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Moral Imagination and Character Development
Volume II

Moral Imagination in Personal Formation and Character Development

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Table of Contents

Introduction

George F. McLean

In this transition between the millennia humankind experiences a series of dilemmas which, paradoxically, derive as much from its long accomplishments as from its failures. Descartes launched the modern age with the call for a unified science predicated upon analytically clear and distinct ideas. Besides opening the way for the developments and discoveries of the modern mind, this created a split between spirit and matter, reflected in his fractured notion of the human person. This was a distant, early warning signal of the many problems which would accompany the achievements to follow. Soon reductivist understandings would generate idealisms and materialisms. In either case rigorous clarity would impose either a notion of community without room for persons or self, or a notion of the individual without bonds of community. Both would suppress or pervert personal freedom, and with it the creativity needed for truly humane life in our day.

In these circumstances, much attention has been directed toward elements of synthesis in order to reunite what had been split asunder. More positively, there is need now to harvest and integrate the insights into spirit and matter which, being developed in separation, had been unfairly burdened with the demand that each respond to all questions. Is it possible to find points of mediation and operational integration of matter and spirit? Could there be room for a free play of ideas to enrich and humanize the necessitarian aspects of structures and systems? Is there room for creativity, freedom and new life in and between persons, national efforts and entire cultures? These are central and deeply felt questions and needs of our times. Their examination is the concern of this three volume series: *Moral Imagination and Character Development*.

New attention, and indeed new meaning, is now being given to the imagination as an integrating and creative center for human life. This was the burden of volume I, *The Imagination*. In the processes of discovering by which a child grows and is educated as a moral person the imagination is most active and remains important I moral life. This is treated here in Volume II *Moral Imagination in Personal Formation and Character Development*. The work of adjustment and innovation by which nations face their economic, social and political life; and the effort to build integrating bonds of understanding and cooperation between peoples at the deepest levels of cultural self-understanding, religious commitment and communication between civilizations will be the work of Volume III *Moral Imagination in Religion and Social Life*.

Part I "Imagination and Personal Development," rather than understanding the nature of imagination in terms of the infinite dynamism of being from which it emerges as human consciousness, turns to a study of how the imagination operates as an active factor in the human psyche enabling persons to shape their own personality and relate it to others.

The first two chapters discuss imagination from within the theory of Adrian van Kaam. In Chapter I, "Formative Imagination and Disposition Formation," he treats its role in the formation of dispositions. He notes the need for an active creative role of the imagination in order to retain one’s freedom and responsibility vis a vis impacts from without. He describes its role in the different dimensions of psychic life from appraisals to decision, images, feelings, strivings, motivations, actions and dispositions, and even mediation to and from mystic imageless states of consciousness.

Chapter II by Carole Riley, "Imagination and Decision-Making in Van Kaam's Theory of Human Formation," looks more in detail at the foundational role of the imagination in the critical examination carried out by the formative mind and will. This is treated within the broader field of spiritual formation where the imaging of the past in memory and of the future in anticipation are part of each decision-making process.

Eva-Maria Simms in Chapter III, "Feminine Imagination and the Ethics of Care" differentiates the role of the imagination in the appreciation of the other between a phallic male model which she sees with Gilligan as generating a male ethics of justice, and a feminine relational model for an ethics of care. Here Ricoeur is evoked noting that imagination "provides the milieu, the luminous clearing in which we can compare and contrast motives as different as desires and ethical demands, which in turn can range from professional rules to social customs or to strictly personal values." An ethics of care, notes Simms, needs this clearing ground where empathy reflects and becomes aware of itself.

Chapter IV by Charles Maes, "The Moral Image of the Other and the Others: Two Exemplifications," analyzes the process by which the imagination makes it possible to take account of the other as other. That is, how beyond mere symbolic participation. This makes not only ego formation possible, but also its transcendence as a preparation for responsibility. Maes exemplifies this in two ways, first the technical network of "face" in Levinas' notion of "the other", and second the human ability to overcome the consumerist fascination with things as objects.

Chapter V by Richar Knowles, "Fantasy and Imagination," corrects a common restrictive notion of imagination by which it is seen as mere fantasy. He shows the two to be quite different: fantasy separates from life and can be based on fear and excapism, whereas imagination is a capacity for openness and engagement.

In this light Chapter VI by Raymond Studzinski, "The Imagination, the Unconscious, Faith and Moral Development," is able to show the role of imagination in faith and moral development. He notes a fourfold sequence. The first is facing a problem or mystery when attempts at solving the puzzle based on one's usual interpretative schemes fail. The second step finds people scanning the field of possibilities for a new perspective while they continue to be challenged by the conflict. This scanning, which relies heavily on the imagination, is both a conscious and an unconscious process. Thirdly, an intuition or insight which gives a clue to the resolution of the conflict appears on the boundary between the unconscious and the conscious as a result of the constructive act of the imagination. At this point, a new way of seeing the situation is offered. With this insight the knower experiences a surge of energy — energy formerly absorbed by the conflict. Release from the conflict in the fourth step gives rise to self-transcendence. The new insight makes possible finally a reinterpretation of the problem situation.

Against this background Studzinski cites Fowler's six stages of faith development, of which the confessions of Augustine and the conversion described by al-Ghazali in his *Munqid* might be taken as classic extended examples.

Part II, "Education and Moral Imagination," enters more in depth into the role of the imagination and expands our understanding by examining it not merely as an internal dimension of one's personal growth, but also a socio-cultural reality which plays a role in shaping the life of a people.

In Chapter VII, "The Necessity of the Imaginative Dimension of Moral Living," Edward L. Murray develops two interlocking propositions: first that imagination lies at the very heart of our being moral; and second that morality lies at the heart of our being human. He explores the

connections between the two seeing the imagination as enabling one to rehearse life situations before actually entering them.

Chapter VIII by Henry C. Johnson, "Moral Education, Cultural Inheritance, and the Transmission of Values: Moral Development as Nurturing the Moral Imagination," studies the role of moral imagination in the transmission of values. In this it critiques approaches which would construct an ideal value pattern in abstract philosophical, empirical or socio-cultural categories. He points instead to the proper interior issues and potentialities of the moral imagination as able to take up, elaborate and personally apply the values of the tradition, the community and the institutions of which one is a member.

Richard Graham begins Chapter IX, "Imagining Self and Society" with seven propositions regarding the role of the imagination in moral education. The chapter provides an explanation, defense and ways of implementing these themes.

A cross cultural horizon characterizes the following two chapters. In Chapter X, "The Role of Imaginative Narration in Moral Education and Character Development," Alberti B. Msuya also studies the work of the imagination in African thought, especially the ways narration goes beyond abstract thought and its importance for moral education.

In Chapter XI, "Formation of Character in Traditional Nigerian Moral Education," Izu Marcel Onyeocha examines the role of imagination in African moral education. In this oral culture the moral code is conveyed and impressed upon one by initiation rites in which the role of imagination is central. The content of this code is expressed in terms of stories and proverbs by means of comparisons which depend upon the work of the imagination.

Chapter XII by Hortensia Ferrand de Piazza and Doris Gonzales, "Imagination and Urban Development in Villa El Salvador, Lima" gives a practical example of these principle through the history of a project of community cooperation in constructing a school in rural Peru.

Chapter XIII "Moral Imagination and Character Development in Ancient India" by M. Prabhakara Rao extends the view of character development by reporting on the classical Indian understanding for which he provides also the metaphysical context.

As the promethean hopes and pretences fade that by rigorous scientific reason humanity could resolve all problems, a much broader and more diverse playing field opens before humankind. It is not without great threats, but neither is it without equally great hopes. The key to making the differences between the two lies notably in the human imagination, to the study of which in its many modes this series of volumes is devoted.

Chapter I

Formative Imagination and Disposition Formation

Adrian Van Kaam

Here, the adjective, *formative*, is used to indicate that the imagination is of interest to our science mainly insofar as it is related to our distinctively human formation of life and world. Formation science would not be interested, for example, in a chance imagining of a geometrical figure if this image had no influence on human formation under its distinctively human or spiritual aspect. By contrast, we may imagine how we can counteract a deformative anti-authority disposition by learning to cope with our irrational anger. In this case, we use our imagination formatively. Therefore, we must ask: In what way does formative imagination* influence the formation of our disposition?

In the preceding chapter, we considered the role of transcendent and functional appraisal in disposition formation. In this chapter, we will examine the part played by transcendent and functional imagination. The operation of imagination is transcendent when it supports and depends on our transcendent mind and will. For example, a woman may choose to devote her life to teaching the art of formative living to professional people who feel spiritually abandoned in the midst of opulence and sophistication. This option implies a transcendent appraisal of the meaning of her life as a whole. She has to ponder the spiritual sense of detachment from other, more lucrative occupations. She needs to reflect on the abandonment of spirit that unconsciously depresses many of her contemporaries and cries out for help. Necessary also is an appraisal of the transcendent constituent of such a teaching disposition, for to choose a new way of life means to choose a new set of dispositions.

This appraisal may be sustained by imagining symbolically the beauty of a life dedicated to such a calling. In her imagination she may form the symbol of a prism, analogous to the rich, reflecting power of formative teaching. She imagines that a bright light pervades the prism. This light symbolizes for her the way the formation mystery[1] uses her to reflect its wisdom to others in formative, inspirational teaching. Her transcendent memory may recall images of teachers who have become living symbols of her ideal. In transcendent anticipation she may imaginatively portray herself as a teacher who starts and sustains many others on their life's journey. In this way her imagination enhances and supports her transcendent appraisal and option. If, by chance, she is

[1] *Formation-mystery*. This refers to a transcendent reality to which patients, counselees or directees — adhering to various ideological or religious transcendent formation traditions — point in their own particular communications and expressions. Formation science as a science cannot base itself exclusively upon any one of these meanings attributed to the forming mystery of cosmos and humanity in different formation traditions and in various patients, counselees or directees. Such particular elaborations of the experience of the forming mystery can, however, be articulated in each formation tradition in dialogue with its underlying faith tradition. To illustrate this postscientific possibility, I suggest in a few sentences in this paper how some of its contents can be trans-scientifically related to the Christian formation traditions. In those instances, I move beyond the realm of science, insofar as I personally identify, over and beyond science, with the faith tradition that underlies the Christian formation tradition and its own formational spirituality as distinguished from other formation traditions — such as those of the Judaic, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, Taoist, Marxist, Humanistic, Freudian, Jungian, Rogerian traditions that articulate the forming mystery and its influence on patients or counselees in their own particular way.

freely committed to a consonant form tradition,[2] she may find in its sources many other symbols and images to draw upon in her reflection and meditation. These help her to keep in tune with the transcendent depth of her chosen ideal and to replenish her dedication where it is waning.

Such transcendent use of the imagination does not suffice, however, for the formation of concrete disposition. It has to be complemented by a functional or incarnational exertion of the imagination. The imagination functions incarnationally insofar as it assists the functional mind and will in their task of directing the concrete implementation of transcendent ideals in daily life. The teaching ideal should be imagined realistically also. The woman may place herself imaginatively in the concrete surroundings of a teaching situation, asking herself: Will I feel at home there? How would I manage? She may recall imaginative teaching situations in which she participated either as a teacher or a learner. She may try to anticipate what teaching would be like in the future within the society in which she will have to exercise that function. This practical use of the imagination will make her more aware of the kinds of dispositions she should begin to cultivate if she wants to implement her transcendent ideal effectively.

Formative Imagination in the Service of Disposition Formation

In the service of disposition formation, formative imagination can create fictitious formation situations or add fictitious aspects to the perception of a real formation situation. People who initiate or cultivate dispositions react and respond to fictitious formation situations as if they were real, even on the level of organismic reactions.

Formative imagination can operate in all five dimensions of our formative presence.[3] Here we will not discuss at length the pneumatic dimension, which is the human transcendent dimension as illumined by the Holy Spirit as speaking in Holy Scripture and Christian tradition. Suffice it to mention that formative symbols abound in the Christian tradition. We need only recall the image of the rock in the Psalms, of the exodus from Egypt through the desert into the promised land, or of the vine and the branches in Jesus' farewell discourse.

In the human transcendent dimensions of our formative presence, we may think of such images as the Holy Grail, a national flag, or the shamrock of Ireland. In the functional dimension, examples can be found in attractive industrial design and in the power and status symbols devised by image makers. In the vital dimension, the West has become poor in symbolic imagination. Mainly physical-sexual imagery has been fostered to see, for instance, an open object as the image

[2] *Consonant form tradition*. The terms consonant-dissonant are used to appraise the observable correspondence or non-correspondence in patients, counselees, and directees between their particular formation tradition and its underlying ideological or religious faith tradition. It is also used to measure the consonance and dissonance between the various dimensions of the human life form and between this life form, its field of presence and action. Ultimately, this concept helps the counselor to appraise the consonance between the life of the counselee and the formation mystery as envisaged in some direct or indirect way by the counselee.

[3] *Five dimensions of our formative presence*. Observations of relatively adequate consonance and failing consonance in counselees and directees led me to a dimensional theory of formation instead of the usual level or stage theories of personality and human development. I found in Holland that the construct of dimension enabled me to emphasize as crucial the unity-in-principle of all aspects of human formation as well as a hierarchical order of formational flow between these dimensions. The five dimensions to which I refer in this paper are: the socio-historical, the vital, the functional, the transcendent. A fifth one, passingly mentioned here, is the pneumatic. This dimension falls outside the scope of formation science as science. It is added only as a suggestion for those who want to articulate the science in the service of the Christian formation tradition. Other ideological or religious faith and form traditions that use formation science hermeneutically for their own particular articulation may add some other dimension, as does the Christian with the addition of the pneumatic dimension.

of a vagina or a pointed object as that of a penis. Here we become aware of the socio-historical dimension. The impact of psychoanalytic image formation has influenced popular sexual imagining in our culture. Socio-historical pulsations[4] form our imagination on every level mentioned. Already a superficial observation makes it evident that such interconscious images[5] and symbols can conform the prevalent dispositions of a specific population.

Formative imagination can be guided by both form reception and form donation.[6] Receptivity can be passive or active. If our form receptivity is only passive, it may spell trouble for disposition formation. Merely passive imagination allows all kinds of formative images to enter into our lives uncritically. We do not actively form and reform our images in the light of appraisal and enlightened choice. Such passivity seems to be fostered in childhood by an early prolonged exposure to television. The child's form-receptive imagination is inundated with images he or she does not elaborate actively. As a result, it becomes difficult to activate the child's creative imagination. It may have been better when children were exposed to radio programs only. Enchanted by these verbal stories, children had to fill out visually in their imagination what was presented to them only in words and sound. This helped them to cultivate their active-receptive form imagination.

Passive form imagination leads to a passive development of dispositions that are neither unique nor transcendent. It makes for a somewhat dull population, similarly disposed because of exposure from early in life to similar programs absorbed complacently. The pliability of their formative imagination makes them vulnerable to outside influences in later disposition formation. They are easily victimized by any image maker who captures their imagination. A striking example pertains to the vulnerability of large groups of people in Germany to the images created by Nazi propaganda. It disposed them to acts many would never have consented to, were it not for their impressionable formative imagination.

Creative Imagination and Vital Disposition Formation

To illustrate the power of creative formative imagination, let us consider its influence on the vital reformation of dispositions. We choose examples of the formative influence of vital imagination because we can observe clearly its impact on our bodily life. Take the case of a person we shall call Peter who constantly suffered low back pain due to the treatment of rectal cancer. The pain became so intolerable that only three options seemed open to him: effective treatment of the pain, commitment to a mental institution, or suicide. He was lucky enough to have become acquainted with an experienced, well-trained formation counselor. This woman suggested that he

[4] *Socio-historical pulsations*, Clinical observation identified the dynamic strivings of the four dimensions. They are socio-historical pulsations, vital pulsions, functional ambitions, transcendent aspirations, and inspirations. These dimensions and their interactions play a significant role in the problems brought to our therapists, counselors or directors. The socio-historical pulsations refer to the various dynamic, historically conditioned forces that pulsate in any particular society. Such pulsations influence significantly the life formation and deformation of the counselees.

[5] *Interconscious images*. The science, on the basis of its observation of the expressions of human consciousness, distinguishes between a personal and social side of consciousness-in-formation. The latter it calls interconsciousness. It is a result of, and gives rise to, observable expressions of interformations between counselees in group therapies and sessions of group dynamics. In both, personal consciousness and interconsciousness, four regions of consciousness are distinguished: focal, prefocal, infrafocal, and transfocal consciousness, each with its particular impact on the formation stories of patients, counselees or directees.

[6] *Form reception and form donation*. From therapy, counseling and direction sessions, it is unmistakably clear that all patients, counselees and directees are always engaged in receiving form from, and giving form to, their life and world, including their life of imagination and fantasy.

should deactivate his present disposition toward pain and develop a new disposition that would diminish his suffering. She proposed to him a project of vital disposition reformation by means of formative imaging. They would first talk through the object pole of the disposition he should reform. She helped him to address himself to the pain, not as an abstract concept or a simple perception, but to form an image of the pain that would express how it really affected him — an image that would not be made up by the mind in isolation but that would emerge from the source of the pain as concretely located in the vital dimension of his life. It should be an image that would tell him something about his suffering.

Under her guidance, he was able to form an image of a vicious terrier chewing his spine. It was a nightmarish image, but it enabled him to give form to his pain experience. This visual image in turn made it possible for him to form a verbal image. In this form, the pain became available to his appraisal. This appraisal[7] had to be positive or appreciative. The image and the experience it represented had to be seen as a formation opportunity. Only then could he approach it as a point of departure for the initiation of a formative disposition. Then he could begin to work with it. Peter came to this first formation decision: "Yes, I want to reform my disposition toward pain. I am resolved to work with this image, to see it as an opportunity for the improvement of my life."

Once the *formation will* came to bear on this decision, the formation counselor could work with him on the reformation of vital imagination. A process of intraformation[8] was set in motion. Peter was encouraged by her to get in touch imaginatively with the vicious terrier. This should not be an exercise of logic but an imaginary talking to the terrier. In his talking, Peter began to find out why the terrier was chewing his spine. His physical pain was amplified because an infrafocal[9] resentment of his profession as an accountant had given rise to bitter feelings of rage and resentment toward life. He had never been able to admit to himself these deformative dispositions. They were poisoning his life. They found indirect expression in a deepening of the pain that was already there. The infrafocal deformative disposition of rage, revolt, and defiance tried to destroy his life via deadly increase in the experience of already existing pain. The vital dimension of his life became the channel of deformative self-expression. In this way, an unknown disposition was potentially made available through the formative imagination.

When Peter discovered the meaning of the pain, he gradually became capable of reforming the underlying disposition. In the end, transcendent appraisal and appreciation would lead him to

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[7] *Appraisal*. Appraisal is another key concept in formation science. The exercise of appraisal engenders in our counselees or directees formative appreciations and depreciations. These, in turn, can and do give rise to certain formational appraisal dispositions that more lastingly influence their life story with its crises and conflicts.

[8] *Intraformation*. In its diagramming of the formation fields of its counselees formation science distinguishes between pre-, intra-, inter-, outer- situational, outer-nondial/cosmic formation spheres. By pointing to these formative spheres the science points to the need to assist patients, counselees or directees in a striving for 'consonance' between these influences on their life and to help them to bring any significant influences of these life spheres to focal consciousness and subsequent reflection if they are nonfocal. In the life diagram of each counselee, intraformation points to the sphere of the counselee's interior appraisal, acceptance or rejection, as well as the subsequent cognitive, affective, imaginative assimilation or resistance to formational invitations, challenges, pressures, seductions or suggestions coming from the inner and outer spheres of the formation field.

[9] *Infrafocal*. In an earlier footnote, I presented a summation of the four regional structures of formative consciousness. One of the four is infrafocal consciousness. Unlike prefocal consciousness, this region initially is not available to focal awareness and vocalization: hence, the term, *infrafocal*, or *below* focal awareness. This differs from the counselee's prefocal region of consciousness, whose contents are in principle available to consciousness without formation therapy in depth. My construct of the infrafocal is somewhat reminiscent of the Freudian construct of the unconscious but is not fully identical therewith, for the nuanced meaning and role of the infrafocal region of consciousness is modulated by the other regions of consciousness that together form a more differentiated and comprehensive structure of consciousness than Freud proposed in his pioneering approach to human consciousness.

a spiritual disposition of abandonment in faith, hope and consonance to the formation mystery. Functional appraisal would help him to express this abandonment in other appreciative images that would directly address themselves to the image of the chewing terrier, representing his self-destructive resentment. In the end it became possible to make the terrier stop its merciless chewing. With the taming of the terrier, the disposition of rage and fury against his fate was slowly deactivated. A disposition of abandonment, surrender and trust was initiated. The pain was no longer intolerable. Some of it was still there, but it had acquired a new meaning through his meaning-giving disposition. The temptation to suicide or to commitment to a mental institution was no longer experienced.

This case study illustrates the power of formative imagination. There are many examples in primitive cultures of this power. For example, a medicine man declares that bad spirits have invaded a tribesman. As a result he will die. Amazingly, the person will not survive this indictment. No Western treatment can change his fate. The deep formative imagining, "I have to die," initiates a fatal disposition of anticipation of certain death. This vital disposition gives form through images to the involuntary nervous system in such a way that the person dies as predicted.

Something similar may happen in Western civilization. A young man's father and uncle die in their fifties from coronaries. Deeply troubled and anxious, this man develops a disposition of anticipation of a coronary when he reaches that age. Through formative imagination, the disposition may affect the vital dimension so intensely that the man indeed experiences in that year the coronary he was disposed to expect. The same power of imagination explains why the laying on of hands by suggestive people who are either believers or atheists may effect healing in those who expect to be healed.

Incarnation of an Imaginative Reform Project in One's Life

The act of implementation of an image in one's life can be called an incarnation. In the context of our example, such enfleshment applies first of all to the vital dimension; it can then be applied to other dimensions of human formation.

The first condition for effective formative implementation is relaxation. One should let go of all tension, socially, vitally, functionally and spiritually. Formation science emphasizes in this regard the development of the general form disposition of *gentleness*. At the start of this exercise of implementation of imagination, this disposition will enable us to go through a phase of gentling the force of our vital-functional formation energy.[10] This energy may have been invested, among other things, in deformative imagination dispositions that have to be overcome. For example, I may be disposed to image myself as an overly shy person, a wallflower. I have to overcome this disposition and the images in which it expresses itself. A first step to diminish its hold over my life is to gentle my formation energy. This will indirectly diminish the energy invested in this dispositional image. Now I can distance myself from this disposition.

[10] *Formation energy*. Form reception and donation in ascendant transcendence imply the use of what I identified as transcendent formation energy. Formation therapists, counselors and directors observe the rise and wane of this energy; its replenishment by transcendent presence; its transformatively directed flow in activated dispositions, dynamics and directives of the pretranscendent life form; its flexibility as well as its stagnation in one or another repetitious activation of a disposition no longer relevant to the life situation; and the conditions and consequences of these dynamic processes in relation to transcendent human formation. Formation science established an internal relationship between its concept of transcendent formation energy and its concept of the formation mystery. This interwovenness makes this concept different from the energy concept used in dynamic psychologies.

Once I become gentle, I should foster another general form disposition promoted by science, that of *openness*. Openness in this sense is the same as humility. It is a dwelling in the light of the truth, no matter how humiliating or painful this truth may be. I thus withdraw formation energy from its investment in my dispositions. I do so by "gentling down." This makes energy available for openness or humility and for new form reception and form donation. In practice, this withdrawal of energy means for most of us a withdrawal from busy inner and outer functioning. Such agitation is fueled by the form energy invested in our active dispositions.

In the case of Peter and his lower back pain, the formation counselor got him to relax deeply. This relaxation provided him with the necessary distance from his deformative disposition. It freed some of the energy invested in it. He could then be humbly open to the deformative dispositional image. He was able to talk back to it imaginatively under the increasing guidance of his power of appraisal.

Guidelines to Effective Use of Formative Images

How do we influence the formative vital-functional dimension of our life via imagination? How can we make this dimension available to appraisal and appreciation as well as to the power of effective decision? Let us return to the case of Peter. Why did he develop such a disposition of overwhelming rage and frustration?

Peter was an accountant. He never wanted to be an accountant in the first place, but a writer, journalist, or teacher. The formation sessions made him admit to himself for the first time that his was an uncongenial choice[11] of profession. Why did he become an accountant if he did not like this work? It was mainly because his father was a successful accountant who pressured him to take over his company. Peter meekly submitted to this pressure, but deep down he hated the imposition, the betrayal of his freedom. He resented a professional life that was not really chosen or ratified by his own powers of appraisal. As a result, he found his life incompatible with his colleagues who liked their jobs, with his clients who forced problems upon him he did not want to solve, with his wife and children whose welfare and future compelled him into making a living by means of work he despised.

Because of his infrafocal disposition of resentment, he could not be compassionate with himself or others. Neither himself nor his father could he forgive for having made the wrong decision. He could not empathize with his clients and their worries; he could not feel compassionate toward his wife and children. He was too preoccupied with his own resentment disposition.

This infrafocal resentment would explode at times in sudden outbursts about little inconveniences and irritations that would frighten his family, friends and clients. There was no proportion between the vehemence of his anger and the smallness of the incident that would trigger it. They could not know the hidden disposition of rage and resentment that was the real cause of these sudden outbursts. No one suspected that a terrier of powerful resentment was chewing the

[11] *Uncongenial*. Congeniality and uncongeniality are substructures of the concepts of consonance and dissonance. They refer to the mode and measure of the formational consonance or dissonance of patients, counselees, directees — on the way to transcendent transformation — between their actual empirical life form and their founding unique life form. Their given uniqueness has to find some congenial expression in their empirical form of life. Transcendence therapy, counseling or direction assists them in liberating this unique dignity from its oppression by inner directives absorbed from an unjust oppressive society.

spine of his life. An added strain was that his disposition to live comfortably was important in the eyes of his contemporaries and neighbors. This, too, kept him glued to his job.

The disposition of resentment formed a deformative formation field, the meanings of which were colored by his impotent rage. The inner and inter-sphere of the formation field was conformed by the father he secretly hated and by the colleagues and clients who forced him to do what he did not like to do. The situation sphere was the accountant's office, reminding him of a position in society he was unable to enjoy. The world sphere of his formation field became darkened by his resentment. He could not see much good in a world that somehow forced him to stay in this niche. The preformation sphere was also affected by his resentful disposition. He felt prefocally that he had been unfaithful to his preformation. He was not made to be an accountant, but something else. So he felt resentful toward himself.

Paradoxically, this resentment turned against the preformation itself, without which he would not have been in this kind of trouble. This contributed to the low back pain and to his suicidal tendencies. It did not cause physical pain, but it contributed to an amplification that made it intolerable. To develop a disposition of resentment toward one's preformation is to be disposed to resent the deepest sources of one's unique life. The impotent rage is directed intraformatively against both the alien, false or counter life-form and the preformation that gave rise to it.

The first stage of the reformation process was thus to become aware via images of the deformative disposition. The next stage was that of formative appraisal and appreciation. This means that the person has to come to appreciative *imagination* and *appraisal* — at this phase, still embedded in the imagination.

The terrier tells Peter in their imaginary interaction: "It is not a career as an accountant that you wanted. You are successful in your job and well-regarded, but you never dared to admit to yourself that you did not want to be there. You have to face your real disposition. It may not be necessary to change your career, but you surely must overcome your resentful imagery and the disposition in which it is rooted."

When this insight had seeped in, the formation counselor encouraged Peter to take time for formative appreciation exercises. He had to begin to appreciate how good he was or could be at what he was doing. He had to ponder how many people are compelled by life to take on a career they do not want. He imagined gifted physicists who became busy housewives and mothers of many children; budding novelists who became secretaries to make a living; potential artists who became house painters; professional people driven from their homes and jobs during wars and revolutions to do manual labor in a new country.

Peter had not freely chosen his professional life, but he could still come to a free acceptance of it. Since this form of occupational life had become his, he could develop a disposition to make the best of it instead of fighting it. He could attain transcendent appraisal by putting his occupation and its problematics in the light of the formation mystery and viewing all that had happened in an attitude of overall abandonment in faith, hope and love.

After such appraisals, Peter decided to overcome his resentful disposition, to forgive his father, and to forgive himself. Forgiveness is formative. It is a disposition that overcomes resentment most effectively. It helps one to grow in compassionate understanding. Maybe his father did not know any better. He may have been the victim of deformation himself. The people surrounding Peter and influencing him with their deformative socio-historical pulsations may not be guilty either. They did not ask to be born in this pressured climate for publicly applauded success in life at the cost of one's real aspirations. Parents and neighbors often veil our calling

with the best of intentions. If we do not forgive them, it is we, not they, who suffer most in the long run.

Peter came to the decision to accept the present historical situation. He accepted it as a point of departure and as an opportunity. This was the first step in the development of the disposition of "opportunity thinking," or appreciative instead of depreciative thinking. He began to realize that to live in depreciation is to live an unhealthy life.

In the process of deactivation of deformative anticipation, one has to catch in oneself the deformative memories and anticipations linked with the disposition. These tend to evoke, deepen and maintain its power. During imaginary interaction exercises with the chewing terrier, the answer came to Peter from the terrier: "I will stop chewing your spine." This means the disposition of rage and resentment had weakened sufficiently. It, at least, did not keep amplifying his vital pain experience. Indeed, these appreciative responses were accompanied by an easing of the pain. As a matter of fact, during the following weeks Peter's pain progressively subsided.

The case of Peter makes us aware that when we are in pain, there is some hidden image of pain in us. Of course, we must first try out all the solutions offered by traditional medicine. Only then can we safely apply to chronic pain the formative imagination exercises. What we really do then is to extend our formation powers not only to the voluntary, but also to the involuntary facets of the human form of life. If we begin to think and especially to imagine how painful things are, we will feel more pain. We blow our pain out of proportion. It may reach unbearable heights. Our repeated imagining of pain leads to an enduring disposition to expect and feel its sting.

We are in formation at all times through dispositions. These are partly formed by our focal or prefocal images. Sometimes these images are consonant and helpful; they foster formative dispositions. At other times they are dissonant; they engender dissonant dispositions that have to be reformed. We can put this whole question in a transcendent perspective: the formation mystery helps us to form and reform our dispositional life via consonant image formation.

Vital Physiological Process of Pain Disposition Reformation

Because the reformation of the pain disposition is such a clear example, we can ask ourselves what happens *intraformatively* in this case? The disposition is reformed by means of consonant images. The reformed disposition then gives rise to pain-stilling images. These trigger the release of the body's natural pain killers. Medicine, one of the main auxiliary disciplines to formation science, researches the so-called endorphins. These complex chemicals reform our vital-bodily experiences when they are triggered, among other causes, by appreciative imagery. Their work resembles that of a narcotic.

It may be that Eastern form traditions preserved a kind of operational knowledge in this regard without our present-day scientific explanation. Certain adherents of these traditions were able to walk through fire or over broken glass without pain or injury. They seem to have been able to activate these chemicals by proper imagination and to become immune to pain.

A similar example is the so-called "runner's high" experienced by joggers. This feeling is ascribed to an increased output of endorphins. People may in some sense become "addicted" to jogging: when they cannot run they feel low. This seems to be an indication of withdrawal symptoms. Once that disposition for feeling high through jogging is formed it strives for reiteration, as do all dispositions. A letdown is experienced when this striving is not satisfied. In the case of a chemically sustained disposition, the letdown is felt in the vital dimension in the form of symptoms of withdrawal from the usual satisfaction of this vital disposition.

Consonant Use of Traditional Images

How does one start to give form to life by consonant imaginative dispositions? We may find help in this regard in our form tradition. Various consonant form traditions foster a consonant disposition toward suffering by providing images that lift it to a transcendent level. However, such images have to be used wisely. There is a kind of concentration on images of suffering, like the cross, that can lead to harmful dispositions. One may dispose oneself to appreciate suffering for its own sake. When our disposition is focused in this way, it may intensify suffering. One may begin to revel in pain itself.

A consonant disposition would involve focusing, for example, as an adherent of the Christian form tradition, on the potency of the suffering Christ as enabling one to accept one's own suffering as filled with transcendent meaning. The potency of Christ within the Christian, to go beyond suffering as mere pain, is activated. Positive appreciative imagination sees the Lord as the victor over grief and agony. As for this disposition, pain and distress are points of departure, not terminal states desirable in and by themselves. The wrong appreciation of pain can become immensely deformative when it is connected with masochistic or sadistic dispositions. The masochistic disposition represents a perverse inclination to experience pleasure in pain, while the sadistic disposition inclines one to find pleasure in inflicting pain on others. These dispositions may be partly innate, partly acquired.

There is a way of talking about symbols of suffering that generates a disposition of hypersensitivity to any potential unpleasantness and exalts it out of proportion. Some types of spirituality exalt any inconvenience that comes one's way as a great "cross" to bear with courage, as a sacrifice to be made generously, and so on. This may lead to a life of imaginatively exalted suffering of things that, for example, the ordinary mother in a large family takes in stride as the everyday business of living.

A consonant disposition in regard to pain and suffering should neither exaggerate it by use of exalted images nor deny its reality. The disposition should help one to relieve pain, if possible. If imaginative, informative talk can be of assistance, one can engage in it in a relaxed way.

Imagination and the Involuntary Nervous System

As we have seen, the imaginative can be used to enable us to give form to our involuntary nervous system. This system is not under the direct control of the powers of formative appraisal and volition. We can learn how to release the endorphins developed in us by the cosmic, evolutionary epiphany of the formation mystery. Such endorphins wrought in us over the millennia by the miracle of formative evolution can reform the intensity of the pain without the side effects of powerful drugs.

We always give form to life by means of dispositions. In the West we may think only of how to give form voluntarily. We may have reduced the art of living to voluntary living only, having forgotten almost entirely that we can dispose ourselves to give form to our autonomic system, too. We can develop dispositions that give us some control over our heart rate, breathing, digestion and emotional and sexual excitability. Such gentle control can serve our spiritual development.

Our formative autonomic nervous system is connected with both the infra- and transfocal conscious dimension of our formative minds. It is also linked with instrumentation of our mid-brain and brainstem. The autonomic nervous system is not directly available to focal

consciousness. Yet it is in continuous contact with the *infra-* and *trans*-dimensions of consciousness. Hence, we can only give form to this involuntary system and its processes in a symbolic and imaginative way. This is the only language by means of which we can form aspects of our life that are not controlled by the focal mind.

What falls under the direct control of the focal mind can be formed by focal command. For instance, I can tell myself to get up, but I cannot directly force myself by mere logical reasoning to become totally relaxed and rested. Here the distinctive formative idiom that is needed is that of images.

Exclusive appreciation of logical and functional rationality leads to the neglect of the development of the formative dispositions of imagination in service of the incarnation of transcendent and functional decisions. The imaginative idiom of such dispositions may be as unfamiliar to us as a foreign language. Yet the restoration of spiritual formation in the West will partly depend on the restoration of this idiom and its underlying dispositions.

Highly developed in our cultural form traditions are the dispositions and idioms of cortical focal life. We neglected the development of subcortical dispositions and idioms, which should not replace but should complement our focal dispositional life. No rational language can speak formatively to our subcortical existence. The autonomic nervous system listens only to images and symbols loaded with affective power. To illustrate this fact, we can perform a simple experiment. We can try telling our mouth with abstract words to form and secrete saliva, making sure not to link any image with the words. The experiment will not succeed. Then we can try, in as lively a way as possible, to imagine a sizzling steak, to smell its delicious aroma, to taste imaginatively the juices of a warm morsel in our mouth. Without any abstract verbalization, saliva will come. Such is the power of imagination.

Had we developed a disposition to evoke certain effective images, they would easily emerge at any moment we needed them. For example, we may have a cholesterol problem. We are not supposed to eat the things we were disposed to love early in life: ice cream, whipped cream, rich desserts, fatty meats. No amount of abstract logical verbalization can lastingly reform the subcortical disposition that makes us crave for them. Now we can try to develop an imaginative disposition in the opposite direction. We image repeatedly in a lively way how our arteries become clogged with this slimy, repulsive, fatty stuff and how the sticky, gluey cream will lie like sludge in our bloodstream. We make the images as vivid, concrete and repulsive as possible over and over again until the disposition is strongly established. Progressively we will experience the repulsion we need to stick to our diet, to develop a new taste disposition strong enough to resist the lure of imaginative advertisements for these forbidden foods.

Consonant Imagination Dispositions and Higher Dispositions

The faithful initiation, maintenance and development of consonant disposition of the imagination is in turn dependent on our higher dispositions. We need the foundational triad of faith, hope and consonance to find the motivation to decide to bear with the work of formative imagination and its patient reiteration. We need the faith that the consonant life is worthwhile enough to do this work, that there is a higher form potency we can trust to sustain us in this effort. For example, if I appreciate in faith that my life is a gift of the formation mystery, I may be willing to get my diet under control via the initiation of the appropriate imagination dispositions.

It is by such imagination dispositions that we can give form to intraformative vital form potentials, such as our endorphins. The appropriate disposition in their regard can reform the pain

that was performed in us intraformatively by our imaginative reaction to all sorts of ailments, from arthritis to angina. Imperative in this area of vital intraformation is the research and therapy of Dr. Carl Simonton with cancer patients. Through the development of healing imagination dispositions, he is able to prolong their life and to decrease their pain.

What can be said of our dispositions for suffering applies as well to our mood dispositions. When we allow depreciative image dispositions to develop, we foster by implication dispositions of dark moodiness. If, on the contrary, dispositions for appreciative images are fostered, they will give rise to moods of appreciation, joy, vigor and delights in living. All of these images and mood dispositions help us to conform effectively our core, current, apparent and actual forms of life. They influence deeply what we are and how we appear throughout the day. They affect also our interformative impact. Some people with dark, depreciative image and mood dispositions seem to spread doom in their interaction with others. Moods and images are contagious. We are responsible for the images we exude to others, especially to impressionable children with their as yet weakly formed dispositions. Negative image and mood dispositions can numb in ourselves and others the free formative energy flow.

Consider the task of having to write a paper. We should prepare for this task by appreciative imagination. We should imagine ourselves in advance sitting before the typewriter, appreciating what we may do. We highlight imaginatively the advantages. It is much more pleasant to sit here than it would be to dig a ditch, to sit in a dark foxhole during a war, to lie chronically ill in bed. Instead, we have the privilege of working with ideas. While we are typing, we will be growing in reflection, self-expression and dexterity. We do not allow negative images to creep in, such as "the miserable paper that I doubt I can do." Such depreciative images kill the vital flow we need to accomplish the task. Instead, we should relax and imagine being pleasantly seated. We have only to worry about a line or two. Once we have accomplished that, imagine how interesting it will be to extend these slowly to a paragraph, then perhaps to a page. Writer’s block often comes from the neglect of appreciative imaginary preparation *before* we sit down to write our paper.

The in-between moments of a task should be utilized for the prevention or deactivation of paralyzing depreciative images and the promotion of appreciative ones. No amount of willpower can surmount mountains of depreciative image and mood dispositions. They first have to be removed by appreciative acts and dispositions of faith. Once faith has moved mountains, anything seems possible for those who believe appreciatively. An example can be found in medicine. In medical experiments a healing drug may be tried out by administering it to one group, while another group, the control group, receives a pill that has no medicinal qualities, a placebo. To the initial astonishment of the experimenters, many patients who receive the placebo get better: a strong imaginative belief that the pill would help them was enough to cause improvement. This is called the placebo effect.

One striking experiment at the University of California, San Francisco, illustrates this point. Twenty-three dental patients who had their teeth pulled received a placebo that they were told would take their pain away. The message conveyed to them by the dental authorities was: "If you take this pill, there will be no pain at all." In more than one-third of the patients, the image was so strong that endorphins in the brain were activated and took the pain away. Then a second agent was injected, a drug that blocks the action of endorphins. All the people experienced pain, even the one-third who before had no pain because of the endorphins initially activated by their imagination.

Formative Use of the Imagination

Our imagination can be utilized most effectively for the initiation, maintenance and development of dispositions by formative gentleness and imaginative visualization. Earlier we indicated the effectiveness of gently letting go. Calming down frees formation energy from the dispositions in which it has been invested and enables us to distance ourselves from dispositions we may have identified with. Another advantage of gentleness is that it liberates us for receptive formation. Images can have a forming effect only if we are receptive, that is, if we are gently ready to receive their imprint in our emergent dispositions and actions.

Because of socio-historical form traditions and pulsations, we may be the victim of functionalistic dispositions that foster form giving over form-receiving. They block the free unfolding of our capacities for receptive receiving. They block the free unfolding of our capacities for receptive formation. This is most unfortunate because the primary way of formation is that of form receptivity. Form giving is secondary; it depends for its human meaningfulness on received wisdom, grace and insight.

Consonant formation of life and world implies a wholesome polarity between the reception and donation of form in mutual interaction. We can only give, produce and create meaningful forms out of an inner wealth of gifts graciously received and assimilated. Wisdom is formed in us by the gift of experience as we humbly allow it to enter our formation field without a priori manipulations on our part. We must open to experience in humility. What has taken form in us uniquely as a result of our receptivity can then flow out in consonant form giving to words, deeds, projects and behavior.

If socio-historical form traditions have inclined us to an agitated mode of form giving, we may bypass our need for receptivity. As a result, we become empty people. Our receptivity for images is also missing. Such receptivity is necessary if we want to influence both the voluntary and involuntary nervous systems. Sharing as they do in our overall receptivity, these systems may be disposed by our imagination to act in consonance with our transcendent aspirations, appraisals and affirmations. In no way can our will directly compel the involuntary nervous system to dispose itself in a desired direction. Yet it can be effectively influenced by the appropriate images. Then it becomes ready to receive other images that progressively dispose it in the appraised and approved direction.

Gentleness presupposes abandonment to the formation mystery and its epiphanies in our life. We must trust the form potencies granted to us by the mystery. Life seen in this light can be compared to a sailboat. If we set the sails in the right direction, the boat will virtually sail itself. The same goes for life. We can engage gently in consonant apprehension, appraisal and affirmation, and allow the formative imagination to communicate the subsequent form directives to our concrete life in formation on the turbulent sea of the formation field. We need not force anything. Gradually, our life will right itself by the initiation of consonant dispositions.

Gentle abandonment implies the relaxed ability to live in ambiguity. We cannot always know what is consonant; at times we will err. We must trust life and its forming mystery. The mystery may allow us to lose our path temporarily so as to disclose it more splendidly later in life. Everything is beneficial for those who remain gentle and receptive during their formation journey.

Once the process of gentleness has its impact, visual or audio imagination can be used effectively in disposition formation. The visualization can be symbolic or concrete. For instance, to overcome my shyness in public meetings, I may concretely visualize the session I have to attend, the relaxed and open role I have to play during it. To develop a disposition of presence to the mystery, I may symbolically visualize a bright, all-pervading light. My audio imagination may

"hear" the mystery as a melody, as the music of the sphere pervading universe and history. If one is committed to transcendent form traditions, one can benefit from dwelling on their visual and audio images, sanctioned and refined by centuries of use.

The Hebrew form tradition, for instance, helps its adherents to visualize the mystery in a variety of images, such as a rock on which to stand, a tent in which to hide, a fortress in which to find strength, a shield that gives protection. Their audio imagination was provided with similar images, like that of a mighty wind or a gentle breeze representing the presence of the forming mystery.

In the realm of vital dispositions, the auxiliary science and practice of medicine has developed many strategies of visualization. Dr. Carl Simonton teaches cancer patients how to imagine their tumor as a dark, dreary mass eating their life away. To imitate a vital fighting disposition, he asks them to visualize something that is tearing away at the tumor, usually an animal. He asks them to engage in such visualization at least three times a day. The fighting disposition has to be initiated and strengthened before the cancer is too far advanced. In a number of patients, this disposition formation has led to remission and occasionally to complete recovery.

Traditions are storehouses of images that can complement in patients the kinds of images suggested by Simonton. Traditional images are charged with sacred powers, filled with transcendent meanings. They connect patients with what they believe to be the source of healing formation as it is disclosed to them by their tradition. Formative readings and rituals may confirm and deepen the patient’s original initiation into such symbols.

Exalted Images and Dispositions

Similar visualizations and audio imaginations may be helpful in the reformation of other dispositions. Consider the deformative disposition of religious and social exaltation. The sufferers lose contact with everyday reality the moment an exciting religious or social movement emerges as an accretion of a form tradition or formation community. Such well-meaning people are easily gripped by moods of religious elation and messianic enthusiasm. They are disposed to absolutize, as "the" way for all, any new project, mode of life, social cause, or charitable enterprise. Their exalted disposition blinds their common sense and paralyzes their potency for quiet realism. The exaltation may generate in them a prophetic glow. It numbs their compassionate sensitivity for the everyday moods of more sedate companions.

Seized by such pulsations, they are pulled out of prosaic surroundings. Some may show disdainful pity for those who do not share their particular social or religious concern. Often they strike their common-sense neighbors as good people but pious floaters. They may be irritated by their smiling, sometimes smug insinuation that they know the exclusive path for all true seekers at this moment in history.

The exalted disposition is difficult to overcome. It has subterranean roots in the pride-form and is often powerfully rationalized. Its victims may be able to point to undeniable, ostentatious effects in the peripheral dimensions of social and religious causes. This disposition may fill them with feelings of imaginary divine form potencies. Their pious or social agitation is often sustained by widely acclaimed pulsations in the accretional dimension of a form tradition or in society. It is bolstered by images and symbols engendered by sweeping social-religious movements.

Reformation of exalted dispositions is hindered by one’s unvoiced, though justified, feeling that reentry into common-sense life will be a shock. It may disclose, for example, how impoverished they have become in regard to personal spiritual living, to true inferiority, to at-

homeness in the silent splendor of the hidden life. Estranged from their deepest calling by pulsations that were not personally appraised, they feel as if they have to start from point zero after a collapse of the whole constellation of fictitious exalted dispositions. They dread nothing more than losing their buoyancy and high spirits. The heightened sense of potency and importance that was theirs when they were lifted up by the excitement of some popular religious or social movement subsides. Hence, their exalted disposition inclines them to pounce on the next one that comes along.

Reformation of Exalted Images and Dispositions

A formation counselor may propose various visualizations of such predicaments. She may ask them to imagine themselves as colorful blown-up balloons, filled with the gas of exaltation, drifting idly and vulnerably in the shifting winds of pulsations. They may visualize themselves letting air out by puncturing their balloon, floating down to earth leisurely, feeling pleasantly deflated, finally safely grounded. She helps them to become cautious of anything that may reawaken their exalted dispositions after landing on the earth. They should visualize and imaginatively hear a meeting of zealous people or a speech announcing new religious experiences, social projects, encounters, renewals and the like. They should visualize how their disposition threatens to abuse such occasions to fill up their deflated balloon again with spurts of elation. They must begin to sense how tempted they will be to join fellow floaters. They should imagine how vulnerable they become when high-sounding sentences begin to flow. They can then visualize their balloon dangerously rising again into the buffeting winds of popular pulsations.

By these and similar images, they may be able to distance themselves from pious or impious crowds and collectivities. Disidentification with their own exalted dispositions may become possible. Released by this detachment, they may become present to their own foundational form of life and revere its silent emergence from the formation mystery as a unique epiphany. Religious or social agitation subsides; spiritual life comes out of concealment. To preserve this path of detachment, they must spiritually fill the inner void. Otherwise, their dormant disposition will tempt them again to stuff their empty minds and hearts with images of the exalted life.

Nourishment of this disposition of transcendent appreciation of what seems unspectacular and trite can be found in one's consonant form tradition and its symbols. One should dwell meditatively on its ancient, time-honored sources. Their affirmation by wise men and women in successive generations offers protection against contemporary exalted pulsations. Some of these ancient images may have been imparted in childhood. They may be dormant now. Awakened later in life, they may play an effective role in the reformation of exalted dispositions.

Functionalistic Dispositions and Suffering

An important cause of deformative dispositions in regard to suffering is an overall functionalistic approach to life. We mentioned earlier that dispositions are not isolated. They are part of a constellation that makes up our empirical life-form. The relation between a general functionalistic disposition and/or a deformative disposition in regard to suffering is one example of the undertwining of dispositions in our empirical life.

People who are functionalistically disposed do not feel in tune with the wider mystery of formation. They tend to exclude the transcendent dimension from their life. Any threat of defeat, loss, death, or betrayal is enhanced by the imagination because of the absence of the transcendent

perspective. The more one is isolated from a grander and meaningful whole, the more menacing any diminishment of one's vital-functional potency becomes. We can see this effect on lower levels of transcendence. When children blossom in the abundant love of their mothers, discomfort becomes less painful. Soldiers who are led to believe that their miseries make sense in the light of the cause for which they are fighting are disposed to suffer less than those who do not share that faith. The wider realm of meaning generates uplifting images that diminish the overwhelming impact which the isolated range of suffering otherwise would have.

Interformation, Images and Dispositions

Much suffering finds its source in interformative relationships. Deformation effects and experiences of interformation can influence not only the transcendent and the functional, but also the vital dimension of our dispositions. Recall some of the familiar vital-sensory expressions we use to describe people who interformatively affect us the wrong way. "A pain in the neck," a "constant headache," "too much to stomach," and similar images are lavishly used. We can develop dispositions to experience certain people in this fashion. They may give us real cause to feel that way. Yet if we have to interact with such persons on a regular basis, such dispositions evoke more pain than necessary. They set up in us and others mutually negative dispositions which may affect us physically more than we realize.

One means for incipient reformation of these *interdeformative* dispositions is the disposition to forgive. This disposition is rooted in the foundational triad of faith, hope and consonance. We must deepen our faith that people badly disposed toward us are embraced by the same formation mystery that makes us be. We must believe that a unique noble form of life is present in them, at least potentially. We should cultivate the hope that its fuller expression in their dispositional life-form may be fostered by our forgiving love and genuine concern. This occurs when we feel ourselves to be in compassionate consonance with them. We know from our own vulnerability that hostile, offensive and arrogant people are really hurting. They themselves may be victims of interdeformation somewhere along the way.

Dealing with Depreciative Images and Dispositions

We may experience that, through their images, depreciative dispositions dominate a relationship that consequently becomes tense and painful. We have to ask ourselves what is the message of that pain? What does it tell us about our informative dispositions? How can they be reformed? What are the present images formed by memory and anticipation that maintain and reinforce these dispositions? How can we reform such images or substitute more appreciative ones for them?

Interdeformative dispositions, each with their own swarm of images, apply not only to people here and now. Depreciative dispositions may fester in us toward parents, teachers, friends and others who may have betrayed our trust. There is no use denying the suffering they inflicted knowingly or unknowingly. Only forgiveness can heal the painful memory disposition and the flocks of dissonant images that it resentfully holds in the imagination.

A disposition of forgiveness toward others will take away the dark and dreary mass in our infrafocal consciousness so that it will no longer poison our life. This disposition of forgiveness must extend to our own life, too. We must live in a climate of being forgiven by the mystery of

formation. In the ocean of its forming mercy our inner misery will be mellowed. The hurt disposition is slowly dissolved in the warmth and light of this love.

Images and Dispositions of Masculinity and Femininity

Among the images handed over to us by socio-historical form traditions are those of masculinity and femininity. They foster in us corresponding masculine and feminine dispositions, which direct our daily form-receptivity and form-giving. We need to appraise such images and dispositions critically. Are they restrictive and deforming? Do they serve to release the best in us? Do they foster a consonant life? Consonant interformation implies that we respect one another's dignity as distinctively human. Our humanness transcends our sexual identity. Any cultural image that fosters the illusionary disposition of superiority of one person over another is dissonant.

Interdeformative dissonance generates in turn intradeformative dissonance. It compels us to deny or depreciate within our inner formation the feminine or masculine dimension. Otherwise we cannot maintain our illusionary disposition in regard to the other sex. Formation science distinguishes in the human life form a vital and a functional dimension. It maintains, however, that both are meant to be united in mutual consonance within the higher transcendent dimension of life.

Most socio-historical symbols of femininity link it exclusively with the vital dimension. Subsequent images promote in women the development of mainly vital-sensory-emotional dispositions. Similarly most popular images of masculinity connect it exclusively with functionality and its subordinate dispositions of functional reasoning, dexterity, technicality, dominance and willfulness. Few symbols and images point to the confluence of femininity and masculinity in the transcendent dimension and its spiritual dispositions. Our culture is not inspired by the ideal of transcendent, consonant living, as is evident in the battle between the sexes.

One-sided images lead to stereotyped dispositions which are not sustained by reality. A woman can be rational, logical and functional. A man can be emotional, sensual and vitally intuitive. It is hazardous to enshrine the sexes in such exclusive images. Images tend to become true. Deformative images of sexual identity generate deformative dispositions that rob both men and women of the potential fullness of their humanity. How did this deformative stereotyping come about?

Perhaps it originated in an initially favored expression of femininity and masculinity. The biogenetic of the human body teaches us that the female body is linked intimately with the vital process of procreation. Once a woman is pregnant, she is more centered in her body than a man ever is. She seems initially more at home in her body. It disposes here to experience the formation field in a more centered fashion. The initial experience of masculinity seems more bound up in our culture with functional physiology.

Some physiologists (for example, F.J.J. Buytendijk) observe the prevalence in male babies of strained muscles over soft muscles. As a result, the muscular disposition of males makes them initially experience the world as resistance to be overcome. The initial prevalence in strength of the soft muscles in female infants disposes them to experience the formation field as nonresistant, flowing and adaptable. As a result, males tend initially to be more decentered, aggressive and functional-strategic in their dispositions. Yet in both males and females, vital and functional dispositions should be developed. Vitalism and functionalism should complement each other in both sexes.

The more we grow to transcendence, the more we integrate spontaneously masculine and feminine dispositions in a higher synthesis. Both the transcendent male and female, in their

distinctive humanness, can be equally centered or decentered in consonance with the momentary demands of the formation field. Consonant spirituality destroys all stereotypes, also those of an exclusive masculinity and femininity.

Dissonant Images and Dispositions

From the preceding examples and discussions, it may be clear that we can distinguish a consonant and a dissonant imagination. Formation science refers to dissonant imagination also as fantasy. Because fantasy does not have a pejorative connotation for all researchers in the auxiliary sciences, the term dissonant imagination is often used instead. From the viewpoint of formation, images are far more powerful than concepts. Most of our life is guided by focal, pre-, trans-, and infrafocal imagery. Imagery can exert either a consonant or a dissonant influence. It can be our greatest friend or enemy. It can channel the flow of formation energy in consonant directions by means of like images and symbols or it can also dissipate the energy flow in the dissonant ruminations of our fantasy life.

Because the imagination is susceptible to dissonance, we must appraise, when desirable, the consonance of the images that give form to the formation field in which our life unfolds itself. A new life direction may demand crucial change in our formative imagination. Our usual formative imagery has to be apprehended and appraised in the light of a new life direction and the disposition it demands from us. Imagery should become congenial with the dispositions of the new current life-form. This life-form in turn should be congenial with the dispositions of the foundational and core forms of life.

The process of bringing the imagination into consonance with the dispositions of the foundational and core forms of life demands, at least initially, a formative curbing of one's fantasy and an asceticism or discipline of the imagination. Discipline can help to prevent the erratic ruminations of fantasy life that foster dissonance and disintegration. It also helps us to overcome the hold of formerly helpful images that are no longer in consonance with our new current life-form[12] and with the corresponding disclosures of the foundational life-form in which this current form is rooted.

Consonant formation demands a periodic distancing from our fantasy life and from the concrete dispositions and corresponding situation that threaten to absorb and fixate our formation energy. One means of halting dissonant fantasies and relativizing an overpowering situation is the creation of imaginary situations of diversion. Such diversions may take us momentarily out of our absorption in idiosyncratic fantasies and free us from our absorption in dispositions pertaining to

[12] *Current life form*. Clinical observation compelled the distinction in the process of basic formation, reformation transformation and its counterpart deformation five basic forms of the transcending life: the founding life form, the core form, the current form, the apparent and the actual form. The preformational founding life form is what is given transcendentally, genetically and traditionally. It is the point of departure for any formation of human life whatsoever. This initially pre-empirical and never totally known founding form contains certain unchangeable, consonant constants. These have to be implemented somehow in the empirical-experiential-form directive life of the counselee if it is to gain in (always inadequate) consonance. Their basic implementation happens in the empirical-experiential dispositions of the core form or heart of the counselee, Passing implementations — geared to passing life situations — happen in the current form of his or her life. The apparent form represents the compatible appearance demanded for the counselee's effective functioning in society. Insofar as the appearance is consonant, it represents a true but limited, selective, adaptive expression of those facets of the counselee's founding, core, and current life form that are compatible with effective societal functioning. The actual life form of the counselee is the more or less integrated result of the formational influences of these life forms on the counselee's presence and action in each of her or his actual life situations here and now.

limited manifestations of reality. This liberating function of the consonant imagination by means of periodic diversion can be facilitated by certain so-called servant sources of formation. Travel, movies, television, literature, art and the like, when utilized discriminately, can facilitate this defixation of the usual concentration of the formative imagination.

Fantasy Life and Fantasy Field

We should be cautious lest the use of media for the relaxation of the imagination becomes in reality a means to foster dissonant imagination. The dispositions of dissonant fantasy life are essentially different from those of the consonant imagination, even in diversion. Dissonant imagination tries to escape lastingly the uneventful regularities of daily life. A fantasy life may take over, fed by unchecked desires, flamboyant ambitions and floating aspirations. We may daydream about the extraordinary, the exciting, the novel, the grandiose. Such fantasies lead to dissonant dispositions, dissonant because our transcendent dimension has no way to integrate them in the emergent totality of our congenial and compatible formation. They take us away from our foundational life-form and our concrete formation field. The ordinary checks and balances of transcendent and functional appraisals are not utilized. Dissonant imagination fabricates an unreal formation field, replacing the one that is really ours. It is subtly distorted by our fantasy life.

To elaborate and maintain this dissonant fantasy field and its corresponding dispositional life-form, one must be disposed to labor constantly at the falsification of one's real formation field. At the same time, the dissonant imagination must try to maintain and strengthen a whole constellation of protective dispositions and images. These help us to detach and neutralize in advance all the signs that seem to point in the direction of our real formation field.

A striking example of such dissonant disposition and image formation is that of a pseudo-spiritual life. Its victims may have been exposed to the spiritual writings of the masters, to the lives of gurus and saints, and to spiritual exercises, inspiring encounters, and lectures. Somehow their dissonant imagination managed to concoct all of this information into a fantasy field of sublime spirituality. They have disposed themselves to move, speak and sound as if they were already such masters themselves. They disarm in advance any evidence to the contrary that comes their way. Their performance may be so convincing that even astute people mistake it for the real thing.

Because the fantasy field is borrowed from that of the real masters, it may manifest a coherence, wisdom and beauty of expression that dissonant persons could never have created themselves. Their own absorption in their imaginary role generates an inner conviction that it is all for real. Like any conviction, this one, too, is contagious. Touched by it, we cannot easily unmask bright, eloquent persons, well-trained in spirituality, deeply believing in their own imagined providential mission. Those less bright and informed would have to construct a spiritual fantasy field by their own powers. They are liable to make mistakes that reveal this field more readily as dissonant.

One should not doubt that many fabricators are genuinely convinced of the reality of their imagined formation field. In the near future, the growing interest in spirituality, combined with the scarcity of sufficiently formed and experienced formation counselors, may help multiply such fabrications. One must always suspect such a possibility in excessively enthusiastic persons who claim an extraordinary depth in spiritual living. One should not trust uncritically the usual manifestations of humility. Well-read people know that they should manifest this necessary sign of authenticity. They can borrow its language from their spiritual readings, albeit unintentionally and prefocally.

Temporary Field of Imaginary Diversion

On the one hand, we note the possibility of an enduring imaginary fantasy field misconceived as one's real field of disposition and action. On the other hand, we note the possibility of a temporary field of imaginative diversion conceived as a passing means of bringing gentleness to one's dispositional concentration. Such diversion can help a person to regain relaxation, critical distance and freedom. Examples might be enjoying movies, theater, television programs, concerts, or other entertainment that can alleviate our absorption in strenuous life situations or in dissonant fantasy life.

We should clearly acknowledge that imaginative diversion is only an occasional means to relaxation and distancing from our usual task-oriented dispositions and directives. One should take care that such playful excursions of the imagination do not turn into the main source of those central dispositions and directives that are supposed to guide our daily formation. The images sought should not be the kind that lead irresistibly to inner or outer acts and dispositions that are uncongenial with one's foundational life-form; incompatible with one's basic life situation; lacking compassion for the vulnerability of self and others; and inconsistent with the dispositions of the form tradition to which one is committed. For example, an entertaining novel or movie can fulfill the right conditions whereas promiscuity, brutality, or random destructiveness would not meet the prerequisites.

The formative liberating imagination is marked by its gentle and relaxing effect on our life. No conflicts are created between such diversion dispositions and one's unique life direction. For example, the diversion dispositions of a professional concert pianist should be such that they do not endanger his hands and fingers and the refined sensitivity of his musical mind. He should not develop a diversion disposition for boxing or wrestling. This would endanger the means that sustain the main vocational direction of his life. By the same token, people religiously committed to a celibate life should not cultivate the diversion disposition of watching peep shows as a regular part of their relaxation.

The cultivation of images in one's focal or prefocal attentiveness thus exercises a formative power on one's present and future life. The same is true of the past. For example, the memory image of unjust treatment by a parent may begin to dominate our imagination, as if it represented the whole meaning of life. It becomes a dissonant imagination disposition insofar as it makes us anticipate injustice everywhere. This disposition engenders in turn aggression, overprotection and suspicion.

To reform them, our consonant imagination, guided by appraisal, has to create images that purify the dissonant images from their isolation and totalization. They should be made relative as well as being integrated into the larger reality of our formation field and our transcendent destiny. In the above example, there is no use denying that injustice happened to us in childhood. This experience alerts us to the possibility of injustice later in life. In the light of our real formation field and the mystery of formation, we are able, however, to relativize the experience of injustice. This means that we reduce it to its realistic proportions. The earlier formative event is no longer generalized as the total explanation of life. We begin to appreciate the positive meanings such an experience can have for our formation. The event is placed imaginatively in the context of our formation history as a whole.

The consonant imagination overcomes the tendency of the dissonant imagination to reduce the whole of life and its disclosures to one overwhelming formation event in isolation. The

consonant imagination thus relativizes the totalized events of our formation journey. It integrates them consonantly with the transcendent perspective of the emergent life-form. Consonant imagination can thus be called the servant of the transcendent dimension of life formation. No event should live on in our imagination as a spiritually unappraised and unintegrated event. Such isolation generates a dispositional life dissociated from our deepest life-form and its hesitant emergence. Outside this light, we cannot cope with such totalized events. The dissonant dispositions they generate mislead us. We become confused, fragmented, joyless and desperate. Thus, our journey is arrested, and we lose our direction.

Dissonant Dispositional Identity

Our true identity is never known to us exhaustively. It is hidden in the foundational image of the mystery deep within us. We are called increasingly to disclose this basic image that we are. We have to bring our primordial life-form to light in the way in which we give form to our secondary empirical life-form. This secondary life-form can be known imaginatively and focally; in principle it is open to experience. Hence, we call it empirical. The dispositional life-form is permeated by our imagination, be it consonant or dissonant. Practically, it is both; our dispositional identity is a composition of these two aspects, usually one being in ascendancy, the other in remission.

Some people may allow only their consonant or dissonant dispositional identity access to their experience and imagination. Such one-sidedness leads to dispositions of excessive optimism or pessimism. People may identify themselves totally with their dissonant dispositions. They may mistake this dissonant identity for their foundational identity. They do not realize that they are dealing only with their secondary dispositional identity.

What are the dynamics that account for this identification with our dissonant identity? They are linked with those of the pride-form,[13] or the quasi-foundational form of life, which by its nature is exalted and exalting. The pride-form tries to prostitute our aspiration for consonant dispositions. It suggests exalted form directives and images that are practically unattainable. People may identify themselves with these exalted dispositions and images, and mistake them for disclosures of their foundational life-form. To measure up to such exalted dispositions and imaginations is impossible; they imagine that they can and should realize in life their exalted dispositions. Their whole feeling of form potency and effectiveness depends on this achievement. They feel crushed by any failure to live up to what they feel they are supposed to be. They demonize themselves for this failure. In disgust, they ostracize their weaknesses, mistakes and limited accomplishments. These look pointless to them in the perspective of their grandiose ideals.

By demonizing, banning and isolating their vulnerability from the consonant formation flow, they take these human limits out of the integrative dialogue of the spirit. Outside of this dialogue, identification with one's failure to implement exalted imaginations becomes part of one's

[13] *The pride form*. Clinical observations led to the construct of the contra form. The contra form represents all basically dissonant dispositions, directives, and acts of the counselee. These are rooted in what is hypothesized as a preformational quasi-foundational form of life, here called the pride form. The term 'pride' is not being used in the popular sense of boasting or showing off. These expressions may or may not be consequences of the deeper pride form. The compulsive use of such expressions usually depends on the insecurity quotient of counselees. The deeper pride form as the essential contra form represents their compulsion to go it alone, to diminish contact with the demands and directives of reality outside themselves, to be absolutely self sufficient, to think, plan, feel, act, imagine in as much isolation as possible from the inner and outer spheres of their formation field, insofar as they are not reducible to their insulated intrasphere.

dissonant identity. The same dynamic leads to an identification of all one's consonant dispositions and images with only the exalted ones that proved to be unrealizable because of one's despised limitations. As a result, one's life-form as a whole is demonized. It is appraised as entirely futile, as perfidious to itself, depraved, deficient and destructive. This rejection of one's life-form becomes the basis for negative disposition formation. In the extreme, it can lead to despair and suicidal tendencies.

Adherents of a religious form tradition who are at home in its spiritual idiom may call this self-rejection humility. Humility, however, is a disposition of relaxed openness to who we are foundationally, as a gift of the formation mystery, as a vulnerable composite of consonant and dissonant dispositions, directives and images in mutual dialogue with one another. Hence, in formation science, we often use the term *openness* to refer to the disposition of humility. This realistic openness is a necessary basis of wholesome, consonant life formation.

Dissonant imagination hems us in. It imprisons us in isolated directives and dispositions. The openness of consonant imagination, on the contrary, shares in the flow and the promise of the formation mystery. It always waits in faith, hope and love for a new disclosure of this mystery and its performing epiphany in the great adventure of life. Consonant imagination can always unlock the doors of a formation event that threatens to close us in. It opens us toward the future, toward new becoming. Consonant imagination is, thus, the mother-of-opportunity thinking.

Necessity of Intervening Formative Imagery

By now it may be evident that we cannot understand disposition formation without delving into the vast richness of inner images. They are the bridge between appraisal and disposition. All our appraisals and their expressions are replete with imagery. Hence, to reform our dispositions, we should look not only for the focal-conceptual expressions of our appraisal directives, but for their formative directive meanings as well. Their dynamic power rests mostly in the intervening images. They are our concrete formation source of appraisals. They give flesh and blood to them, as it were. To be sure, a lot of inner talk goes on before the appraisal ends up in a decision of the will to give form to concrete acts and subsequent dispositions. But this reasoning about formative events is supported by images of which we may be aware only vaguely.

We never appraise without an image, no matter how faint and remote it may be. This unavoidable formative imagery is at least passive. We may undergo the process of image formation unwittingly, without paying attention to it, or we may actively participate in the process, either by receiving or giving form. During such participation we induce some images or reform others in such a way that they may have an effect on our action and disposition formation.

For instance, I may have negative memory images about dieting that constantly remind me of its unpleasant aspects. My doctor may tell me that, due to chronic disease, I should develop a lifetime disposition for a certain selection of foods. I appraise this advice intellectually and decide to follow it. However, I do not reform my prefocal adverse images in regard to this diet. It is only when I make them focal, ponder their inhibitive impact, and replace them with vivid images in favor of this diet that lasting success becomes possible.

Moreover, in the beginning of the formation of this food selection and taste disposition, I must practice the act of dieting in my imagination before I find myself at the table. This may help, but it is still not sufficient. I must complement it with a progressive exposure to tempting foods that excite my customary taste dispositions. In the face of each one of them, I must renew and deepen

my new negative appraisal and imagination in reference to the food selection recommended by a physician or nutritionist.

My imagination may be sustained in this endeavor by the vivid example of others who have already developed the desired selection and taste disposition. Their observable incarnation of these dispositions presents my imagination with concrete images which interaction is interformative. Among other things, it can facilitate my own imagination formation.

Dynamic Principles of Formation Science and Disposition Formation

At the end of this chapter, we may ask ourselves where to locate the formative imagination in the intraformative process of disposition formation.

Our description of formation dispositions, their initiation, maintenance, development, reformation or deactivation is rooted in the dynamic principles of the science of foundational human formation. A relevant principle here is that of the incarnational formative tendency. This principle maintains that any act of formative transcendent or functional appraisal and volition tends to incarnate itself in our life as a whole. This penchant results in form directives, which tend to form in turn suitable images, memories and anticipations, with their attendant feelings and strivings. Subsequently, these form directives give form to the vital, glandular and neuromuscular systems of one's body.

Form directives issued by appraisal and volition and invested in concrete imagery prepare these systems, via the imagination, affecting mid-brain and brainstem, for corresponding action. Next, they give form to the action itself in the formation field. Finally, by reiteration of these actions, they may give form to lasting form dispositions. According to this principle, every formative image contains in itself a formative dynamic inclination. It is the penchant of this image to incarnate itself concretely in one's process of formation throughout life.

We can strengthen this dynamic tendency in service of the formation of the consonant dispositions we hope to cultivate. A first means is the judicious use of our appraisal potency. We can deliberately focus this power of appreciation of motives for this disposition to appraise and deepen our appreciation of them. Similarly, we foster appreciation for effective ways to attain its realization. Once this formative appraisal enlightens our will, it may come to a decision in favor of the disposition. Then we stimulate our functional, executive will to incarnate the appraisal and chosen form directives in memory images, new images and anticipatory images that may facilitate and motivate more concretely the chosen acts and dispositions.

These formative motivations and images engender corresponding feelings and strivings. The latter may or may not tap into our vital passions. If they happen to be linked with our passions, their power is increased accordingly. The effective reiteration of the subsequent acts intensifies by formative feedback the original appraisals, choices, directives, images, motivations, feelings and strivings. It is this reiteration, combined with the deepening of motivation and feeling, that progressively establishes a disposition.

Formation science holds that formative feeling generates incipient formative desire and striving. The stronger the formative feeling, the stronger the striving. Such formative feelings are aroused and enlivened by pertinent images and symbols. They present us with vital roots for lasting dispositions.

There is, thus, a dynamic intraformative relationship among formative appraisals, decisions, directives, images, feelings, desires, strivings, motivations, actions and dispositions. These intraformative components facilitate and strengthen one another mutually by their continual

interaction. If one of the links in the chain is weak, it may affect the whole chain. This diminishes structurally the solidity of the disposition it tries to generate. In the case of ineffective disposition formation, we should try to discover which link is underdeveloped and diminishes our effectiveness. Once we discover this frail component, we should work at its invigoration. Systematic exercises may be helpful. More often than not, it is the formative imagination itself that needs to be awakened and exercised.

This chapter has explored the function of formative imagination. We should add here that people may experience moments or periods of higher, purely receptive transcendent formation in which all thought and imagination is silenced. In such privileged moments of our journey, we are called to dwell in wordless and imageless presence to the formation mystery. Imagination still remains necessary for the concrete implementation in our life of the inspiration received in imageless contemplation. Moreover, one must periodically return to words and images when imageless presence weakens in one's spiritual life. The role of formative imagination is complemented, sustained and expanded in turn by formative memory and anticipation.

*This paper is a slight adaptation of *Formative Imagination and Disposition Formation* which is Chapter 7 in Volume Two of my Five Volume Series on Formative Spirituality. The subtitle of this volume is *Human Formation*. It deals mainly with the formation of dispositions. The book is based on the science of formation and its clinical observations. (Adrian van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality: Vol. I, Fundamental Formation; Vol. II, Human Formation; Vol. III, Formation of the Human Heart; Vol. IV, Scientific Formation; Vol. V, Transcendent Formation*. New York, N.Y.: Crossroad Publishing Co. The first four volumes have been published, the fifth one is in preparation.)

Formation science is an empirical-experiential human science. The formal object of its research and clinical practice is the dynamics, conditions, and consequences of the process of the transcendent formation, reformation, and transformation of life. The science takes into account data and theories of other human and social sciences and disciplines relevant to its own clinical observations in the realm of formation, formation therapy, transcendence therapy, counseling, and direction. The possible contributions of formation traditions, too, are critically appraised.

Formation science, *as science,* cannot base itself on the revelations that underlie religious formation traditions or on the founding intuitions of the formation traditions of non-religious ideologies. However, it can be used as an ancillary science by these formation traditions in a way similar to that of the discipline of philosophy to ideological or theological faith traditions that underlie formation traditions.

The following footnotes may facilitate the understanding of some of the unfamiliar terms of the science as well as that of its underlying Formation Anthropology.

Chapter II

Imagination and Decision-Making in Van Kaam's Theory of Human Formation

Carole Riley

This paper seeks to situate imagination and decision-making within the framework of the relatively new discipline of formative spirituality. This was developed by Adrian van Kaam, C.S.Sp., at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., over the past three decades[1] and is directed primarily to a study of the transcultural, universal foundations of human formation and its Christian articulation.

The new discipline of formative spirituality is related somewhat to the recent European pedagogical development of andragogy. This field focuses primarily on the meanings, values, dynamics and conditions of human formation as they manifest themselves in people of all ages, stages of development and cultures. As a dialectical-integrational discipline, formative spirituality directs itself to the study of the foundational movements that underlie all formation dynamics, conditions or problems. It develops a frame of reference or infrastructure in dialogue with such other sciences as philosophy and the human sciences. Within this foundational frame, it integrates other relevant contributions from such disciplines as medicine or pedagogy.

Nature and Location of Formative Spirituality

The theory of formative spirituality sees each individual as engaged in the give-and-take of formation, defined as the "unconscious process of gradual realization of the characteristic form each living being is tending toward in accordance with its nature and condition."[2] The main presupposition of this discipline is that the human has the ability to transcend purely deterministic vital functional laws that rule the unconscious and the micro/macro cosmos. The emphasis is on the spiritual ability of the person, his or her transcendent ability.[3] Hence the terms `spirituality' understood as "human spirit" and `formative' understood as "form giving and form receiving." The human spirit is always giving and receiving form from lived experience. More fully, this discipline posits five basic principles which can be formulated as follows:

(a) the principle of formability — we give form to and receive form from every person, event and thing in our life;

(b) the principle of ongoing formation — life is not static, but dynamic;

(c) formation field principle — our life is in constant dialogue with people, events, personal history, feelings, hopes and the ultimate Mystery that forms our lives;

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[1] A history of the development of formative spirituality as a discipline and science is found in Adrian van Kaam's "Scientific Formation," *Formative Spirituality*, Vol. 4, (New York: Crossroad, 987), pp. 80-96.

[2] "Formation," *Studies in Formative Spirituality*, Vol. I:i, p. 137.

[3] In pursuit of this formal object, spiritual formation, formative spirituality focuses its attention on spiritual or foundationally human formation as it appears concretely: namely, in the concrete formation events that make up everyday life situations. Van Kaam, himself, employed transcendent intuitive imagination when he hypothetically deduced principles from the intuition of *formation* as the central dynamic of universe, world, culture, and human experience (R. Byrne, unpublished dissertation, 10).

(d) formation-tradition principle — humans are formed through traditions of language, ritual, custom, artistry, etc.;

(e) maintenance of form potency principle — we endeavor to be competent and cultivate self-esteem.

These principles form the basis of the discipline of formative spirituality and provide a brief overview of the dynamics: working to unfold our uniqueness at every stage of our formation. Where does formation takes place; how is it that a person grows in spiritual living, spirituality or moral decision-making? Spiritual formation takes place in a field of formation diagrammed below.

Formation-Polarity Diagram

Self — **World Mystery Of Formation Situation** — **Other**

Using the paradigm of the formation polarity chart, we observe that the center of the field is not the self but the mystery of Formation which, van Kaam believes, permeates the entire field. The concept of the dialogical formation field underlying the discipline emphasizes the social dimension. In this regard formative spirituality differs from traditions that focus mainly on interiority and the discernment of spirits.

The polarity concept of foundational life formation regards one quarter of a full empirical life development as inner formation while three quarters are regarded as social formation. Our values are shaped by our interaction with others (interformational sphere) by our immediate family, church, community (situational sphere) and by our mediated cosmic and cultural world (mondial sphere).

As persons, we operate simultaneously on three dimensions in each given situation. We are vital, feeling persons, who function and manage our lives. The spirit or transcendent dimension more and more permeates our feeling and functioning as we form and reform our dispositions, imaginations and habits. Part of the human developmental task involves the permeation of the vital and functional dimensions of the self by the transcendent or spiritual dimension. Each of these three dimensions flows from our rootedness in our socio-historical and cultural background. This field is not static, and we are constantly influenced by the dynamics and directives which emerge from this field.

The Central Activities of Formation

In the central spiritual-activity habits, dispositions and attitudes are formed or reformed through four processes of discernment and decision-making, namely, apprehension, appraisal, affirmation and application. Apprehension and appraisal are the work of the mind. Affirmation and application involve the will. Both mind and will are served by the auxiliary powers of memory, imagination and anticipation.

Apprehension

The first step in decision-making, according to van Kaam, is apprehension which involves our perception or seeing. We cannot think, evaluate or act upon any disposition without first looking, noticing or perceiving the directives or messages which come to us from our field. Directives come from ourselves, others, the situation and the world. We prioritize them differently according to our level of attentiveness, our age or temperament.

Distinctively human or spiritual formation requires the task of conscientization,[4] that is, the process of raising to consciousness the directives at work in our formation field. This apprehension of the directives that are actually shaping our lives in consonance, or misshaping us in dissonance, is the necessary first step in the process of authentic decision-making. when we talk of crisis, our need to change a behavior or a felt moral imperative, we have already *apprehended* the "clue" or directive and are ready for the second phase of the *process*, appraisal.

Appraisal

Seeing and perceiving directives of our actual life formation leads us to think about or *appraise* them, van Kaam affirms the importance of the appraisal process in the ongoing formation of human life:

Our critical intelligence drives us to ask formation questions and to search for the right answers. In this asking and searching, the disposition of formative thinking develops. This deepens our power of reflection on events, their meanings, obstacles and facilitating conditions. The act of reflection on formation is gradually perfected, corrected, elaborated and refined. It gives rise to increasingly reliable methods of critical evaluation and validation of insights and findings . . . (one) can develop these by reflection. The inclination to appraisal must be fostered by the mind.[5]

The inclination to appraisal must be fostered by the mind.

Formative appraisal is the work of our mind as formative. Its appraisal potency is twofold: it is both transcendent and functional . . . . Appraisal by the transcendent and functional mind is not sufficient to bring us to a final decision. It needs the assistance of another power: the transcendent and functional will.[6]

The possibility of appraisal is created through the willingness to distance the self from the daily preoccupations of life as well as through the ability to recollect one's destabilized ego for intentional interior activity. It is on the strength of the ego, grounded in the transcendent spirit, that critical appraisal and disposition formation are accomplished.[7] Simply, one must become recollected enough to give the relatively detached perspective that critical appraisal and disposition formation require.

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[4] "Conscientization," *Studies*, Vol. I:I, p. 149.

[5] "Formative Thinking," *Studies*, Vol. I:I, p. 153.

[6] van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality*. Vol. 2. *Human Formation*. (New York: Crossroads Publications, 1985), pp. 66-67.

[7] van Kaam, *The Transcendent Self*, (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1979, pp. 27-28.

The actual dynamics of appraisal are at the service of consonant decision-making: namely, decisions that will foster the unfolding of our harmonic life. These dynamics are a quest for the formative or reformative significance of the values, meanings, forces, drives, motives, etc., that shape our lives in harmony or undermine our lives in dissonance.

In recollection, the appraising mind utilizes the powers of memory in the service of appraisal and consonant disposition formation. Through the mediation of formative, focal recall, memory can influence the mechanism of appraisal as can no other agent.[8]

We can decisively influence our actions and dispositions by means of formative focal recall. In regard to the apprehension, appraisal, choice and implementation of a unified meaning for the whole of our life's formation, our modality of formative memory can be instrumental as can no other formative power. It enables our mind and will to take into account the past shared and personal formation events that gave form to our life. Because of this memory we can develop new integrative meanings for the whole of life that grant a currently significant configuration to both past and present formative events.[9]

In quest of the consonant life, the appraising mind questions the directives brought to consciousness. It questions these according to four criteria: congeniality, compatibility, compassion and competence. Consider, for example, the situation of a mother of three children with a history of employment in education. She is offered a teaching position at the local primary school. Let us imagine ourselves as this mother. What are some forces in my formation field that pull me to accept the position — the need for qualified teachers, the appeal of working outside the home, extra income? Other considerations may direct me away from taking the position — the needs of my children, the limitations of my personal freedom, imposition upon leisure time.

Apprehending as many concrete directives as possible, I, as this mother, now employ criteria that will enable me to judge which course of action is more appropriate for my distinctively human or spiritual formation. I would reflect as follows:

a) Is the teaching position *congenial* with who I am? Does it fit with my vital make-up? Do I have the stamina? Is it something I really want to do? Will I like it? Is it what I'm called to do at this time?

b) Is it *compatible* with my familial and other significant relationships in my life? How will the children react? Will my husband need to assume more than his share of the family management? Does he object to or confirm the teaching position?

c) I appraise my vulnerability and situation with *compassion*. How will my teaching affect my life situation? Will it put too much strain on my family at this particular juncture in our history? Will the school responsibilities be a joyful and energizing situation?

d) Will I be a *competent* teacher and a *competent* mother? Am I *able* to teach? Am I really any good at teaching, or am I escaping boredom?

Reflecting on responses to the appraisal questions, the mind moves toward the act of judgment. Despite contradiction and confusion, the transcendent mind, as it were, "sees" the truth of the situation and judges what the prudent course of action is. For example, I, as the mother in

[8] In his treatment of memory, imagination and anticipation, van Kaam seems heavily influenced by Aristotle and St. Augustine, especially as narrated by Paul Ricoeur in *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1 (*Temos et recit*, tome 1, Paris: Edition du Deuil, 1983.) Another potential inspiration is the writing of Roy Schafer, specifically, *The Analytic* Attitude, (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

[9] van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality*, Vol. 2, p. 147.

the preceding scenario, decide that, all factors considered, the right thing to do is to refuse the offer and work within the home.

Affirmation

The third step in the discernment process, affirmation, is an activity of the will as transcendent. The will as transcendent is our openness to reality on levels beyond the mere functional vital and historically conditioned meanings and motivations experienced in life. The person, as transcendent will, is open and responsive to more than egoistic, organismic, and culturally satisfying motives and meanings. It is open and responsive to those transcendent directives that evoke human life on the spiritual or distinctively human level.

Values such as love, communion, justice, and peace transcend the apprehension and appraisal of the merely egoistic mind. They disclose themselves to the formative transcendent mind and are chosen in the depths of transcendent will. Affirmation is an intentional "yes" to directives judged as consonant from this transcendent perspective. It is the act, often neglected in functionalistic society, of quiet, interior acquiescence in and adherence to the good, true and beautiful. Van Kaam calls this act of affirmation, intentional wholeness. We will the good, express our "yes," and now move to execution or application of the decision by the functional will.

Application

Application, the fourth step of the decision-making process, is primarily the work of the functional will. Rooted in its intentionality toward consonance, transcendent will moves toward execution or implementation. It employs strategies, projects and plans to carry out, in all levels of life, what the transcendent will has affirmed and that upon which the heart has set itself.

The act of application is often frustrated in actual life experience. For example, because of personal limitation and oppressive situations, we may not be able to implement the decision of the transcendent will and fail. Failure, however, to carry out our intention does not necessarily vitiate our integrity, for transcendent willing itself (affirmation) is the very core of spiritual and moral decision-making.

This inner work of apprehension, appraisal, affirmation and application stands at the center of life’s development. Spiritual life, centered in transcendent mind and will, is therefore at the very I core of the human enterprise. It is not life apart, but simply the whole of life permeated by the human spirit, that is, by the apprehending and appraising mind and the affirming and applying will.

Imagination and Intraspheric Powers of Formation

Formation theory describes what it calls auxiliary intraspheric powers that penetrate and animate the central intraspheric powers of mind and will. These intraspheric powers are memory, imagination and anticipation.

According to van Kaam the function of formative imagination is to concretize in images the past to be remembered and the future to be anticipated. Imagination accomplishes its task by creating fictitious formation situations and by adding fictitious aspects to the perception of a real formation situation. The efficacy of formative imagination as a directive-incarnational source is rooted in the tendency of the human person-in-formation to react and respond to such "fictitious formation situations as if they were real, even on the level of unconscious organismic reactions."

The formative power of imagination is due to the power of images and symbols on all of one's incarnational formation and deformation efforts. From the viewpoint of formative incarnation, images are far more powerful than concepts. Most of our life of formative incarnation is guided by conscious, preconscious or unconscious imagery.

Imagery can exert either a formative or deformative influence on the human person. It affects all the dimensions of the self. We therefore can speak of historical, vital, functional and transcendent/pneumatic imagination. Van Kaam claims that in the processes of forming and reforming dispositions, imagination can be "a person's greatest friend or enemy." It can channel the flow of foundational energy in formative directions by means of formative concrete images and symbols; it can also dissipate the energy flow in deformative imagination and ruminations.[10]

Because the imagination is susceptible to deformation, the person-in-formation must engage in an ongoing appraisal of the images which form the formation field, namely, the inner and outer milieu in which the person dwells. We may remember that the criteria for appraisal are congeniality, compatibility, compassion and competence. If a particular image or confluence of images is appraised to be deformative, a reformation of imagery is necessary. Due to the power of imagination in a person's overall project of formation, the reformation of imagery is most often connected with the task of reformation in other areas of life. The always ongoing differentiation and growth from one type of life form to another current[11] life form demands similar differentiation and growth in the images andsymbols which inspire and sustain a person's life direction.

A crucial change in one's life direction and formation too demands a reformation of the life of formative imagination. Formative imagery has to be apprehended and appraised in the light of the new life direction; imagery should become congenial with the new current life form, which in turn should be congenial with the foundational (pre-empirical) and core (empirical) forms of life.[12]

The process of bringing imagination into consonance with the foundational and core forms of life demands, "at least initially, a formative asceticism or discipline of the imagination."[13] Discipline can help to prevent absolutization and fixation of images which inevitably culminate in deformation. As a preventive measure against fixation in the imagination, van Kaam suggests moments of "relativizing relaxation."

Transcendent life formation demands periodic distancing from concrete life situations that threaten to absorb and fixate one's formation energy. One means of relativizing the overpowering situation is the creation of imaginary situations that take one momentarily out of one's absorption in some limited manifestation of reality. This liberating function of formative imagination can be sustained by certain servant powers of this function; for example, travel, movies, TV, literature, art, etc., can facilitate this defixating of effort of the formative imagination.[14]

Caution must be exercised, lest a person use the power of imagination as a mechanism of denial and repression, seeking an unrealistic escape from the realities of daily situated existence. Van Kaam describes persons who employ their imagination in such a deformative way.[15]

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[10] 10. *Studies*, Vol. II:I, p. 123.

[11] The actual form, that we are empirically, has three facets: the *core* form which is the deepest unfolding of our pre-empirical foundational life form; the *apparent* form which adapts appropriately to protect the privacy of the core form; and the *current* form which strives to make life congruent and compatible with the age and stage of development in response to our daily interactions with people, events and things. *Studies*, Vol. I:l, p. 146.

[12] "Reformation of Formative Imagination," *Studies*, Vol. II:I, p. 124.

[13] "Formative Imagination and the Unique Life Form*, " Studies*, Vol. II:l, p. 125.

[14] "Formative Imagination and Relativizing Relaxation," *studies*, Vol. II:l, p. 12.

[15] One aspect of this deformative use of imagination is similar to Karen Horney's "Search for Glory" in *Neurosis and Growth*, (New York: Norton & Co. Inc., 1950), pp 22-24.

S/he tries to escape its [life's] uneventful routines by living a fantasy life fed by unchecked desires, flamboyant ambitions, needs and drives. S/he begins to hunger after the extraordinary, the not-everyday, the exciting, the novel, the grandiose, the impressive, the latest, the newest.[16]

In order to avoid the pitfalls of using imagination in a deformative manner, van Kaam establishes three conditions under which a tendency to escape from an absorbing life situation via imagination can be tested:

(1) This function of the formative imagination should be acknowledged and used only as a temporary means of passing diversion and playfulness. One should especially watch that such a playful excursion of the imagination does not turn into a source of central formation directives of one's real life.

(2) The images evoked should not be of such a nature that lead irresistibly to inner or outer acts that are not congenial with the foundational human . . . life form, incompatible with one's foundational life situation, and uncompassionate in regard to others.

(3) Formative liberating imagination is marked by its gentle and relaxing effect on the person-in-formation without creating conflicts between the imagery and the foundational formation principles of the person's life.[17]

The power of formative imagination facilitates detachment from potentially all-absorbing situations. This detachment fosters the process of disposition reformation. Formative imagination is also an important instrument in the attachment phase of the reformation process. Van Kaam maintains that a person's conscious and consistent evocation of images has a profound effect on attitudes and behavior. He articulates this effect when he defines the meditative cultivation of formative imagery as follows:

The cultivation of formative images in one's focused and pre-conscious attentiveness by dwelling on them in such a way that they exercise an intensified and prolonged formative power on one's present and future life.[18]

Thus, by repeatedly imagining the successful implementation of the desired dispositions and the acts which comprise it, the person can strengthen the power of the new disposition. Conversely, the imaginative evocation of undesired deformative dispositions strengthens their potentially dominating power; thereby, increasing the obstacles to the successful incarnation of the formative dispositions strengthens their potentially dominating power; thereby, increasing the obstacles to the successful incarnation of the formative disposition.

Indulging in them [former undesirable modes of presence] in his imagination can only detract from the force and growing unity of his personality. He cannot deny their hold on his life, but he can decide not to foster their development.[19]

[16] van Kaam, *In Search of Spiritual Identity*, (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1975), p. 191.
[17] *Studies*, Vol. Il:l, p. 125.
[18] "Meditative Cultivation of Formative Imagination," *Studies*, Vol. Il:l, p. 125.
[19] van Kaam, *Religion and Personality*, (Denville, New Jersey: Dimension Books, 1980), p. 19.

Van Kaam's theory is similar to that of William Lynch who defines imagination as "the sum total of all the forces and faculties in the human that are brought to bear upon our concrete world to form proper images of it."[20]

That which is suggested here is the necessity of exchanging mere ego-identity (the Heideggerian "fallenness" and van Kaam's notion of "functionality") for an ego-decentering shift to dominance by an "authentic" or "transcendent" self. We submit that the appraisal mechanism alluded to above, which involves critical examination fostered by formative mind and will, is effected at each stage by the power of imagination. One must become recollected enough to gain some sort of detached perspective, for one imagines one's future, in the light of the present and past.

The formative mind utilizes formative memory, imagination and anticipation in service of appraisal and consonant disposition formation. It will be readily apparent that the formative imagination has been instrumental in the conceptualization of the dispositions. Formative memories that "have given form to our lives in the past . . . and continue to give form to them in the present"[21] are the repositories of such functional and transcendent images.

Calling on inner images supplied by our formation field, one may structure new dispositions in light of the appraisal of such images. One may also decide to revise certain present dispositions should the act of appraisal indicate the advisability of doing so.

Summary

Formative spirituality presents a comprehensive framework within which imagination and decision-making take place. Within van Kaam's theory the term spirituality is used to define that in us which makes us truly and fully human -- our human spirit. Primarily, manifested in our mind and will, these unique and essentially human and spiritual faculties are employed in disposition-formation and reformation, assisted by the auxiliary powers of memory, anticipation and imagination. The formative mind apprehends and appraises while the functional and transcendent mind affirms and applies any decision.

The intraspheric auxiliary powers of memory, imagination and anticipation play a key role in any appraisal since the imaging of the past (memory) and the imaging of a possible future (anticipation) are very strong directives and dynamics to be considered in each decision-making process. All decisions have a three-dimensional quality. We decide in the present influenced by the past and in the hope that the decision will lead to our good.

The formation field concept, where socio-historic as well as social influences are kept in a healthy tension, helps insure that no polarity becomes the center of a fixation which would lead to an unbalanced decision. Formative spirituality admirably provides a theory which is both comprehensive and, yet, the essence of simplicity.

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[20] William Lynch, *Image of Hope: Imagination as Healer of the Hopeless*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), p. 243.

[21] van Kaam, *Formative Spirituality*, Vol. 2, p. 143.

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Chapter III
Feminine Imagination and the Ethics of Care

Eva-Maria Simms

. . . the failure of women to fit existing models of human growth may point to a problem in the representation, a limitation in the conception of human condition, an omission of certain truths about life. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice*[1]

One of the current tasks in psychology is to rethink our theories of human development from the perspective of the development of the woman. At the heart of my inquiry is the puzzling knot of gender, conscience and imagination. I want to suggest a rereading of Erikson's phallic stage in the development of the female child. A reinterpretation of the Oedipal struggle leads to a changed understanding of the virtue of the imagination, as Erikson calls the psychological strength gained from this stage.[2] Imagination is an essential aspect of a feminine ethics, and I will develop some initial ideas about feminine imagination and its place in culture.

The Culture of the Other

An undercurrent in some of Freud's lectures and papers is a running debate he has with some of his female followers, who apparently attended his lectures and felt offended by Freud's negative characterization of women. Freud claims that women are conventionally secretive and dishonest;[3] that they are more passive in their behavior and in their goals; that masochism is typically feminine;[4] that their superego is less developed and independent, which makes them less important in their culture;[5] that their only cultural contribution is braiding and weaving, which have very little to do with the discovery and invention of cultural history;[6] that women have less sense of justice because their main motivation is envy; and that their capacity for sublimation is very restricted.[7]

Freud tries to deflate feminists' objectives by implying that their rejection of his interpretation of a woman's organic inferiority is a symptom of their own castration complex.[8] In *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud sketches the relationship between woman and culture.

The women soon come into opposition to the trends of culture and spread their delaying and hindering influence. These are the same women who through the claims of their love initially laid the foundations for culture. The women represent the interests of the family and of sexual life; the work of culture has become more and more the affair of men. It culture has become more and more the affair of men. It poses them tasks that are increasingly difficult and urges them toward sublimation of their instincts, which women are hardly capable of. Since man (*der Mensch*) does

[1] Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1982).
[2] Erik Erikson H. *Identity: Youth and Crisis* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1968).
[3] Sigmund Freud, *Gesammelte Werke*, V (London: Imago Publishing Co. Ltd., 1943), p. 50.
[4] *Ibid*., XV, p. 123.
[5] *Ibid*., p. 139.
[6] *Ibid*., p. 142.
[7] *Ibid*., p. 144.
[8] *Ibid*., XIV, p. 522.

not have infinite quantities of psychic energy, he must fulfill his tasks through a task oriented distribution of libido. What he uses up for cultural purposes he mainly draws from women and from sexual life. The continuous community with men and his dependence on the relationship with them alienates him even from his task as a husband and father. Hence through the demands of culture woman sees herself pushed into the background and enters into a relationship of enmity to it.[9]

Freud's bias is obvious: man, the human being, is masculine, a slip of the pen which in Freud's German text is even more apparent. Culture is threatened by women and the family, who are trying to delay and hinder the progress of civilization by luring the male away from his cultural projects. Woman is unable to sublimate her libido and channel it into politics and technology. The love and the attachment of the family are subversive to progress, so the culture Freud speaks of stands in opposition to the woman's concerns. She responds with enmity.

But, there is a different way to read this passage. Much is unspoken, but we can still hear echoes of a feminine other behind Freud's words. What in his perspective seems passive and unproductive reveals itself as a determined position when seen through the eyes of the woman. We find her standing back, refusing to participate in a culture that excludes family and love. Her values arise from attachment to her people, not from a longing for infinite progress. From a reflective distance she watches the fraternity of sons and their dangerous technological games. Her culture is the culture of the other, and it threatens to invade and disturb the culture of the male by the very claim she has on his heart: she is his mother, his wife, his daughter.

Imagination: The Phallic Model

Erik Erikson's work has expanded the psychoanalytic model of psychosexual development. Like Freud he calls the third stage in the development of the child the "phallic stage," and he discusses the psychological struggle of the child during the oedipal phase as one between initiative and guilt. The psychosocial strength, or the virtue, which the child acquires when he resolves the crisis of this stage is the capacity to imagine himself taking up the roles that his culture offers. Erikson puts it into the phrase: "I am what I can imagine I will be."[10]

Richard Knowles[11] has expanded Erikson's model of development to include the aspects of the self that go beyond the concerns of the ego. Hope, will, imagination, competence, fidelity, love, care, and wisdom are existential moments of the authentic self, which correspond to Erikson's "virtues" or "psycho-social strengths." For the third stage of development, however, Knowles substitutes the term "imagination" for Erikson's term "purpose." The phallic issues of Erikson's model are interpreted as issues of movement, initiative, and ego-direction, which are "being gathered around the central theme of the imagination."[12]

I agree with Knowles that the issue of the imagination is a central aspect of the oedipal resolution. However, Knowles, in his expansion of Erikson's theories, also incorporates Erikson's bias into his conception of the imagination. Erikson has inherited Freud's prejudice that the male child is the psychological norm for a description and interpretation of human development. The *Phallic* stage of the boy is Erikson's model for the development of both sexes. He writes:

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[9] *Ibid*., p. 463, my translation.

[10] Erikson, p. 122.

[11] Richard T. Knowles, *Human Development and Human Possibility. Erickson in the Light of Heidegger* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986).

[12] *Ibid*., p. 86.

The *intrusive mode*, dominating much of the bahavior of this stage, characterizes a variety of configurationally "similar" activities and fantasies. These include (1) the intrusion into space by vigorous locomotion; (2) the intrusion into the unknown by consuming curiosity; (3) the intrusion into other people's ears and minds by the aggressive voice; (4) the intrusion upon or into other bodies by physical attack; (5) and, often most frightening, the thought of the phallus intruding the female body.

This, therefore, is called the *phallic stage* in the theory of infantile sexuality.[13]

The image of the intruding phallus is for Erikson the matrix for interpreting the psychological issues of this stage. Physical movement, mental inquisitiveness, and the questioning voice are subsumed under the intrusive mode, together with explicit physical aggression and fantasies of the sex act. Erikson does not offer a separate model for the behavior of the girl (there is no "vaginal" or "inner space" stage). She, too, is seen through the phallic model, which certainly does not flatter her. While the little boy develops his masculine initiative with the emphasis on "'making' by head-on attack," in the girl feminine initiative becomes "catching"; which can either be an "aggressive snatching" or the activity of making herself attractive and endearing.[14]

I think that Erikson's phallic stage does not do justice to the development of the girl, and that it calls for a reinterpretation of girl's the psycho-social struggle during the oedipal phase. To movement, aggressive initiative, and ego-direction, we have to add the specific qualities that the girl develops. These, too, can be grouped around the virtue of the imagination, and they add a new dimension to Knowles' existential understanding of the imagination. Since the figure of the boy led Erikson and Knowles to their insights about the imagination, I suggest we follow the figure of the girl to explore the feminine side of initiative and imagination.

Gender and Ethics

"The great governor of initiative is conscience," says Erikson,[15] and in traditional psychoanalytic theory the oedipal stage is the nodal point for gender differentiation, internalization of objects, appearance of the superego, and introduction of cultural values and ideals. Gender, conscience and imagination are inextricably interwoven. Nancy Chodorow[16] has suggested an alternative model for understanding the oedipal situation of the girl and the formation of the feminine self. Both boys and girls are usually mothered by a woman who is the object of the child's preoedipal attachment. During the oedipal stage this attachment must undergo a change which differs according to the gender of the child. While for the boy separation and differentiation from the mother and identification with the father are the core issues, the girl retains her primary attachment to her mother and includes the father in a triadic relationship. Chodorow writes:

Girls emerge from this period with a basis for "empathy" built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not. Girls emerge with a stronger basis for experiencing another's needs or

[13] Erikson, p. 116.
[14] *Ibid*., p. 118.
[15] *Ibid*., p. 119.
[16] Nancy Chodorow, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

feelings as one's own (or of thinking that one is so experiencing another's needs and feelings). Furthermore, girls do not define themselves in terms of the denials of preoedipal relational modes to the same extent as do boys. Therefore, regression to these modes tends not to feel as much a basic threat to their ego. From very early, then, because they are parented by a person of the same gender, . . . girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object-world and as differently oriented to their inner object-world as well.[17]

Empathy, continuity and relatedness to the world are key achievements of the girl's struggle during the oedipal stage. We could call them, in Erikson's terminology, psycho-social strengths. While the boy's sense of initiative is characterized by aggression and intrusion, the girl's initiative is empathic and attempts to establish connections between herself and the world. Her social behavior imitates and initiates relational situations. In Erikson's model, initiative is checked by guilt, and the boy must work through the crisis of guilt as it attaches itself to the child's secret aggressive and erotic fantasies. The superego and a sense of conscience is a direct result of this struggle. The crisis for the girl, however, lies not so much in the rivalry and aggression she feels for the parent of the same sex, but in differentiating herself from the mother without losing her love. We could call her struggle during the genital stage empathy vs. undifferentiation.

Chodorow[18] suggests that her relationship with the father supports the girl's striving after differentiation, since he gives her a sense of separateness. The father-daughter relationship provides neither the narcissistic unity nor the threat to the self which the preoedipal mother-child dyad poses. Because the girl does not lose her attachment to the mother, her superego is less rigid and punitive than the boy's. It is, as Chodorow says, "more open to persuasion and the judgment of others."[19] While at the extreme the male conscience can become implacable and overly rigid, the female can become dependent on the superego strictures of another.

The female child's uncivilized urges, then, are held in check not be fear of punishment, but through the empathic relationship with the other and the fear of losing love. Since the girl's superego is based on identification with the mother, and if the mother, as Freud[20] argues, stands in enmity against the project of culture, the female superego is not so much a representative of *the law* and the values of culture, as of the subtle rules that protect and make possible personal relationships.

Carol Gilligan's[21] research suggests that gender influences the moral choices we make. She contrasts the male *ethics of rights* with a female *ethics of responsibility and care* and shows how women's moral imagination focuses on relationships and the value of inter-subjective connectedness. She writes that the ideal of care, which characterizes the feminine self in its ethical aspect, is "an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone."[22]

Even in Freud, Gilligan discovers intimations of a feminine moral conception which is different from the "primary mutual hostility of human beings" which Freud usually regards as the foundation of human relationships.[23] Although Freud never properly developed the concept of the

[17] *Ibid*., p. 167.
[18] *Ibid*.
[19] *Ibid*., p. 169.
[20] Freud, XIV.
[21] Gilligan.
[22] *Ibid*., p. 62.
[23] *Ibid*., p. 46.

"altruistic urge," he had to concede that the love of a mother for her child does not fit into the standard pattern of aggression. Gilligan comments:

Throughout Freud's work women remain the exception to his portrayal of relationships, and they sound a continuing theme, of an experience of love which, however described — as narcissistic or hostile to civilization — does not appear to have separation and aggression as its base. In this alternate light the self appears neither in isolation screaming for help nor lost in fusion with the entire world as a whole, but bound in an indissoluble mode of relationship that is observably different but hard to describe.[24]

This interpretation of Freud leads her to suggest an implicit alternate model of human development, which "leads not through aggression to separation but through differentiation to interdependence."[25] The self, then, that lives according to the ethics of care is a self that seeks differentiation and interdependence instead of individuation and personal achievement.

Imagination: The Relational Model

My attempt to reinterpret the development of the girl independent of Erikson's phallic model clears a space for investigating the existential mode of the imagination, which Knowles[26] has shown to be connected with the genital stage. Let us call the feminine model which parallels the phallic stage the relational model.

Within the phallic model imagination has the function of projecting the self into the future, as we can gather from Erikson's[27] summary of the achievement of this stage: "I am what I can imagine I will be." He interprets this in terms of the child's discovery of the role models his society offers and his proclivity for taking a place in his culture's future. For Knowles,[28] the imagination is closely connected with creativity, intelligence, and the ability to initiate action. We could say that the imagination is the transcendent moment of our projects, meaning that we can see the project imaginatively in its completion and ourselves taking the steps towards it. Knowles writes:

We understand imagining as the experience in which one forms an image of the possible, In this experience one feels drawn to the actualization of that possibility and, in fact, the body is already poised for that possibility. There is no break with reality involved and the experience is harmonic.[29]

For both Erikson and Knowles the imagination is oriented toward a future self and its projects. Although the imaginative act opens possibilities inherent in a situation, this activity in its present as well as its future orientation is centered on the self. We see a lonely self playing out personal designs. If we take up Chodorow's insight that girls emerge from the oedipal situation "with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self,"[30] we have a different foundation for an existential understanding of the imagination. Paul Ricoeur, in discussing the connection between imagination and intersubjectivity, sees empathy as the "transfer in the imagination of my

[24] *Ibid*., p. 47.
[25] *Ibid*.
[26] Knowles.
[27] Erikson.
[28] Knowles.
[29] *Ibid*., p. 75.
[30] Chodorow, p. 167.

'here' to your 'there.'"[31] I perceive the other as analogous to myself by imagining myself in her place. For Ricoeur it is the imagination which makes intersubjectivity possible. Yet, more than bridging the gap between subjects, the imagination creates new connections with other selves like myself. Through my imagination and my capacity for empathy (*Einfühlung*), I am connected with my fellow human beings past and present, and thus find myself to be a cultural and historical being.

Our capacity for analogous experience between subjects is threatened by the formation of cultural institutions. When mutual relationships become anonymous and intersubjectivity is replaced by bureaucracy, human relationships will calcify into mere manipulation of objects. Bureaucracy is the death of the subject. "It is then the task of the productive imagination," Ricoeur writes:

to fight against this terrifying entropy in human relations. To express this in the idiom of competence and performance, the imagination has as its competence preserving and identifying the analogy of the ego in all relations with our contemporaries, our predecessors, and our successors. Its competence therefore lies in preserving and identifying the difference between the course of history and the course of things.[32]

In an institutionalized, anonymous culture the imagination becomes subversive because it refuses to abide by the objectification of human relationships. In preserving the analogy of the ego the imagination is the core of our humanness, for it reveals the kinship between self and other. The further our cultural values are removed from an ethics of care, the greater is the distance between a productive imagination and the mainstream of culture. But the greater, too, is the need for artistic and poetic expression to fight against "entropy in human relations."

In an earlier publication of the *Moral Education Project*, Henry C. Johnson has argued that the crisis in our education culture reflects a crisis in our culture, and that perhaps a restoration of art to its proper place in education can provide the imaginative impulse to "rebuild and repopulate the barren landscape."[33] He cautions us though, for the impulse to provide the leavening for a growing change in our culture's self-definition might be possible only in a counterculture. Taking into account our initial quotation from Freud, we can now perhaps say that this counterculture has always been in existence, although it has had little influence on our technological and scientific projects. If it would find its voice, the *culture of women* could become a leaven for change on an even more primal level than the level of the arts: on the level of human relationships, in the transfer from my "here" to your "there," in the analogy of the ego in all relations.

Afterthoughts: Narrative and the Ethics of Care

Let me project into the future and imagine the possibilities inherent in the development of the self as it is based on empathy and the relational model. To know oneself, as Gilligan implies, is to know oneself in a web of relationships. Yet relationships cannot be quantified and the knowledge of them requires a language alive with the many facets and moods that characterize the quivering

[31] Paul Ricoeur, "Imagination in Discourse and in Action" in *Analecta Husserliana*, Vol. VII, 3-22 (Dordrecht, Holland: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978), p. 15.

[32] *Ibid*.

[33] Henry C. Johnson, "Some Preliminary Considerations Respecting the Nature and Role of Education in Peaceful Development" in *Psychological Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development*, eds. Richard T. Knowles and George F. McLean (Lanham: University Press of America, 1986), p. 177.

relational web. Its precision lies not so much in what it says, but how it is said. The psychology of women is in need of the language of stories, for they provide the narrative structure which gives the "framework of an ordered fiction to the the diversity of human action," to adapt a phrase by Paul Ricoeur.[34] Through our stories we hear and exchange ourselves, but we are also engaged in fictionalizing our selves. Fiction in this sense is a tool for grasping the essence of relationships and the self at their nodal point. It redescribes and thereby reveals reality. "It is the imagination," Ricoeur writes:

which provides the milieu, the luminous clearing in which we can compare and contrast motives as different as desires and ethical demands, which in turn can range from professional rules to social customs or to strictly personal values.[35]

As a luminous clearing the imagination illuminates the other as a playground of narratives revealing her as similar but also as strange and ever surprising. It retains the tension between empathy, which focuses on sameness and emotional attachment, and the distance that comes with fictionalizing a relationship through narrative. An ethics of care needs to unfold this clearing where empathy reflects and becomes aware of itself.

[34] Ricoeur, p. 11.
[35] *Ibid*., p. 12.

Chapter IV

The Moral Image of the Other and the Others: Two Exemplifications

Charles Maes

The human child begins life cradled in a milieu of human care. Through the family as the forming agent, the history of humanization according to a particular faith or ideological tradition is communicated to the child. A specific symbolic heritage is brought into play, and in this transmission the new human being is formed. This human environment into which the child is born constitutes itself as a nurturant situation that enables the child to grow. From the beginning, the child is humanized according to the forms of the specific tradition or heritage; and the parents serve in the function of transmitters of the specific forming tradition.

On the child's side we find not a purely passive receptor in relation to what is transmitted, inasmuch as it reacts or responds to the forming influences to which it submits. The child reacts and responds to all elements of the transmission in a vital, bodily manner. In infancy the child is limited to vital responsivity since ego or cognitive capacities are not yet present and will begin to develop only gradually. The beginning of personal autonomy and of personal identity is evident in earliest infancy to the extent that the neonate both receives and responds to the efforts of the parents or their surrogates as agents of a forming tradition. It is important to realize that the 333child's personality is not determined, that the formation of its personality includes a certain evidence of autonomy even if only in a very shadowy sense. In other words, a certain transcendency is already evident in the infant from the moment of birth. As the child overcomes its motoric incapacity, this ability to give form to what is received progressively increases. The transcendence ability is most dramatically evident in adolescence when some greater or lesser degree of conflict with the forming tradition is normatively to be expected.

With regard to the moral imagination, it is expected that all of the existent faith and ideological traditions constitute themselves in their essence as ethical systems regarding what is considered distinctively human formation, including norms of moral action or conduct. From the standpoint of psychological development as it relates to the problems of the moral imagination, this paper will focus on the relevant contemporary issues with special attention to the particular problems which arise in bourgeois societies; these will be discussed in their psychological and philosophical perspectives.

Returning to childhood formation it is assumed here that childhood in all traditions is appropriately a period of conformity. The child responds in this way, normatively until reaching the adolescent stage of development. The child conforms to the requirements of the tradition as transmitted by parents because its life is still dependent on the recognition and loving care of the parents. In other words, what distinguishes conformity is that it lacks the authorization from within that characterizes mature comportment. Conformity, accordingly, is to be understood as a positive way of being-a-child and of achieving a necessary state on the way to a higher stage of development. In 'normal' development, the child's relationship to the environing world is primarily one of being nurtured. This is true even if one includes the fact that the child is being prepared to take a role in society. Growth of functional abilities brings about an achievement of considerable independence that is importantly a source of happiness for the young human being. This growth of functional abilities contributes essentially to the way in which the child relates to

the world. Normal development signifies that, to a sufficient degree, human growth means independence, happiness or enjoyment in life. As E. Levinas writes, "We live from 'good soup', air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep, etc. . . . living from delineates independence itself, the independence of enjoyment and of its happiness which is the original pattern of all independence."[1]

Enjoyment, as the term is used by the author, emerges out of this "living from the world"; as such it constitutes the first movements away from dependency on others and in particular from parents. This structure of relationship to the world, of "living from the world" is true for adults, of course; this way of thinking is particularly significant in its applications to our understanding of such issues as personal autonomy, identity, separation, individuation and other psychological and sociological issues as these bear on the problems of moral imagination. Implied in the concept of "living from the world" is nothing less than how a human being comports him/herself toward the world either appreciatively, if the conditions of family life favor normal development, or depreciatively, if the conditions of family life are unfavorable.

A. van Kaam speaks to a similar issue in discussing the human being's relationship to all-that-is (or Being), which he calls the "mystery of formation":

People are called to participate in the mystery of formation in their lives. Their first response to this call is a *foundational formation decision*. In this basic option they choose to believe in the meaningfulness or the meaningless of their life formation. It is a choice either to abandon themselves to this mystery or to feel abandoned in this cosmos as in a meaningless and careless system closed in upon itself. Our primordial formation decision is thus a faith option for positive or negative abandonment.[2]

Of course, this primordial option is not totally free; it can be limited by genetic factors and innate predispositions, etc. This foundational decision is not a conscious one since it originates before cognitive development is possible in the child; and Levinas' concept of enjoyment lends itself for the clarification of the primordiality of the foundational decision as Van Kaam writes about it. Mature development in adulthood necessarily requires conscious affirmation although the individual may ordinarily do so indirectly or implicitly. For instance, a person may be conscious of himself/herself as a happy and positively oriented individual and that he/she highly values having a generally positive view of the world, of others, etc. On the other hand, a person may not consciously be aware of the primordiality of this foundational decision in its genetic origins and originality. In the same way, an individual who has opted for the depreciative foundational decision may be aware that his/her world outlook toward others is an unhappy way of looking at everything, as in the example of a deeply depressed person. The deeper sense of freedom in human life emerges out of this foundational decision as van Kaam asserts:

Formation freedom cannot be examined as an object similar to the other objects we observe in and around us. For this reason we cannot look at our deepest freedom from the viewpoint of the physical and moral sciences, for these sciences examine objective reality. From their perspective, formation freedom would appear as something unverifiable. Only one road leads to the awareness of formation freedom; the path of openness to the experiences of formation we allow into our lives by our creative action or receptivity. In other words, the awareness of such freedom can only be found in the intraformative pole of our formation experience and its history.

[1] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 110.
[2] Adrian van Kaam, *Fundamental Formation*, Crossroads (1983), p. 221.

We are often aware that we give form to and receive form from life. Simultaneously, we have the definite experience that we could have given a different form to our life or allowed another forming influence to affect us. We are aware that we ourselves somehow decide to give or receive this specific form, which may be either relatively enduring or only a passing current form of (one's) life. We may also experience that we failed to foster a consonant form of life that we truly felt called to assume. This experience of failure in fidelity may be accompanied by the experience of formation guilt. When we look back on our life of formation, we become aware that we experience ourselves repeatedly as the source of our willingness to give form to or to receive form in this or that way and not otherwise.[3]

Formation freedom, as conceived by this author, has an important similarity to Levinas' idea of independence achieved through enjoyment of the human being's relation to the world as "living from the world." Life's satisfaction and happiness as we ordinarily speak of it consists precisely in this developmental achievement.

Individuation, Otherness and Responsibility

The independence thus gained establishes a human life in a condition of separation from others, a first step away from dependence on others — from parents in early childhood where the bonds of dependency are understandably very strong. Separation as an effort of independence introduces into human life the possibility and development of a certain inwardness or interiority. Quoting Levinas:

Separation or ipseity is produced primordially in the enjoyment of happiness (we will show) how in this enjoyment the separated being affirms an independence that owes nothing, neither dialectically nor logically, to the other (or to others) which remain transcendent to it.

While the atheist independence of the separated being does not posit itself by opposition to the idea of infinity, it alone makes possible the relation denoted by this idea. The atheist separation is *required* by the idea of Infinity (Infinity understood as an essential structure of personality), but is not dialectically brought about by it. The idea of Infinity, the relation between the same (meaning one's own identity to oneself) and the other, does not undo the separation arrested in transcendence. Indeed, the same can rejoin the other only in the hazards and risks of the quest for truth; it does not rest on the other in complete security.

Participation is a way of referring to the other; it is to have and unfold one's own being without at any point losing contact with the other. To break with participation is, to be sure, to maintain contact, but no longer derive one's being from this contact: it is to see without being seen. . . . For this it is necessary that a being, though it be a part of a whole, derive its being from itself and not from its frontiers (not from its definition), exist independently, depend neither on relations that designate its place within Being nor on the recognition that the Other would bring it.[4]

[3] *Ibid*., p. 224.
[4] Emannuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), p. 60.

Separation, as a break from participation in and with others, while maintaining contact, establishes an intrasphere of privacy "to see without being seen." In other words, solitude is established in the growing movement of egocentricity in which all of the conditions of ipseity constitute themselves as part of the growth of the individual. Thus, the individuality of the human person comes about in the break from symbiotic participation. At every point in the growthful movements toward separation, an increasing individuation is effected while maintaining contact with others. As achievements, one's solitude, privacy, etc., are effectuated on the condition of a redefinition, so to speak, of relationship to others, albeit a mode of relating that is very different from symbiotic participation of the infantile beginning. The idea that separation is a necessary and favorable outcome becomes clearly evident in van Kaam's positing of what he calls the privacy disposition.

The privacy disposition is crucial for consonant human formation. It protects the inter- or intraformative sphere of our formation field. At the same time, it does not impede fluid interaction with the other spheres of this field. For instance, the richness of intraformative reflection on the meaning of my life is not destroyed but nourished by my experiences of what others go through or tell me. In turn I may share with them what I have learned inwardly, provided such exposition is congenial with my basic life call and compatible with my life formation at this moment. The science of formation identifies what happens here as either the consonant expansion or the consonant contraction of the intraformative sphere in relation to the interformative sphere.

The same expansion and contraction is possible in relation to the outer spheres of formation. My intraformative sphere is nourished not only by direct interformation with people but also by the symbols and formation events in my life situation and wider world. Books, architecture, music, paintings, sculptures, myths, rituals, and other situational expressions of form traditions may enhance the meaning of life and deepen my intraformative reflections. The intrasphere in turn may expand into these outer spheres by symbolic expression and formative action.[5]

The break from symbiotic participation serves the function of establishing the self not only as independent, separate, happy, etc., but ultimately in its otherness; and it is here that Levinas uses the idea of infinity as a way of thinking about the otherness of the self. All achievements in personality growth, so to speak, result in an encircling movement or movements having as their end the condition of egocentricity, the establishment of otherness, the natural atheism of the self.

For Levinas, the separated being of the self, its otherness in the condition of natural atheism is the precondition for the ethical life. The high point of his view, in this regard, emerges in his discussion of ethics and its essential relation to human discourse, which he calls the "relation with the face":

This is the situation we call welcome of the face. The idea of infinity is produced in the *opposition* of conversation, in sociality. The relation with the face, with the other absolutely other which I cannot contain, the other in this sense infinite, is nonetheless my Idea, a commerce. But the relation is maintained without violence, in peace with this absolute alterity. The resistance of the other does not do violence to me, does not act negatively; it has a positive structure: ethical. The first revelation of the other, presupposed in all the other relations with him, does not consist in grasping him in his negative resistance and in circumventing him by ruse. I do not struggle with a faceless god, but I respond to his expression, to his revelation.

[5] Adrian van Kaam, *Fundamental Formation* (Crossroads, 1983), p. 125.

The face resists possession, resists my powers. In its epiphany, in expression, the sensible, still graspable, turns into total resistance to the grasp.[6]

The otherness, absolute otherness as Levinas insists, of the other seals all the accomplishments of personality formation, of egocentricity. The other absolutely resists all grasp; it cannot be dominated. Punctuating this point, Levinas insists:

To kill is not to dominate but to annihilate. . . . I can only wish to kill an existent absolutely independent, which exceeds my powers infinitely, and therefore does not oppose them but paralyzes the very power of power. The Other is the sole being I can wish to kill.[7]

The infinity of the self is stronger than murder. Its otherness resists us in his expression, his face; the first word as primordial expression is "you shall not commit murder." The infinity of the other, according to Levinas, paralyzes power, a resistance "of what has no resistance — the ethical resistance." Such ethical resistance, "firm and insurmountable, gleams in the face of the other, in the total nudity of his defenseless eyes, in the nudity of the absolute openness of what is transcendent."[8] The epiphany of the face makes possible the gauging of the infinitude of the other in the temptation to kill what resists grasp and domination and, at the same time, the purely ethical impossibility of that temptation. The temptation to kill is a struggle to overcome, to dominate otherness: "War presupposes peace, the antecedent and non-allergenic presence of the Other."[9]

The impossibility of killing does not have a simply negative and formal signification; the relation with infinity, the idea of infinity in us, conditions it positively. Infinity presents itself as a face in the ethical resistance that paralyzes my powers and from the depth of defenseless eyes rises firm and absolute in its nudity and destruction. The comprehension of this destitution and this hunger establishes the very proximity of the other. . . . The primordial essence of expression and discourse does not reside in the information they would supply concerning an interior and hidden world. In expression a being presents itself; the being that manifests itself attends its manifestation and consequently appeals to me. This attendance is not the *neutrality* of an image, but a solicitation that concerns me by its destitution and by its Height. To speak to me is at each moment to surmount what is necessarily plastic in manifestation. To manifest oneself as a face is to *impose oneself* above and beyond the manifested and purely phenomenal form, to present oneself in a mode irreducible to manifestation, the very straightforwardness of the face to face, without intermediary of any image, in one's nudity, that is, in one's destitution and hunger.

The being that expresses itself imposes itself, but does so precisely by appealing to me with its destitution and nudity — its hunger — without my being able to be deaf to that appeal. Thus expression of the being that imposes itself does not limit but promotes my freedom, by arousing my goodness.

This bond between expression and responsibility, this ethical condition or essence of language, this function of language prior to all disclosure of being and its cold splendor, permits us to extract language from subjection to a preexistent thought.[10]

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[6] Emannuel Levinas, p. 197.
[7] *Ibid*., p. 198.
[8] *Ibid*., p. 199.
[9] *Ibid.*
[10] *Ibid*., p. 200.

Here, we find the turning point, the ethical still point as a shift from egocentricity to responsibility. Here, too, we can see the positivity of our separated being; the developmental achievements that culminate in egocentricity can and must be affirmed as a preparation for responsibility. Later, we will address the problem in Western bourgeois societies where the conditions of affluence seem to foster a runaway consumerism, an obsession with projects of self-actualization. Essentially, these projects constitute the conditions of egocentricity, as we have delineated that preparatory stage of development on the way to responsibility.

First Exemplification

The foregoing reflection on Levinas' analysis of the upsurge of the ethical imperative brings us to the high point of his analyses:

The presentation of the face, expression, (i.e., discourse) does not disclose an inward world previously closed, adding thus a new region to comprehend or to take over. On the contrary, it calls to me above and beyond the given that speech already puts in common among us. What one gives, what one takes reduces itself to the phenomenon, discovered and open to the grasp, carrying on an existence which is suspended in possession — whereas the presentation of the face puts me into relation with being.[11]

Discourse or expression as the presentation of the face is not to be confused with common speech, inasmuch as common speech is specific in the sphere of egocentricity, the realm of things or objects and of possessions. By the same token, it is not a world that has been withheld or kept secretively. The presentation of the face or expression calls to me, solicits me, appeals to me to come forth. This calling issues forth from the other, and can be located with specificity as "calling to me above and beyond" the commonplaces of speech. The world in which we give and take, the world of possession and consumption, the common or mundane world is ever the sphere of my complaisant involvements, the obstacle to my being called forth. The presentation of the face "puts me" or places me in relation with being, with the transcendency of the other.

The existing of this being (of the other that calls to me) irreducible to phenomenality understood as a reality without reality, is effectuated in the non-postponable urgency with which he requires a response. This response differs from the "reaction" that the given gives rise to in that it cannot remain "between us" as is the case with the steps I take with regard to a thing. Everything that takes place here "between us" concerns everyone, the face that looks at it places itself in the full light of the public order, even if I draw back from it to seek with the interlocutor the complicity of a private relation and a clandestinity.[12]

The existing of the other as this singular being, the act of self-presentation, is impelling in that the appeal of the other requires me to respond. The existence of the other's being cannot be suspended. Urgency, here, specifies "everything that takes place between us" as happening or coming to pass in the ethical sphere, "in the full light of the public order," and thus as unable to be understood as a relation of privacy or secretiveness.

Language as the presence of the face does not invite complicity with the preferred being, the self-sufficient "I-Thou" forgetful of the universe; in its frankness it refuses the clandestinity of love, where it loses its frankness and meaning and turns into laughter or cooing. The third party

[11] *Ibid*., p. 212.
[12] *Ibid*.

looks at me in the eyes of the Other-language is justice. It is not that there first would be the fact, and then the being it manifests or expresses would concern himself with justice; the epiphany of the face *qua* face opens humanity.[13]

The presence of the face, discourse, the existing of *this* being (who calls to me) is not forgetful of all-that-is, of the others, and in that sense does not invite me to a private relationship since that would falsify the meaning of what is manifested. The third party, humanity (the others), looks to me, implores me in the eyes of the Other; the showing forth of the other calls me to be just — "language is justice."

The face in its nakedness as a face presents to me the destitution of the poor one and the stranger; but this poverty and exile which appeal to my powers, address me, do not deliver themselves over to these powers as givens, remain the expression of the face. The poor one, the stranger, presents himself as an equal. His equality within this essential poverty consists in referring to the *third party*, thus present at the encounter, whom in the midst of his destitution the Other already serves. He comes to join me. But he joins me to himself for service; he commands me as a Master. This command can concern me only inasmuch as I am master myself; consequently this command commands me to command. . . . The presence of the third party (that is, of the whole of humanity which looks at us).[14]

The nakedness of the fact reveals to me the vulnerability, the being-at-risk of the other, his incompleteness and 'not yet' in relation to me, still a stranger to me. This being 'not yet' in relation to each other calls me to respond to his destitution and to overcome our estrangement, our alienation from each other. The other presents itself as my equal, while showing forth in his poverty and in his concerned existing as stranger. He is my equal since he presents himself to me "in the light of the public order," and in this he "refers" to the legitimating third party, humanity, present in our encounter. The order as Master commands me to command myself to be responsible. This mastery is essentially non-violent since the other does not offend my freedom; in fact, the other calls me out of my self-absorption and in so doing frees me for my responsibilities and also from the imprisonment of my natural atheism — the vertigo of egocentricity. In this sense the other's existing is necessary for my coming to be, for the emergence of my unique being. As stranger, the other commands me in yet another way: to overcome the conditions of my separated being, of my narcissism. The other as stranger invites me to fraternity; that is to say, in calling me to be responsible he establishes me in social justice. The act of existing by the other or stranger, which is an "action" upon my freedom, puts an end to violence and, therefore, makes peaceful coexistence possible.

In these different ways, the other's action upon my freedom is primordially *for my own good*. My own becoming who I most deeply can be emerges out of my being, called forth to assume my responsibilities as inextricably connected with the other, the poor one, the stranger and with the others. The moral image of the other and of the others ratifies a perspectivity of what is distinctively human. In its mythic and narrative proportionality, this moral image is telling: it tells a story of goodness as such. Likewise, it tells a story of an excelling truthfulness, a hard won triumph of the human historical being as a central event of an earthly being that matters; it materializes or embodies itself as the beautiful.

Second Exemplification: The Bourgeois Image of the Other, and of the Others

[13] *Ibid*.
[14] *Ibid*., p. 213.

The example of moral imagination we have just concluded emerges out of the Judaic faith tradition. It grants itself in the mythic narrative history of a people, a documented and inscribed narrative, the mythic book of *Genesis*. Because of an historic kinship, the first exemplification is in its essence consonant with the various Christian faith traditions as well. In that story of human genesis, a key image of the human being is that he was "created in the image and likeness of God." Viewed from the narrative standpoint, Levinas tells the same story in a new way. The retelling evokes us in its originality: it is exemplar.

We point out those things because they serve the purpose of clarification as to the historical grounding of our second exemplification of the moral imagination. In its own way and strictly speaking, this can best be understood as a conflicted and mystified exemplar of the foregoing view of moral imagination. The bourgeois version of the moral imagination historically claims to be the praxic embodiment of our first exemplification. This rational claim grounds itself in the philosophies of enlightenment, in such writers as Hume and Locke and pointedly in the economic philosophy of Adam Smith. Likewise, its legitimation also grounds itself in the American and French Revolutions, that is, in the creative myths of these events and as embodied in the sacred texts on "human rights," constitutions and the symbolic order in law. The bourgeois imagination emerged in the phenomenon of the rising expectation effectuated, evoked by the liberationist ideals of laissez faire capitalism.

We intend to recapitulate some of the central configurations and key points of Levinas' analysis and to show how the bourgeois imagination reveals itself in contrast, in its distinction from the first exemplification. Recall first Levinas' definitive and insistent view of human development. Human being is living from the world; the end result of development is human happiness, self-being and personal independence. As a movement of transcendence in human being, this consists in liberating the human existent from the shared immanence of human care and love characteristics of infantile beginnings. Transcendence, understood as transcendence to the ego or functional freedom, is the ideal achievement of the human being as living *from* the world. This achievement, as the development of human interiority, we call egocentricity.

The ego is the guarantor of the reality principle, of objectivity and objective reason, the proud achievement of the bourgeois imagination, the ground of the bourgeois moral imagination. The ego as a movement of transcendence concerns itself with reality and with objects, the world in its transformative possibilities for man. The ego enables us to dominate nature, to bend it to our purposes, to make of the world human habitation. In endless ways, the ego is functionality in its essential nature; as functionality it is *Energeia*, the natural, on the side of man's fleshly being. The centricity of the ego liberates human being and enables man to dominate and shape reality through the objective capacity to "make objects" for humane projects. As ego, human interiority concerns itself with the liberation of the outer spheres of human life. Straightforwardly, when the ego is consonant with its essential nature, it necessarily concerns itself not with the good, but with goods. Egocentricity is therefore necessarily preoccupied with possessions; it is suspended in possession as Levinas clearly points out.

Living from the world in its achievements is not the same as living for the world, for its humanization. Ego-centricity implies both a displacement and decentering of the human spirit. It should be said that the bourgeois imagination makes very difficult, if not impossible, a true understanding of human interiority; the core of human life is exiled — so much so that it creates new problems for our social being. For example, the other, as stranger, more, not less, alien to me since his calling to me in the presentation of the face, is calling to me "above any beyond the given," i.e., the world of common goods which we share. Egocentricity cannot be comprehended

as any kind of interiority, to say so is mystification. When we speak of the ego as the agent of human autonomy and maturity, we only compound that mystification. Rather, it should be said that the function of the ego is understood best as a symptom of malaise, inherent in the bourgeois moral imagination. In short, the action of the ego consists in making important things unimportant and in making unimportant things important.

Let us be clear; where egocentricity is raised to the level of an ideal way of being, what is of lesser importance is given the greatest value. When the necessary conditions of the outer sphere of life are brought about through work to the neglect of nonmaterial or spiritual values, it is important to recognize this as a significant impoverishment of what makes us distinctively human.

The conflictual nature of the bourgeois imagination is nowhere more evident than in Western societies. The egocentric ideal has created great conflicts with regard to human aspirations for a more fraternal and communal existence. In the bourgeois affluent societies where the good is confused with goods, consumerism increasingly becomes a substitution for communal bonds. The rich and the poor become alike or equal as consumers. Living from the world, as we stressed in the first exemplification, is even in the end of our reflections a positive human achievement; it is the preparation and the precondition for respectable human beings. Nonetheless, its idolization in the bourgeois moral imagination, which in one sense contributes to human well-being, especially in fostering material well-being, at the same time has unwittingly become an instrumentality that does not ratify but rather conflicts with a truly transcendent or ethical view of human being and becoming. Inevitably, it is confusion.

Chapter V
Fantasy and Imagination

Richard T. Knowles

In treating the topic of imagination, there is often a tendency to equate imagination with fantasy and to speak as if they were one and the same experience. This fusion of the two experiences is found also in everyday life and in professional psychology. To my mind, these are very different experiences, although they are related in some ways. What I propose to do in this article is to postulate a distinction between the two experiences and to offer some different ways of thinking about them.

Fantasy

Separation from the Life Context. Under the general experience of fantasy, I would include such acts as daydreaming, dreaming, wishful thinking and also what now is popularly called "fantasizing." At the extreme of fantasy, delusions and hallucinations would also be included. The content of the fantasies themselves may be accompanied by a positive or negative feeling tone but the experience of fantasizing would seem to have common constituents and a common structure. One of the difficulties in researching the experience of fantasy is that the content of fantasy may be described by subjects apart from the particular life context from which the fantasy emerged and to which the subjects returned. In fact, this forgetting of, or absenting oneself from, the life context seems to be an essential constituent of fantasy. One cannot be fantasizing and also be involved in the life context at the same time. The current popular expression, "being out of it," seems to describe this constituent well.

Re-entry Problems. Of course, there are other ways in which people absent themselves from involvement in life, for example, in reflection or in leisure. In these cases, however, one seems to return to involvement refreshed and to become even more involved than previously. The opposite seems to be true of fantasy; rather than moving easily and rhythmically into involvement, one experiences a re-entry problem, as if one were coming back from a different world. If reflection, a bending back on experience, were to degenerate into introspection, a form of fantasy, the re-entry problem would then be experienced. Introspection, like fantasy, is a private monologue, an autistic meandering which bypasses the need to shape the experience or to communicate it to others. If leisure, a relaxed mode of experiencing one's life, were to degenerate into passivity, a major constituent of fantasy, again one would experience oneself as having to make up for lost time rather than as being in the right rhythm of things.

Relationship with Fear. Fantasy seems to be an essential experience for each one of us; we seem to find it difficult to face things as they are. Ernest Becker[1] has made a good case concerning the emergence of fantasy. Along with others, he suggests that fantasy emerges out of fear. The child, faced with its own vulnerability and the chaotic nature of things, develops a fantasy of the self and situation which is less fearful and more consoling. This fantasy becomes his ego or

[1] E. Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: The Free Press, 1973).

character, what Becker describes as a "vital lie." Another way of phrasing this idea is that our personalities are fantasies; we form them in response to fear. One side of the coin is fantasy, the other fear; fear calls for fantasy, and fantasy, although alleviating the fear in the short term, increases it in the long run.

Even a casual reading of Laing's description of psychotic patients[2] reveals the essential relation between fear and fantasy. On nearly every page of these descriptions, we find one pole of the experience to include fear, terror and rigidity, the other pole to include fantasies, delusions and hallucinations. It is as if the experience of life and death is so terrifying that one finds oneself in a rigid posture of fear. This posture being too difficult to sustain, a temporary release is found in the experience of fantasy. This release, rather than alleviating the fear, serves to increase it in the long run, making it more difficult to confront life's issues directly. Bettelheim[3] describes how an autistic child fantasized himself as a robot out of fear of experiencing human feelings and how, at the age of eleven or twelve, he had to begin to confront the issues of infancy and childhood. The fantasy may have relieved the fear, but he had lost all those years; rather than being more ready to confront those issues, he had also the re-entry problems noted above.

The Fantastic Self. Most of us do not experience the extremities of fear and fantasy to such a degree, but in our lives fear and fantasy intensify one another and this circular mode comprises a large portion of our lives. This is Becker's point: the lived reality is so threatening that we have to form a fantasy; we have to reduce things to manageable proportions, so we form a personality, a character. Whom we consider ourselves to be is really a fantasy built on fear. This, I believe, is the origin not only of neurotic modes but of the ordinary personality; and I would see it as having some similarities to what van Kaam calls "the pride form." In other words, it is our fantasy of who we are, a false self, which is revealed in experiences such as hope, imagination and love. Fear and fantasy stand in contrast to these latter-named experiences and comprise a mode of experiencing which excludes them. One cannot, at the same time, be fearful and also hopeful, imaginative or loving. There are ways of responding to the fear-fantasy mode which can make these other experiences possible, but that is a point to be taken up later.

Roots in Childhood. For now, we are considering Becker's point of character as a vital lie, how the fear of confronting things as they are leads to a fantasy of who we are and of what those things are. At a very early age, this "personality" is put up against the chaos and the danger and is held onto as long as possible. Take the case of the over-responsible adult. Perhaps at a young age, this person was faced with the absence of a caring adult and was expected by the family to take on adult responsibilities too soon. The theme of responsibility became focal and all other things collected around that theme. The child began to identify with that theme and to reduce the chaos by narrowing everything down to it. Perhaps a childish promise was made. In this case it might have been, "Since there's no one to take care of me, I will take care of myself and others." This may have become the theme of the person's life, lived out with a monotonous and repetitive regularity. Even as an adult, the scared and deprived child may be coming through, posing as the caretaker of others rather than confronting the fear and vulnerability associated with this fantasy.

The Necessity of Fantasy. As stated earlier, the personality, the ego, the character formed, is a fantasy based on fear and one which is highly resistant to change. Not to have one would be to

[2] R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self* (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1973).
[3] B. Bettelheim and A. Joey, "Mechanical Boy," *Scientific American* (1959), reprinted.

be defenseless in the face of the chaos, to be living in the chaos, as in psychosis, to be a nonfunctioning person. It is essential to have an ego to put up against the chaos; otherwise, one is overwhelmed. In this sense, personality is a necessary fantasy. Along with Heidegger,[4] we may say that the everyday self is the inauthentic self, that it is precisely who we are not. Yet this self is essential to the totality of the self. Who we really are includes the personality or who we are not. The nonself is an essential constituent of the self.

Fantasy as a Life Theme. The problem comes in believing our own propaganda about who we are. We begin to identify with the inauthentic self and to believe in our own fantasy. As mentioned earlier, I believe this fantasy to be similar to van Kaam's concept of the pride form.[5] The over-responsible child grows into the over-responsible adult, seeing only the positive aspects of responsibility. As child and adult, the person is rewarded for being responsible, and both self and others come to agree on this definition of the self. The problem is not that the definition is inaccurate, but that it is too narrow, narrowness being an essential constituent of fear. The fantasy is that one can overcome one's vulnerability by being responsible. Responsibility here is merely one example of an ego mode; there are many others. Whatever the repetitive theme is in one's life, it becomes the ego mode, whether it is being compliant, being the center of attraction, being rational, etc. The fantasy grows and develops, as the person grows and develops, and the mode of existence becomes highly resistant to change.

Change

The Resistance to Change. Since the mode was established and the childish promises made prior to the emergence of mature rationality and judgment, it takes more than "mere knowing" to change it. The person believes the fantasy to be reality and constitutes others to believe it, too. In authority, power and leadership situations the fantasies of both leaders and followers may accelerate at great rates creating all kinds of fusing and confusing situations. The person lives out the fantasy as if it were true, one actually comes to believe in the fantasy and begins to dictate it to others and to situations. It should be mentioned that this belief is not a total or whole-hearted one, although it may be presented as such. The person on some level is aware of some ambiguity in the situation and adopts an attitude of ambivalence. The over-responsible person, for example, may at the same time communicate in covert ways a need to be taken care of. The ambiguity in the situation and the ambivalence of the person leave openings for change. If the fear is strong enough, the person may be "successful" in living out the fantasy, thereby failing to respond to the possibilities of growth. In most cases, however, if one persists in the ego mode, in the fantasy, a crisis occurs because the mode is not in tune with the world and others. Herein lies the hope.

Change through Crisis. Although there are possibilities for change along the way, the two major ways in which the fantasy is challenged and confronted seem to be those of crisis and commitment. A crisis is probably the more ordinary way. Since the maintenance of the fantasy does violence to the intersubjective truth of situations, it is likely to be challenged by a crisis in which one either maintains the fantasy or responds to the invitation to change. A person is not very likely to change out of a desire to change because there is so much at stake. Even in the statement

[4] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962).

[5] A. A. Van Kaam, "A Provisional Glossary of the Terminology of the Science of Foundational Formative Spirituality," *Studies in Formative Spirituality* I (1980): 459.

of a desire to change there is often the other side of the ambivalence: "No, I won't." For, to change would mean to let go of the security of the fantasy, of the narrow view which keeps the risk and danger at a distance; one does not do this readily.

No. The situation or another person does not co-operate with the fantasy. What should have worked didn't work and the fantasy is thrown into question. For example, the over-responsible person may be faced with failure in work or in relationship. The issue of responsibility may be found to be irrelevant to the situation. At first when the crisis comes, the person intensifies the fantastic mode; the over-responsible person becomes even more responsible in a crisis. But that response doesn't work; it may even aggravate the situation. Still, the person ambivalently but stubbornly clings to the one interpretation of the situation. Being responsible is *the* way of overcoming vulnerability and, according to the person in this mode, it must work. When it doesn't, there is hope.

So a major aspect of change is not so much doing something positively as much as it is a question of letting go of a fantasy of self and situation which precludes growth. But before a person can let go of it, it must be identified. In a therapy situation at this point, the situation may be seen more clearly. Here it is discovered that the person has only good words for the fantastic mode and bad words for other alternatives. In addition, a whole system of rationality is found to be supporting the fantastic mode. There is often a private theology and morality backing up the mode. The religious person, for example, is attentive to those scriptural passages and moral teachings which support the fantastic mode and neglects others which might throw that mode into question. As stated earlier, one of the constituents of fantasy is the private, autistic interpretation of reality, the absence of intersubjective contact and dialogue.

If the person in crisis can become aware of the exact nature of the fantasy mode, apply accurate words to describe it, become familiar with the private morality supporting it, the limits of the mode become obvious. Many times this is not as conscious a project as I am making it out to be. The person may just realize how narrow and imprisoning a mode it is and decide in action to let it go. If one is able to let it go, then other possibilities present themselves. But his letting go is easier said than done since letting go means facing vulnerability and fear and taking risks. Nowadays it appears that, for many, the fantasy mode is not confronted until the time of the mid-life crisis, an experience Levinson[6] terms "de-illusionment," and, of course, even then it is not fully confronted. Being human seems to include living in fantasy to some extent at all stages of life.

Change through Discipline. Another way that makes change possible is that of commitment. As one commits oneself to particular forms of adult living, disciplines are enacted which are constantly at odds with the fantasy mode. On entering a commitment, the person tries to shape the commitment into the fantasy form; for example, to make parenthood a mode of over-responsibility. However, the disciplines involved in being a parent include many forms of letting go. The parent is disciplined to let the child go to school, to give the child room to grow, to trust the child, etc. All these disciplines constantly challenge the attempt to live out the fantastic mode of over-responsibility and to define parenthood in its terms.

Commitment to various forms of work also involves disciplines which make it more difficult to live out the fantasy mode. For example, the discipline of silence for a psychotherapist makes it more difficult to be a savior or rescuer. The discipline of science makes it more difficult for the medical doctor to give free rein to a fantasy mode of omniscience. Each adult commitment involves such disciplines and leads the adult into an intersubjective network involving a tradition and a

[6] D. J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life* (New York: Ballantine, 1977).

multi-perspectival reality. It is also possible for groups to fall into a shared fantasy mode, but contact with the larger society helps to prevent this.

In this section, I have been using the term "fantasy mode" to describe the ordinary way in which we view ourselves. Strictly speaking, a fantasy mode refers to the actual experience of dreaming, daydreaming, etc., rather than to a life style. However, because there are so many elements of fantasy in our view of ourselves, I have stretched the term in order to bring out more clearly the distinction between fantasy and imagination. Likewise, with imagination, there is the imaginative mode when one is actually in the act of imagining, and there is also an imaginative life-style.

Imagination

Contrast with Fantasy. The imaginative mode is much more difficult to describe because it is an open-ended experience and lacks the narrowness and repetition of the fantasy mode. Although he does not make the explicit distinction between fantasy and imagination, Bettelheim[7] makes a similar point:

Those who live completely in their fantasies are beset by compulsive ruminations which rotate eternally around some narrow, stereotypical topics. Far from having a rich fantasy life, such people are locked in, and they cannot break out of one anxious or wish-fulfilling daydream.[8]

He goes on to describe what is termed here the imaginative mode in the following way:

But free-floating fantasy, which contains in imaginary form a wide variety of issues also encountered in reality, provides the ego with an abundance of material to work with. This rich and variegated fantasy life is provided to the child by fairy stories, which can help prevent his imagination from getting stuck within the narrow confines of a few anxious or wish-fulfilling daydreams circling around a few narrow preoccupations.[9]

The fairy tale partakes of the imaginative mode in that it includes and makes sense of the raw material of fantasy, it is communicable to others rather than remaining chaotic and private, and it invites one (the child, in this case) into participation and contact with the world and other people. A private fantasy, in contrast to the fairy tale or any other imaginative creation, remains unarticulated and does not move one to action. There is also no "owning" or sense of agency involved; one doesn't really become involved with the fantasy but remains passive as it comes and goes.

Imagination as Openness, Willingness and Movement. Imagination includes a certain form of perceiving, but more than that it includes also willing and, more centrally, a movement toward action. We may all have had the experience of ignoring a household repair, for example, with a sense of somehow also being burdened by it. Then, one day, a novel way of making the repair may have occurred to us. At that point, we could almost feel our bodies becoming posed for that action. At least three points are worthy of note with regard to the imaginative solution.

[7] B. Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment* (New York: Vintage, 1977).
[8] Ibid.
[9] Ibid.

First of all, there was an opening of perception. Rather than looking on the task in the one way, other ways presented themselves. As long as the task was seen in that one way, it did not invite our participation but was seen as a burden, as a "have-to," as unappealing. In order for the perception to open up to other ways of approaching the task, there had to be a relaxation, a more leisurely approach to it. Then, when we least expected it, a novel solution presented itself and this outcome involved letting go of the previous narrow and tense perception. Along with the relaxation of tension comes an opening of perception, one essential constituent of the imaginative mode. Incidentally, the solution may have been partially derived from previous fantasy (daydreaming, for example); however, something more had to happen with the raw material of fantasy. It had to be organized into a new *Gestalt* which invited one into action.

The other two points have already been mentioned. The second point is that prior to the imaginative perception, we were unwilling to become engaged in the task. In the imaginative act, a second essential constituent seems to be the willingness to become engaged, the overcoming of resistance and a lack of ambivalence. We say "Yes" to the task rather than "Yes, but," "Later," "Maybe," etc.; a whole-hearted willingness is present.

Fantasy and Imagination. The third point is that more than perception and willingness are involved; movement is also essential. In imagining the solution, we are already moving to carry it out; in fact, we might say that imagination is a particular way of moving in the world. In contrast to the plodding movement of depression or the frantic movement of hysteria, imagination is a way of moving in harmony with the rhythm of the world and others. One experiences oneself as in tune with the world and others. Perhaps this harmonic experience is most evident in sports when one is having a good day (for example, John McEnroe in the last match at Wimbledon).[10] In contrast to the passivity of the fantasy mode, the imaginative mode not only invites movement but is itself already movement. This movement may be intellectual or even meditative; it doesn't have to be physical. But, even in these cases, the body is experienced as both relaxed and poised, as harmonic with the imagined project.

Quality, Not Quantity. Obviously, the imaginative mode is not our ordinary way of experiencing. Not every house repair is a creative one, nor is our everyday experience in sports a harmonic blending as described above. More frequently, we find ourselves in the habitual mode, the mode founded on fear and fantasy. We are looking out for our security and are living out an illusion of ourselves which keeps coming up against the realities of the world, even up to and following mid-life.

Yet, the imaginative mode, though quantitatively infrequent, has a quality to it that does, I think, carry us over the more ordinary days and that endures beyond the specific experience of being imaginative or creative. Like other authentic experiences, such as hope and love, imagination keeps us grounded in reality, one that is more real than the pseudo-reality of calculation, self-interest and self-aggrandizement. In fact, the real story of our lives consists primarily, I think, of the authentic moments, such as those of imagination.

Unless we can imagine ourselves doing something, we cannot do it. What usually interferes with our authentic imagining is fear and its rigidity, fantasy and its passivity, a willful or wishy-washy attitude. In the rare moments when we are able to imagine, there is a letting go of the more habitual ways, a willingness to encounter things and people as they are and a move into risk and uncertainty. The fears, fantasies, resolutions and wishes take on a particular form, are seen in a

[10] From *Studies in Formative Spirituality: Journal of Ongoing Formation* 6 (1985): 53-63.

creative *Gestalt* and offer to the person a sense of purpose, a way of moving in the world which is more real. For the religious person, the imaginative mode would be, at least partially, to be living in God's reality rather than in the usual unreality of pride. One's true vocation is revealed in this mode.

Becoming Imaginative

The How-to of Imagination. In the modern age we are inclined to adopt a technical approach toward experiences like imagination. We live under the illusion that we can obtain the benefits of this mode if only we know the technique or the "how-to." Obviously, things do not work that way. How do we become imaginative if not by resolving to have it and working at it?

Making the Distinction. Let us return to what has been said previously about the fantasy mode. It seems that we spend the greater part of our lives in this mode and that the usual ways of moving beyond it include coming to a crisis and/or engaging in particular disciplined modes of living. In these two ways we become more available for authentic experience in general. The imaginative mode and the fantastic mode are two different ways of experiencing. They involve different bodily postures, different forms of perception, etc., and one cannot be at the same time both fantastic and imaginative. On the other hand, one has to let go of the habitual fantastic mode before experiencing the imaginative mode. In this sense, we appear to have an either-or situation. On the other hand, just as fantasy provides the raw material for imagination, we might say that the fantasy mode is the foundation for the imaginative mode. Or, following Heidegger,[11] we can say that authentic experiencing is a modification of the inauthentic. So, the habitual fantastic mode is essential to the more infrequent imaginative mode, but the effects of the imaginative mode are stronger and more lasting.

Acting on the Distinction. What has been proposed in this article is, I think, different from the usual practice of equating fantasy and imagination. Although there is an essential link between them, they appear to be different experiences, as mentioned above. This is not merely a theoretical issue since many practical difficulties arise out of the tendency to confuse one's private fantasies with imaginative projects which are in harmony with others and the world. At the very least, we can make the distinction after the fact. Hitler's Third Reich was a project carried out in the fantasy mode whereas the democratic vision of the founding fathers, whatever its limits, was an imaginative one.

But we can go even further than this; it seems possible to make the distinction as events are unfolding, both in our more personal projects and in the more socially oriented ones. A project is imaginative rather than fantastic when: its spirit is one of openness and relaxation rather than of rigidity and fear; it is characterized by receptivity rather than passivity; it admits and organizes the chaos and uncertainty of life rather than attempting to eliminate them or becoming lost in them; the project is articulated in such a way that it invites rather than coerces, leaving people free; it is available for inter-objective validation rather than calling for blind faith; it opens up a future which inspires to action rather than relying upon nostalgia or guilt; and the thinking involved and the practice acknowledge the unfinished and open-ended nature of the project.

A more explicit, descriptive analysis of the two modes would, I believe, reveal many more distinctions than those listed above and would contribute to a more detailed understanding of the

[11] Heidegger, *Being and Time*.

relationship between the two experiences. For now, however, we know enough to posit these distinctions and to avoid the pitfalls of equating them. Although fantasy and illusion are essential in our lives, we can watch for their signs in ourselves and others and name these correctly, thereby reducing their power. At the same time, we can allow ourselves whole-heartedly to enter into imaginative projects when they are truly imaginative.

Chapter VI

The Imagination, The Unconscious, Faith and Moral Development

Raymond Studzinski

Ruby Turpin, in Flannery O'Connor's short story "Revelation," is a woman basically satisfied with her life.[1] As she sits with her husband, Claud, in a doctor's waiting room, she sizes up the people around her and herself in relation to them. People fall into facile categories for her — the well-dressed, the common, white-trash, niggers. She utters a prayer of thanksgiving that everything is the way it is in her life. But suddenly her comfortable world begins to unravel when a book is hurled across the room at her.

The ugly girl who hurled the book at her proceeds to choke her. The girl had been staring at Ruby before the incident. Now, as the girl is finally being held down on the floor by the nurse and the girl's mother, she and Ruby gaze at each other again. In that gaze Ruby feels that this demented girl knows her in an intensely personal way. Ruby presses the girl to speak to her and is answered by a whispered "go back to hell where you came from, you old wart hog."[2] The image of the wart hog from hell stays with her long after she leaves the doctor's office. She tries to fight it off, but the image has power and stays. She ponders why that message should have been given to her. She was not trashy like some of the others in the waiting room. She rails against heaven for this injustice. Then, while she is outside, she has a vision. On a purple streak in the sky looking like a bridge extending upward from the earth, she saw a procession of folks going toward heaven. At the front of this crowd were those she thought little of — the white-trash and niggers. At the very end of the procession were people like herself, the righteous who had lived respectably. They appeared to be shocked as their virtues were being purged away. After the vision fades, Ruby remains for a while immobilized but then heads back to her house with a new awareness.

The case of Ruby Turpin can serve as a point of reference in a discussion of how people come to take up a particular imaginative perspective on themselves and the world, how that perspective guides their moral activity, and how that perspective can undergo major revision in the course of a transforming moment. More specifically, Ruby's way of construing and operating in the world has an imaginal base that can be probed and analyzed in the light of recent contributions of object relations theory within the field of contemporary psychoanalysis. This theory is able to illuminate the origins of certain relational patterns and to contribute to a fuller understanding of the dynamics of both moral and faith development.

Object Relations Theory, The Imaginal World and Faith

Object relations theory is an outgrowth of Freudian thought which gives central place to early relationships with primary figures (parents, close relatives, others who live in the same house, etc.) in the constitution of one's personality and the establishment of one's relationship to the world.[3] Whereas Freud had given primary attention to drives, object relations theorists have

[1] Flannery O'Connor, *The Complete Short Stories* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1971), pp. 488-509.

[2] *Ibid*. p. 500.

[3] For an introduction to object relations theory, see Harry Guntrip, *Psychoanalytic Theory, Therapy, and the Self: A Basic Guide to the Human Personality in Freud, Erikson, Klein, Sullivan, Fairbairn, Hartmann, Jacobson and Winnicott* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Jay R. Greenberg and Stephen A. Mitchell, *Object Relations in*

focused more on the relationships which people have with others. The "object" with which this theory is concerned may be parts of persons (e.g., a mother's eyes or hands), but are ultimately and ideally whole persons with whom a relationship is established. Object relations theorists note how mental representations of others are gradually built up in the mind by a process of internalization. Memories of interactions with others in the past and present consolidate in the mind so as to form these mental representations which are not carbon copies, but subjective, and sometimes quite distorted, renderings of others. Out of the affective experiences with people in the external world, each person fashions an internal world, a "theater" of the mind, where "actors" (mental representations) from the past are used in varying degrees by a person in relating to self and others in the present. One's own deep sense of value and of being loved or of being of no account and unloved is dependent on the internalization of representations of a loving or rejecting other with whom one relates. Throughout the course of life, self and object representations are in dynamic interaction and can be reworked on the basis of ongoing experience and reinterpretations of past experience. According to this theory, Ruby Turpin is guided unconsciously in her current relationships by her own internal, imaginal world which provides her with a working model for assessing what is of value and what is to be avoided.

Also present in Ruby's imaginal world is the God whom she interrogates so fiercely: "How am I a hog and me both? How am I saved and from hell too?"[4] Ruby's faith has been a source of comfort and strength but is now in crisis. This faith which provided her with a center, a bedrock for finding meaning and value in her life is put to the test. The human foundations of this faith are imaginal representations of important figures who become the first focus of a child's trust. Together these representations provide an individual with a background of safety which allows one to venture forth in the journey of life. In this elemental faith the question of "is there anybody out there for me that I can trust as I become a self" is answered by the powerful images of the primary objects (parents, caretakers) of childhood. This elemental faith based on experience with trustworthy figures is the forerunner to a faith tested by life's crises and grounded in new and reworked imaginal centers.[5]

Faith seeks a transcendent object which will be a fitting recipient for trust even in the face of the most threatening of life's events. Faith also searches for a perspective on life, a view of life, which can hold together seemingly irreconcilable opposites — "How am I a hog and me both?" From the standpoint of object relations theory, there is both a movement here to an ever more adequate image of God, a mental representation which invites a more radical trust, and a movement to a more comprehensive religious "illusion," a religious vision of life which gives meaning to even the absurdities of human existence. Ruby doesn't know how to understand the God who allowed that girl to give her such an awful message. She doesn't understand her world being turned upside down. She wasn't trash, but the message came to her. Again, object relations theory throws light on both the origins and evolution of illusion and the mental representation of God.

Illusions and Images of God

Psychoanalytic Theory (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983); Rubin and Gertrude Blanck, *Beyond Ego Psychology: Developmental Object Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University press, 1986).

[4] O'Connor, *The Complete Short Stories,* p. 506.

[5] John McDargh, *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion: On Faith and the Imaging of God* (Lanham, MD; University Press of America, 1983), pp. 105-107.

Illusion was, of course, the term Freud used to refer to religious belief. It was meant as a pejorative term, a way of reducing such belief to its roots in childhood wishes. The object relations theorist D.W. Winnicott (1896-1971) argues persuasively for the value of illusion, which he related to an intermediate area of experience between reality and fantasy.[6] He noted how a mother's (or primary caregiver's) almost total adaptation to her young infant's needs gives rise to the primary illusion of omnipotence. The infant's slightest need is satisfied by its hyper-attentive mother; its inner need "creates" a satisfying object. The baby is at a stage where the inner world of fantasy has not yet been sorted out from the outer reality. This primary illusion provides a foundation for a love of reality and for hope. Gradually, the infant is disillusioned and introduced to the difference between me and not-me, inner world and outer world.

Transitional Objects and Phenomena

Winnicott observed that the infant in its situation of primary creativity takes an important step along the way to an acceptance of the distinction between the outer world and the inner world of fantasy. It finds adaptive ways of employing illusion to reflect his or her evolving creativity. Specifically, older infants will form a close attachment to some special object, such as a blanket, stuffed animal, or toy. The object, which Winnicott designates a transitional object, functions for the child as soother and comforter. It makes easier the child's adjustment to his or her growing awareness of separateness from mother and of distinction between the subjective inner world of fantasy and the outer reality. The transitional object is the child's first "not-me possession," a beginning attempt to establish a relationship to a world beyond the mother. This special object is a result of the creative activity of the infant who is able to fuse material from the inner world — remembered experience of good mothering — with some object such as a teddy bear from the outer world which can then serve as a mother-substitute and whose meaning to the child is typically shared by the rest of the family. Family members regard the object as special, even sacred, and handle it with reverence. The object is of immense significance for a person's later immersion in cultural life, for it represents the development of a new way of experiencing. Transitional experiencing signals the emergence of an incipient symbolizing activity. Such experiencing ensures a sense of wholeness and will provide a lifelong resting place from the pressure of the inner world and the demands of the outer world.

Winnicott saw the broader ramifications of his formulation and stated that he was staking a claim for a way of experiencing present in culture, religion, art, and creative living. The first transitional object helps the infant to adapt to a growing awareness of outer reality; adult transitional phenomena will facilitate continuing adaptation. Winnicott makes the explicit assumption that accepting reality remains an ongoing task and that transitional phenomena provide relief from the effort involved in relating external to internal reality. In other words, transitional objects and phenomena associated with them are the earliest means through which the individual acquires those healthy illusions which are shared with others and give meaning to life. Illusion, like the transitional object, can serve as a vision of the "more" of reality which provides needed solace and has a place in the lifelong development of persons. This creative approach to life sees reality and oneself as charged with surplus and shared meaning.

Ruby Turpin's vision of life provides her with solace as she sits comfortably in the doctor's office, yet at the end of the story she receives a new vision of life. The importance of some vision

[6] D. W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Tavistock, 1971).

for healthy living is increasingly recognized by researchers and practitioners in various disciplines. In commenting on a psychoanalytic vision of reality, Roy Schafer notes:

The term vision implies judgments partly rooted in subjectivity, that is, in acts of imagination and articles of faith, which, however illuminating and complex they may be, necessarily involve looking at reality from certain angles and not others.[7]

Visions can have different features such as comic, romantic, tragic and ironic. When people approach the world with their imaginations, one of these may be given special emphasis. Ruby's last vision of life focuses on the ironic. It puts together the seemingly irreconcilable. Likewise, the God who seems to be behind her fate and this vision is ironic and quite in contrast to the God to whom Ruby utters her early prayer of thanksgiving.

Mental Representations of God

Ruby's God, or more precisely her mental representation of God, has its origin in important relationships in her life. What begins as a human faith trusting in human supports is pushed by life's challenges to become a faith in the transcendent. Only the transcendent has the potential to respond to the deepest human concerns. Granted the interpersonal matrix in which individuals grow and develop, the human desire for a transcendent object on which to ground faith crystalizes in the longing for a personal Other. In Ruby's life, as for countless others, this personal Other is called God. This God has sanctioned Ruby's behavior in the past and yet now seems to call her way of living and thinking into question. To understand who exactly God is for an individual like Ruby, one must look not only at the cultural and religious tradition in which that person stands but also (and perhaps more crucially) at the interpersonal matrix which surrounds and has surrounded that individual.

The God believers meet in prayer which, psychologically speaking, is actually a psychic representation, a special transitional object, which they have fashioned on the basis of their experience with significant others and what their community and family have told them about God. According to Ana-Maria Rizzuto who has used Winnicott's notion of transitional phenomena in describing the formation of a psychic representation of God, when the notion of God is first introduced to a child, usually in response to his or her questions about the cause of things, the child images this superior being as similar to his or her parents, only of greater power and size. The child forms this notion of God based on his or her previous interpersonal experience with parents and other significant figures. Much like an artist who works with some material as a medium, the child fashions a God-representation using the memories as a medium. The God-image is a new and original creation of the child's based on his or her experience in the interpersonal environment of the home.

The first God-image can be reshaped at each stage of life. Rizzuto observed that mature believers typically renew their God representation to make it compatible with their emotional situation and self-development. For some, however, the image of God does not get revised and so becomes unrelated to their current sense of self. That image can mirror and intensify characteristics of parents or other important figures which are counter to one's growing sense of belief about the nature of God's relationship to people.

[7] Roy Schafer, *A New Language for Psychoanalysis* (New Haven, CT: Yale University press, 1976), p. 23.

In reshaping the God representation, the believer seeks to capture the transcendent more adequately in the finite and inevitably flawed medium of memories. Art, liturgy, theology, and ongoing experience can serve as guides for some, provided there is a foundation of dynamic memories of loving relationships on which to build. In the faith encounter with the sacred which is prayer, images are often purified, transformed, and transcended, though gradually and at times painfully. The reworking of the God representation can be a gradual process unfolding somewhat naturally in the course of spiritual development or a sudden and more dramatic breakthrough to a new way of imaging God occasioned by some powerful experience. Ruby Turpin's new vision is triggered by the disruptive remark of the girl. That remark brings Ruby to a transforming moment.

Transforming Moments: A Theological Perspective

The dynamics of transforming moments such as Ruby Turpin's have been studied by the theologian James Loder.[8] The conviction which comes in such moments, Loder argues, provides new knowledge about the world, the self, and God. The new sense of reality which arises in these convictional experiences includes an awareness of the void which threatens humanity, ultimately personal or collective death. It moves beyond the void to recognize that which negates the threat — the holy. Whereas ordinary knowing is two-dimensional, focusing on the self and the world, the knowledge which emerges from transforming moments is four-dimensional, incorporating the void and the holy as well. Transforming knowing comes as the result of a five part process.

Transformational knowing begins in an experience of conflict when previous ways of knowing begin to break down. A similar phenomenon confronts a person trying to solve a puzzle. The puzzle for Ruby Turpin is how to understand the remark that has been hurled at her so undeservedly. When attempts at solving the puzzle based on one's usual interpretative schemes fail, the second step finds people scanning the field of possibilities for a new perspective while they continue to be challenged by the conflict. This scanning, which relies heavily on the imagination, is both a conscious and an unconscious process. Thirdly, an intuition or insight which gives a clue to the resolution of the conflict appears on the boundary between the unconscious and the conscious as a result of the constructive act of the imagination. At this point, a new way of seeing the situation is offered. With the appearance of the insight, the knower experiences a surge of energy — energy formerly absorbed by the conflict. Release from the conflict in this fourth step gives rise to self-transcendence. The new insight makes possible finally a reinterpretation of the problem situation. A new vision is applied to the former conflict and to a corresponding world view. As O'Connor ends her story,

At length . . . [Ruby] made her slow way on the darkening path to the house. In the woods around her the invisible cricket choruses had struck up, but what she heard were the voices of the souls climbing upward into the starry field and shouting hallelujah.[9]

Loder shows that the pattern of transformational knowing is operative in areas as diverse as education, therapy, and scientific discovery. In every case an imaginative leap brings about a resolution of a conflict situation. On the personal level, the puzzle or conflict which faces people can present itself in the form of a divided self, a self torn between its desires and its limits. The

[8] James Loder, *The Birth of the Living God: A Psychoanalytic Study* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

[9] O'Connor, *The Complete Short Stories*, p. 509.

void can be experienced as absence, loneliness, shame, guilt, hatred, the demonic, or death. It comes into clear view when a person's world begins to break apart in the experience of some conflict and life's order is shattered. In Loder's analysis there is something more than the threat of the void. In a convictional experience the face of the void is negated and transformed into the face of God. At these times a person is brought face to face with the graciousness of Being itself. By finding his or her self grounded in its very source, the person realizes that his or her true nature is to be a self that gives love.

Convictional knowing is experienced as a gift from the all-gracious God. The conversion or change it accomplishes brings a radical recentering of the person on God. Loder indicates that in the course of any human development the transformational process can be seen at work. The stages of development bring people time and time again to a breakdown of a secure world of their own and society's making. While Loder illuminates in a special way the sudden, discontinuous, or unexpected element in such development, others have mapped out the more regular progression in revising and revisioning one's outlook or frame of reference which occurs across the life span.

Faith's Imagining and Developmental Stages

O'Connor does provide the reader with some data about Ruby Turpin which helps position her developmentally in terms of life stages. At one point, after O'Connor has Ruby notice a girl of eighteen or nineteen reading a book, entitled *Human Development,* she tells us that Ruby is forty-seven and so in the midlife period.[10] James Fowler, in his theory of faith development, attempts to highlight what faith's imagining might be like at the midlife period, as well as at the other life stages.[11] For Fowler, faith is a process of knowing and valuing, a dynamic activity which creates and sustains an organizing frame of meaning for life. Faith provides a "dependable life space" in which persons find meaning and order for human existence. It does this through imaging an "ultimate environment," an outer boundary to all that goes on in life. As Fowler observes, "Faith, as imagination, grasps the ultimate conditions of our existence, unifying them into a comprehensive image in light of which we shape our responses and initiatives, our actions."[12]

Following the work of Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, and Lawrence Kohlberg in cognitive, psychosocial, and moral development respectively, Fowler proposes a stage theory of faith development. In his system there is a pre-stage of undifferentiated faith at the beginnings of life. He relates this faith to the issue of trust versus mistrust which Erikson has designated as the first psychosocial crisis a person faces.[13] Stage I emerges by the age of two; this is an intuitive-projective faith characterized by powerful images around which the world of experience is unified. With continued psychosocial maturation and cognitive development, a mythic-literal faith, stage II, makes its appearance around the age of seven when narrative becomes important for giving coherence to experience. Stage III, a synthetic-conventional faith, is an attempt to understand the ultimate environment in interpersonal terms. This stage has its ascendancy in adolescence when a person is concerned with establishing identity. As a move toward a coherent worldview in terms of which one learns to understand the self and others, it is a conformist stage. Though characteristic of the adolescent, this stage of faith development may be the last reached by some adults.

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[10] *The Transforming Moment: Understanding Convictional Experiences* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).
[11] *Ibid*., p. 490.
[12] *The Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981).
[13] *Ibid*. p. 25.

With the advent of young adulthood, an individual, reflective faith, stage IV, comes into prominence. This faith has the characteristics of critical reflection on identity and worldview in which young adults typically engage. Less dependent on authority, these people now make their own judgments and formulate a coherent worldview which makes sense to them. Symbols are translated into conceptual meanings, and a multi-layered reality is often simplified for the sake of comprehensibility.

At midlife, unconscious forces begin to intrude into carefully ordered existences, and this sets the stage for a transition to stage V, conjunctive faith. Much of what was overlooked in stage IV now begins to be incorporated. Symbols are appreciated for the depths of meaning they point to as well as for their conceptual meaning. Fowler speaks of:

the rise of the ironic imagination — a capacity to see and be in one's or one's groups most powerful meanings, while simultaneously recognizing that they are relative, partial and inevitably distorting apprehensions of transcendent reality.[14]

Conjunctive faith implies a new acquisition of personal identity which is more open to the unconscious depths of the person. It involves coming to terms with personal history, reclaiming overlooked parts of that history, and reworking the understanding of the whole. With it comes a willingness to meet reality on its own terms and a more ardent pursuit of a multifaceted truth. Paradox and apparent contradictions are not only tolerated but are now seen as necessary dimensions of a true vision of reality. The faith vision which Ruby Turpin gains at the end of the story suggests a conjunctive faith appropriate to midlife development.

Universalizing faith is the designation Fowler gives to stage VI. He feels that few achieve this level of faith development. In this faith the imaging of the ultimate environment is the most inclusive of all being. People possessing such faith are radically committed to justice and love and work for the transformation of the world.

In a summary statement about the theory, Fowler has indicated:

The theory precisely is about a study of the process in which persons gradually disembed themselves from dominantly unconscious structuring of self-other, selfworld relations, and through a series of stages develop the possibilities of more conscious and critical structuring of their worlds and meanings.[15]

Fowler's theory is not without its problems among which is its failure to acknowledge adequately the role of unconscious elements such as the internalized world of object relations in any of the faith positions.[16] While he seeks to give appropriate place to both affectivity and cognition in faith, he nevertheless understates the importance of the affective and relational dimension in faith's evolution. Although the point is debated, Fowler argues that faith development provides the anchor and backdrop for moral development. Fuller appreciation of faith's imagining as guiding and sustaining moral development and activity would require more careful explication of faith's relational elements than Fowler has given. Certainly, Ruby Turpin's new faith vision

[14] In more recent writings, Fowler has designated this prestage as stage one. See his *Becoming Adult, Becoming Christian: Adult Development and Christian Faith* (San Francisco, CA: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 52.

[15] *The Stages of Faith*, p. 198.

[16] "Dialogue Toward a Future," in *Faith Development and Fowler*, eds. Craig Dykstra and Sharon Parks (Birmingham, AL: Religious Education Press, 1986), p. 279.

implies a new way of construing relationships between herself and others which would impact how she lives morally.

Moral Development and Moral Decision-Making

Contemporary research in both religious ethics and moral development provides evidence of a growing appreciation of the role of imagination, relationships and affectivity in moral growth and moral decision-making. Many questions remain as to how the cognitive and the affective and relational domains combine and interact in the evolution of the moral subject. There is an increasing consensus that in the relational and affective spheres moral development is furthered significantly by such factors as the process of internalization, the capacity for empathy and concern, and transitional experiencing. In the process of internalization the imaginal representations of significant figures in childhood are stored in the internal world of the mind thus making possible an internal regulation of behavior. The subject is now provided with readily available working models of relationships and behaviors. As Paul W. Pruyser has observed:

Mental images of the parents, therefore, no matter how fragmentary and far from holistic they may be in early childhood, serve as behavioral organizers which not only represent the child's archive of person-related experiences but function adaptively in his anticipations, guiding his coping efforts and turning these into habits or traits.[17]

Freud spoke of internalization in his account of the formation of the superego as a regulator of behavior at the time of the resolution of the Oedipal complex.[18] Today the focus is on seeing the internalization as beginning much earlier in the preoedipal period. Ruby Turpin's way of reacting to people such as the white trash would have roots in her experience of the way her parents dealt with various groups. She would have internalized not only aspects of them, but also aspects of the culture of which they were a part.

Empathy, the ability to feel with another, and the capacity for concern have their roots in infancy and the close bond between mother and infant. Empathy provides the emotional foundation for the later cognitive capacity for taking a social perspective, for looking at situations from the other person's vantage point. Lack of empathy is a characteristic of a narcissistic personality and accounts for the difficulty such people have in interpersonal relationships.[19] The capacity for concern emerges in the context of the young child's effort to relate to the mother as a person who both satisfies and frustrates him or her. The child gradually senses that the "good mother" who provides food and the "bad mother" who frustrates the child's desire for immediate satisfaction are one and the same person. According to Winnicott, it senses, too, that the very one on whom its well-being depends is the same one whom it has wished to destroy. But now the child begins to feel concern for the mother and goes through a period of anxiety related to the feeling of almost having lost or destroyed the mother on whom it depends. An experience of guilt over such possible damage signals the ability to tolerate the ambivalence of conflicted feelings of love and hate directed to the same object. This anxiety is dealt with through reparation and various restitutive

[17] See McDargh, , *Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory and the Study of Religion*, pp. 43-44.

[18] *The Play of the Imagination: Toward a Psychoanalysis of Culture* (New York: International Universities Press, 1983), p. 45.

[19] "The Ego and the Id," in *Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1961), Vol. 19, pp. 3-66.

gestures.[20] The capacity for concern as well as the desire to make reparation are vitally important for moral development. Again people with certain personality disorders such as the narcissistic seem unable to experience such concern. There is, indeed, a narcissistic flavor to Ruby's indifference and lack of concern for certain groups.

In a similar way, the antisocial personality lacks, according to some commentators, the ability for transitional relatedness and experiencing. Transitional experiencing here involves ultimately holding before oneself an illusion, a vision of life which gives meaning and direction and provides solace. Concern with fostering moral development has led some researchers to study the way in which visions of how to live morally are passed on. This in turn has led to consideration of how stories impact on the moral imagination, shape character and impart a vision.

Stories, Character and Moral Development

Bruno Bettelheim has explored the role of fairy tales in providing children with moral guidance and enabling them to work through emotional experiences. Bettelheim writes:

[The child] needs — and this hardly requires emphasis at this moment in our history — a moral education which subtly, and by implication only, conveys to him the advantages of moral behavior, not through abstract ethical concepts but through that which seems tangibly right and therefore meaningful to him. The child find this kind of meaning through fairy tales.[21]

Stanley Hauerwas and Craig Dykstra have studied the role of stories in the Christian community for guiding ethical behavior. Stories, of course, have an implied worldview and coherence; they form character. By character Hauerwas and Dykstra mean the coherence of one's moral life which comes about through looking at life in a particular way. A person of good character is one who in the light of a community's stories has made of his or her life a story which adequately ties together past, present and future and fits with what the world is really like. Stories which impact on character are stories which embody fundamental convictions, beliefs which direct the way individuals should act and see. Communities are made up of people who share stories, convictions and visions.

The use of stories in a community process of moral education and formation is longstanding, but has received additional support in recent years. At the turn of the century Edwin Diller Starbuck (1866-1941), a pioneer in the psychology of religion, developed a program of moral education which was centered around great literature. He believed that moral education was best pursued indirectly by introducing children to carefully selected literature. The Institute for Research in Character which he established attempted to prepare a bibliography of children's literature for each grade in the public schools. An illustration of contemporary interest in the use of stories in forms of moral education is a recent book of Robert Coles entitled *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination.* In that work, Coles discusses Flannery O'Connor as one writer who addresses matters of the soul in her narratives. His whole presentation is a testimony to the power of stories for imparting moral understanding.

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[20] See Gertrude and Rubin Blanck, *Beyond Ego Psychology: Developmental Object Relations Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 14; Heinz Kohut, "Introspection, Empathy, and Psychoanalysis: An Examination of the Relationship Between Mode of Observation and Theory," *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 7 (1959).

[21] Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment*.

The role of stories in moral decision-making has been addressed in recent studies of the process of discernment. The attention given to a topic such as discernment in ethics and moral theology is an instance of a movement beyond logic and deductive methodologies in understanding the complexities of the moral life. Discernment has been traditionally understood as an assessment of inspirations, intuitions, affective states, and impulses in terms of their sources and their congruity with the overall direction of a person's life. To study moral discernment is in part to study the role of imagination and creativity in the exercise of moral responsibility. For criteria in evaluating appropriate moral choices discernment from a Christian perspective makes use of the central stories of the Christian tradition and basic affections or virtues of the Christian life such as radical dependence on God and repentance. The symbols and stories of the Scriptures make their impact on the moral imagination and give rise to a moral vision. With the aid of the scriptural stories as paradigms, the person sees more clearly the action of God in personal history and the events of the times. The Biblical narratives and symbols provide normative guidance so that an appropriate moral response to God's activity may be taken.

The story of Ruby Turpin likewise offers a moral vision to readers. Even if one does not share the religious outlook of Flannery O'Connor, the story gives a powerful lesson about how people imagine, how their imagining bears on the way they live, and how that imagining suddenly can be changed. While not classic in the same way a Biblical story is taken as a classic, the story does convey the truth of what life ultimately is about. Against the backdrop of this story people can discern their own prejudices and narrowness and discern as well a new vision of humanity and a new level of moral life.

A visionary light settled in her eyes. She saw the streak as a vast swinging bridge extending upward from the earth through a field of living fire. Upon it a vast horde of souls were rumbling toward heaven. There were whole companies of white-trash, clean for the first time in their lives.[22]

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Chapter VII
The Necessity of the Imaginative Dimension of Moral Living

Edward L. Murray

The human person is a complex phenomenon, indeed, and cannot be adequately understood if his/her complexity is studied in a reductionist manner. Nor should we attempt to explain away that complexity. Rather, it must be explicated as fully as our present grasp of the human situation allows, As a gesture towards rendering that complexity more intelligible, I have elsewhere availed myself of an analogy, limited indeed but yet for present purposes still quite valuable: the analogy of a car.

We can compare every person to a car going down the path of life. It is riding on four wheels: the physical, the intellectual, the moral — ethical-spiritual (the behavioral), and the emotional wheels. These are four critical aspects of our human nature and personality that must be aligned if we hope to succeed in bringing this nature into a rich, creative, and supernaturally fruitful cooperation with God's graces. Corresponding to these four wheels are four maturities that must be developed in a person to enable him/her to effect that cooperation: physical maturity, intellectual maturity, moral-ethical-spiritual maturity, and emotional maturity.[1]

The analogy is not without considerable appeal. In fact, it provides significant comprehensibility to the human vital endeavor, providing it with an intelligible synthesis and direction that, without it or some similar analogy, might well elude us. Best of all, for present purposes, it also provides for us a context in which to appreciate the meaningful and needed contribution that moral maturity in particular makes to the human endeavor and enterprise. We shall return to this matter subsequently, after first studying the nature and impact of human moral effort in our lives, as well as the unique contribution our imaginative effort makes to our moral expression.

Recent years have witnessed many serious challenges to the notion — understanding and practicality of human morality and especially to its traditional notions. Such challenges have been leveled on many sides, but none more eloquently than those rising from considerations advanced by thoughtful feminists, who see a close relationship between genderized conceptions of self and the accompanying conceptions of morality. The latter, it is contended, seemingly mirror in the moral domain the discrepancies and disparities evidenced in the domain of personality theory and development. Such writers, in short, would argue for a reconsideration of our sexual, moral and effective analyses of human nature. More specifically, Carol Gilligan, et al, see masculine morality understood primarily, if not exclusively, in terms of justice, while feminine morality is understood primarily, if not exclusively in terms of care. As a consequence, it is contended, the entire appreciation of genuine human and moral development has been lessened, if not caricatured.

In a recent publication Gilligan stated this as follows:

The two perspectives we have designated as a 'justice orientation' and a 'care orientation' imply a shift in the conception of what is relevant to the moral domain. According to this thesis, the, two orientations would not only entail different notions of morality manifest in different forms of moral reasoning but also different conceptions of the emotions and the relationship of the emotions with

[1] E.L. Murray, "Personality Development in the Classroom," *The Catholic Educator* (1960).

morality. Certain activities that are treated dismissively from one perspective may be elevated from a different perspective. For example, forms of human relationship that, from the perspective of a justice orientation, may be relegated to the status of residues of an outgrown developmental stage may, from a care orientation, be viewed as significant and even central. This shift in world view is key to our representation of the moral significance of attachment relationships, seen not as residues of early childhood need, but as central to the development of what in the past was called 'moral sensibility.' Detachment, which is highly valued as the mark of mature moral judgment in the justice framework becomes in the care framework a sign of moral danger, a loss of connection with others. The sharp subject-object distinction that is considered essential to development in most psychological theories, thus, is called into question. A more fluid conception of self in relation to others is tied to the growth of the affective imagination, namely, the ability to enter into and understand through taking on and experiencing the feelings of others.[2]

Elsewhere Gilligan has addressed the need to rethink our prevailing conceptions of morality and see them as it were in terms of each other — each quite human.

We began with a question about the disappearance of the issue of sex differences in the discussion of moral development. In the course of this article we have suggested how that discussion might be transformed into a more general dialogue between two moral voices whose deep resonance in human experiences suggests their origins in early childhood. . . . We have suggested that men and women may have a tendency to see from different standpoints or, put differently, to lose sight of different perspectives. Our view of morality as originating in early childhood relationships makes it possible to explain how men and women can become both cold and sentimental when genuine attachments fail. It also calls attention to the fact that we are all destined to be unequal when young and to strive toward moral equality as we grow older. While it is true that either we are men or we are women and certain experiences may accrue more readily to one or the other sex, it is also true that the capacity for love and the appreciation of justice is not limited to either sex.[3]

Such critiques of human conceptions of morality are not to be taken lightly. To be sure, they may themselves be subject to worthy critique as well, as in the apparent failure or refusal to see both justice and care as degrees of love and human concern. Justice is that minimum of love that *every* person is by right entitled to; care is that growing measure of love for which all human beings, female and male, aspire. Nonetheless, the Gilligan critique aptly points to the human need for sensitive and tender relationships for which all humans, at all ages, have the radical capacity and which should be cultivated from the very outset of life to its very end.

Imagination and Being Human

Our emphasis here would focus on a theme that is different, though not unrelated to the justice-care articulation cited above. We would begin by stating that morality, moral living, lies at the very heart of being human. It is not a luxury in human life; it is a necessity that permeates the entire human scene, even though our much muddled thought so often blinds us to its presence and its significance. The fact that people can and do act immorally is no argument against our claim; if anything it serves to strengthen it and proves its importance in the human picture of life by both

[2] C. Gilligani and G. Wiggins, "The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships" in *Mapping the Moral Domain* Eds. C. Gilligan, J. Ward, J. Taylor, and B. Bardige (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 119.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 136.

its worthy presence and its frightening, painful absence. At the same time that absence, when verified, serves to illustrate our need seriously to study just what morality is all about, not only to understand better why we suffer during its regrettable absence, but especially to learn how to further and foster its much needed presence.

We have just stated above that morality lies at the very heart of our being human. We now would repeat that statement but in a fuller context. The truth is that two significant realizations are necessary for a proper appreciation of our subject. The first is the fact that imagination lies at the very heart of our being moral; the second is the fact that morality lies at the very heart of our being human. Let us attend to each point.

Imagination and Morality

One of the significant realizations that emerged from the Heideggerian analysis of human existence was the realization that we humans live constantly in a world of personal, as well as collective, communal projections. Unlike Freudian projections that have to deal with our interpersonal suspicions and defenses, Heidegger speaks of projections as our living creatively in a horizontal world. This is true whether we are actually in the process of creating or not; indeed, that is irrelevant. Heidegger's is an emphasis on the human manner of being-in-the-world. By world he did not mean just the things of nature or the countless artifacts that attend our existence. He was referring to the humanly created world of referentiality in which all humans live one way or the other: those thrusts that we humans are ever making as we move into our projects. No human is ever without projects, for that is the characteristically human way of being "there-in-the-world." We are *there-in-the-world* and we are ever ahead-of-ourselves. We humans are ever engaged ahead-of-ourselves; and it is these projects with their respective projections that constitute in their unique way the life pursuits that are ours and comprise our way of being. To be sure, they originate in part and are culled from our education, our religion, our culture and enculturation, our ideals, our dreams, our history. But, be that as it may, they are spelled out concretely in the projections that we formulate for the respective life tasks in which we are ever engaging.

It goes without saying that our projects are remarkably permeated with our respective imaginative genius, such as it may be. For it is thanks to our imaginative thrusts that we persons are verily engaged in our specific situations even before we actually enter into them. This is the extraordinary feature of the human imagination: it enables us to participate in some way, even before we actually take part. We may call this our imaginative rehearsal of life, such as the high diver performs on the board just before springing off, or the applicant does as he/she moves towards a job interview with a prospective employer. In the words of Paul Ricoeur, thanks to our imagination we become, so to speak, the prophets of our own existence. This, to repeat, is a truly remarkable feature of human living: we engage life imaginatively before we actually do so concretely.

It is this dimension of our existence that is so relevant for our moral living. Indeed, we stated above that it is at the heart of that living. Morality, we should realize, does not slip surreptitiously into the human picture or enter post factum by the back door of one's life. In life it is quite the contrary. Morality is very much there even before the story itself unfolds or is enacted. Strange as it may sound, we live in the moral anticipation of our lives and wondrously bedeck them with moral dimensions and implications prior to effectively living them out. This is the extraordinary quality of human living, now applied to its moral sphere. The giftedness of one's imagination renders it all possible and makes the difference.

This should come as no surprise to the person who has chosen to think it through. We shall address shortly the role of morality in human living, and that consideration will provide the overall context for these present observations. Our focus at the moment is the impact of imagination, or better still, imaginative thinking, on moral experience. Our moral effort impacts human life: our own as well as that of others. In other words, our moral projections and moral efforts deal with our understanding of the purpose of living. If morality were totally absent (an impossible supposition, to be sure, but one we make for present purposes), human life would lose its humanity; whereas when it permeates the scene of life, we deal with a truly human situation in a truly human manner. Thus, it is not to be taken lightly or so casually dismissed. By that very token, our imaginative projections having to do with this aspect of life are of powerful importance. Thanks to imaginative projections, the moral dimension looms up so uniquely, for the imaginative projections bring morality so warmly and significantly alive.

That the creative projections of one's life have much to do with our personal and aesthetic achievement is obvious enough; they constitute its very base. But by the same token they have much to do with our moral achievement as well. The moral dimension of life manifests the impact our actions wield on the personal and/or social lives of myself and others who somehow are entailed in those same achievements, Those actions are directed and effective as they are thanks to the imaginative projections that have brought them into being in the first place, as well as the imaginative projections that have provided them whatever efficacy they have maintained since. Moral actions are as permeated with human imagination (and all that entails) as are our artistic, literary, aesthetic or our prosaic accomplishments. The imagination has bequeathed to our endeavors their potency for furthering decent human behavior, for fostering equitable human interaction and for promoting the sharing of vital human love. Meanwhile, the moral actions themselves, that eventuate from such imaginatively inspired endeavor, bespeak and redound to that indispensable imaginative base whence they originated.

Carl Rogers has shown convincingly that the human being's action never reaches an endpoint. We remain forever engaged, engaging, becoming. As one moves into creative engagement with his/her projects, one does so anticipatively and, subsequently, belatedly. One guides, so to speak, one's efforts, bequeathing them meaning and role in the unfolding of life and bestowing upon them moral implications that befit and affect human living. Those actions, tied to one's life, acquire their full significance from their place in and contribution to my life, just as my own life in turn experiences its own increase or impoverishment from the actions I have performed. The impact, in brief, is mutual. My actions, whether merely anticipated or actually performed, are of me, as I am inevitably of them. We find purpose, as it were, in and from each other. Our imaginative, anticipative moral enrichment redounds to our imaginative, actualized moral performance, and vice-versa. In short, the imaginative dimension is at the heart of our moral living.

Morality and Living Humanly

To repeat the second point, morality itself lies at the heart of our being human. To understand properly just what is implied by such a comment, we need to see that the human experience in all its phases is intrinsically *othered.* Whether we work alone or together we are ever "of each other." To grasp the spirit of this truth — a truth that Heidegger once again develops so powerfully in *Being and Time* — I would quote two passages from Robert Frost, "The Tuft of Flowers." In the first passage, he has described his reactions upon finding that the man who had mowed the grass earlier in the morning has now left the scene of the mowing:

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.
But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been, — all alone,
'As all must be,' I said within my heart,
'Whether they work together or apart.'

Shortly after, however, Frost came to a new appreciation about the worker, who apparently in his sensitivity had spared a strikingly beautiful tuft of flowers striding the brook — a gesture that fired the heart and imagination of Frost himself:

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,
And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;
But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;
And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.
'Men work together, I told him from the heart,
Whether they work together or apart.'[4]

That people work together, whether they are together or apart, was addressed by Heidegger at length in a chapter on human interpersonality in *Being and Time*. Not spelled out in detail, but clearly stated in his discussion was the realization, that everything about the human being from head to toes owes its being in some way to the imagination, labors and thoughtfulness, of other people. This is true of our clothes, homes, tools, and everything else. The fact that we pay for them is irrelevant; they are made for people by other people, and we are only too willing to advance the requisite money in exchange for the goods in question. Conversely, the same can be said of our own labors and efforts: they too are meant for others' use, aid, and needs. The same can be said of all human artifacts. The very living out of life somehow constantly is centered around the presence of others — whether emotionally close to us or not being a consideration of secondary import. Preferences and distances aside, others ever still remain necessary in our life picture: we do not, cannot, and will not *be* without them.

By the same token our civilization in all its forms cries out for other human beings who have made it possible for us to be, as individuals, communities, tribes or nations. Meanwhile, there are those special persons who share our more intimate exchanges, whose presence in our lives deeply sustains us and whose loss deeply pains us. In short, human life is ever a peopled life and never ceases to be such. Even the person who is angry at life, resentful about it or would flee from it peoples it emotionally, though in another way. This being the case, we move slowly but inevitably towards the realization that we are ever of, for, with, each other in some way. Even our rest or vacations which take us away from each other for a period of time ultimately are designed to renew us so that we can then experience a return to those we love. This is what it means to be *of* each other.

[4] R. Frost, *Complete Poems of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964).

Interrelatedness, as is now apparent, is the human lot, even if on occasion it takes the form of anger, quarreling or hostility. Paradoxical as it may sound, war itself is but another, admittedly drastic, way of engaging another country that, for whatever reason, presumably has failed to take us, or our people's freedom or rights seriously and respectfully — or so it seems to us. We deem it imperative to wage war to bring the enemy to its human senses. When all is said and done, it appears no exaggeration to say that even war is a desperate and usually futile way of countries making love. In truth, they need each other, and so often want each other, but have not yet devised an effective way of living out respectful love for each other. Until they do so, however, they continue periodic fighting, as do people, hoping that someday they may learn to relate in more genuine loving.

Our point in brief is quite clear. People are people through and through, but cannot be so without dealing in some way with others. Thus, the interrelatedness and mutual otherness that they are calls for appropriate respect and solicitous effort in mutual exchanges, so that they might truly live out the interrelatedness and mutual desire that they are.

This is precisely morality; it is in the living out of the implications of that interpersonal relatedness of us that morality originates. We simply cannot "be" without each other, and morality is that interpersonal prerequisite whose presence in our relationships guarantees that we continue to "be" with each other. Thus, it is not our presumed superiority over, our alleged independence of, or our would be autonomy from other people that founds our morality. It is our realization that we are of, with, towards and for each other (as individuals, groups, communities, and nations) that founds the morality that would govern our human interrelatedness. Morality is that requisite quality that makes our genuine relatedness possible in the first place, sustains it as a living reality, and enables us human beings to be the human beings together that we are and really want to be. Morality cannot be understood as a mere social contract we deviously or desperately concoct. On the contrary, morality is the honest and respectful recognition of our social interrelatedness, interdependence and mutual neediness on the personal and social, national and international, levels and the genuine lived acceptance of the practical implications of that mutual relatedness.

It takes little imagination to see that without genuine morality people cannot live on the earth indefinitely. The world is a very finite location for human habitation with its limited resources. We live between two significant layers of protection, one is the layer of earth and the other is our atmosphere: both resources must be respected and protected if the human race is to survive. Recent developments in regard to both have led to serious concern that the very technology designed to aid the human race may end up ultimately destroying it. Seemingly, without our realizing it, we are beginning to see the makings of a moral question that may soon confront the peoples of our world. A second danger is nuclear warfare. A third is the cruel imprisonment that many countries of the world have suffered at the hands of dictators and despots — again a vital issue with obvious moral dimensions.

When one ponders such matters it becomes apparent that the issue of morality is one the human race is being forced to take more and more seriously. Addiction, corruption in government and industry, apartheid, racism, sexism, all point to a growing realization that there is a moral dimension of life that can no longer be taken for granted. Our humanity has a need for an appreciation of the contribution it has to offer our increasingly threatened existence. Moral maturation must receive the same serious study that other fields have had over the centuries, for its contribution to human living may prove in the end to be the one that uniquely preserves the human quality of our existence.

Morality is the love demand that people and peoples as such have upon each other. Like oxygen to the human body, it certainly is not a luxury we can learn to do without, for it is the living out of our relatedness in such a way that our living together as humans is guaranteed and beautifully enhanced.

Language and Metaphor in Moral Life

The preceding discussion, focussing as it did on the significance of our imaginative projections in the moral experience and of morality in our human experience, does not by any means exhaust the contribution that imagination makes to the human's moral life. We would address now that specific manner in which the imagination provides us humans with the moral strength we need to face and resolve the serious problems with which we are confronted in daily life. In doing so, we shall embark on a discussion on language, which rarely is given adequate, or extended, attention in human life — it is no accident that man was defined by the early Greeks as a *zoan logon echon*, a living being gifted with the power of logos, languaging. Language is significant in our human moral life.

Heidegger finds a poem by the German poet, Stefan George, to illustrate the full significance of language:

Words

Wonder or dream from distant land I carried to my country's strand
And waited till the twilit morn
Had found the name within her bourn —
Then I could grasp it close and strong
It blooms and shines now the front along . . .
Once I returned from happy sail, I had a prize so rich and frail,
She sought for long and tiding told: "No like of this these depths enfold."
And straight it vanished from my hand,
The treasure never graced my land . . .
So I renounced and sadly see:
Where word breaks off no thing may be.[5]

This poem constitutes a remarkable tribute to the great power that inhabits language. While there is no question as to the importance of language in communication, few appreciate its unique role in the task of constitution. French phenomenologist, Maurice Merleau-Ponty once quoted a valuable passage from his masterpiece, The *Phenomenology of Perception,* and then interrogated himself about it as follows:

Is this correct? What I call the tacit *cogito* is impossible. To have the idea of 'thinking' (in the sense of the 'thought of seeing and of feeling'), to make the "reduction," to return to immanence and to . . . consciousness . . . it is necessary to have words. It is by the combination of words (with their charge of sedimented significations, which are in principle capable of entering into other

[5] S. George, quoted in *On the Way to Language* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959/1971).

relations than the relations that have served to form them) that I form the transcendental attitude, that I constitute the constitutive consciousness."[6]

In short, he had come to see in words a power that he had not truly appreciated some fifteen years previously. We, too, fail in this appreciation. It is when we move into the matter of metaphor that we come upon the issue of language and its relevance for the moral situation. Unfortunately, moral study rarely has come to grips with the question of language, particularly the relationship between language and moral strength, though language is probably the most significant aspect of our moral endeavor. As does little else, it joins the emotional, intellectual, and moral resources of the human person — all of which factors constantly enter the picture of morality. It is not mere language alone, however, that impacts the individual in his moral behavior, but one's imaginative language or imaginative thinking. This point is critical for understanding the issue that we are now raising.

Imaginative thinking is just that: a cognitive task that is distinguished by unique features which entail a potency not to be found in purely logical thought and language. To put it another way, the imaginative thinker is free from the outset to move in many directions, even though his movements may temporarily endeavor or challenge what has been accepted in his industry or field. It is not a form of iconoclasm, but a new metaphorization of thought. The traditional logical thinker is intent on cautious plodding, testing, building with critical acumen brought to bear on the process of sifting, dividing, distinguishing and negating. Such a procedure guarantees the logical thinker that he or she is on solid ground, and the need to retrace steps will be minimized. The imaginative thinker, however, will proceed in a more literal fashion, going a long way around with leaps, small or gigantic, that enable him to cover much ground quickly and cursorily until he is brought to a position that holds out the promise he was seeking. Everything in sight holds up some possibility, and the choice is between possibilities. Where the logical thinker carefully establishes his or her ground, finding building blocks and testing the progress at each stage, the imaginative thinker sees building blocks everywhere, so to speak, and selects for the time being any and all, knowing full well that he or she ultimately will settle for certain ones at the appropriate moment. Unlike the logical thinker, the imaginative one will suspend decision after decision — all such may, indeed, enter the picture in due time but only in due time, and then only to the extent that they are truly required.

To contrast briefly the two styles of thinking, let us say that imaginative thinking is strongly intent on the realization of its goal. In this respect, it is no different from logical thinking, but it is convinced that the roads to the goal are many. The fact that others have not found them is no proof that they do not exist. Secondly, it employs a bracketing procedure, termed "epoche," allowing for a suspension of judgment in several respects. Above all, one's goals must remain wide open for considerable time, and one's means — concepts and judgments — must remain tentative or hypothetical as long as possible. Options are kept open to allow for the onset of new possibilities on every side. As is apparent, this kind of thinking is quite far from the method of the logical thinker. Thirdly, it not only does not ask for clear and distinct ideas at the outset, it actually welcomes conceptual ambiguity as the seed of possibility. Even though it may move rapidly and laterally, imaginative thinking would maximize the complexity of situations in the hope of bringing them to life. Exploiting the nebulous and the vacuous is itself a liberating and strengthening experience. Fourthly, it allows for the nonsequiturs that creep into the human picture of thought, considering them a small price to pay for the compensation they can render to one who

[6] M. Merleau-Ponty, *Visible and Invisible*, trans. A. Linguis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964/1968).

is patient and tolerant. For such a person there rests in the experience of illogicalities the makings of significant metaphorizations that can alter the course of our lives. Fifthly, imaginative thinking is willing to entertain even the unimaginable as long as one can, not ruling out its generative potential. This occurred when negative numbers or imaginary numbers were introduced into mathematics, and when Euclidean axioms were reversed, despite their productivity, and nonEuclidean postulates were entertained for what they were worth — which history later showed to be invaluable. Suffice to say that moral maturity and personality integration (issues which we shall address later in our treatment) call for purely logical and highly imaginative thought and language. They call for a blending of both.

Phenomenological research has established the importance of consciousness in human living. That consciousness, however, is not to be identified with human rational dimensions any more than the imagination is to be identified with the unconscious. Human consciousness embraces both the logical and the imaginative. It is a proper human accomplishment to live both logically and imaginatively, and it may well be that the greatest human achievement of all lies in the experiential realization of genuine poetic living, thus optimizing the strong presence of both kinds of thinking in the human endeavor.

Realizing, then, the significance of imaginative thinking in human existence, it is but a small step to appreciate that specific form of imaginative thought embodied in human metaphorizations. To state it all rather succinctly, we can say that mere words, with their denotations and/or connotations, are not enough for living. They make things present, enable people to preside over the birth of beings, the event of reality, the shining forth of what is, and yet, they are not enough. Leaps beyond (*meta-pherein*) are necessary, for life is demanding on all sides in each person's moral struggles. Spouses, children, business — all raise expectations and clamor for attention or resolution; no one can afford the luxury of compartmentalization, for the realities of life are all intermeshed. New and more comprehensive formulations are constantly necessary to cope with the intricacies of life's moral demands. Thus, to move toward the articulations needed for life and to effect some kind of workable synthesis for oneself, the person cannot settle for staid, staticized, stenotypic language. He moves beyond it to metaphoricize it with a new synthesis that enables him to make even larger sense out of more and more of life.

Thus it is that everyone has recourse to his/her imaginative metaphorizations to deal with life's complexities, be they in the domain of health, economics or morals. In the domain of morals in particular, human beings have constant recourse to such imaginative unifications that have helped them make sense of life and its problems. For these, we often express a sign of relief and gratitude to parents, God, neighbors, or perhaps even just to ourselves for having had the good common sense to set aside a few moments of reflection or prayer to raise our minds and hearts to the grander view or to God. Thus it is that death can be seen as the Hand of God; that the onset of many problems can be viewed as God writing straight with crooked lines; that a horrible tragedy can be endured as a blessing in disguise; that the tribulations of age can be embraced as God giving and God taking away. With such metaphorizations, one can take on extraordinary strength and stature even in the midst of seemingly impossible moral crises.

Such metaphorizations, rising for the most part but not solely from religious backgrounds, enable people to deal straightforwardly with challenges. Such metaphorizations prove to be almost miraculously strengthening for everyone, whether they originate in religious or nonreligious cultures. An extraordinary example of such was in the November, 1989 revolution in Prague, when Alexander Dubcek cried out in powerful words to the Czechoslovak people, "If there once was light, why should there be darkness again?" The metaphor galvanized the populace and gave them

the moral strength to face death rather than submit to foreign slavery. Metaphorizations become indispensable ingredients in human living, provide incalculable moral strength, wisdom and hope for people in all walks of life. They express the ingenious contribution that imaginative language and thought makes to our life, especially in the domain of morals, where dealings with other people are so paramount but prove to be often quite subtle and emotionally draining.

Moral Imaginations and Personal Narrative Identity

The construction of one's human identity is a truly remarkable achievement: it begins while the child is still in the womb and continues until the day that the same person is placed in the grave. To say that the entire process is fully understood is unwarranted. We do indeed know much about the human's identity quest, but far less in comparison with what we do not know. Mystery still abounds on all sides: the impact of the biological and genetic; the influence of seemingly countless cultural factors that make their presence felt right from conception; and the contribution of the individual to his/her own becoming. In all this we are indeed dealing with the mysterious and the truly magnificent.

One of the most mysterious and magnificent aspects is the newly appreciated fact that one's personal identity has about it a narrative character with a distinctly imaginative thrust and an intrinsic moral dimension. Needless to say, this appreciation of human identity and its development marks a significant departure from the usual egological understanding of identity as a subject that remains identical with itself throughout a lifetime of changes, to say nothing of the Humean and Nietzchian understanding of our identity which would view the identical subject as nothing more than a substantialist illusion of thoughts, emotions and volitions. Understanding identity as narrative enables us to comprehend the phenomenon in terms of the configuration and refigurations narratives undergo, while maintaining a whole temporal structure that conforms to the model of dynamic identity that one finds in the poetic composition of a narrative text. In short, a narrative text allows for genuine intelligible identity while making room for the complexity of many disparate themes and even conflictual and contradictory episodes — none of which, individually or collectively, deprives it of being what it is. As Paul Ricoeur has phrased it, "The self characterized by self-sameness may then be said to be refigured by the reflective application of such narrative configurations. Unlike the abstract identity of the same, this narrative identity constitutive of self-constancy can include mutability within the cohesion of one lifetime. The subject then appears both as a reader and the writer of its own life, as Proust would have it."[7]

But there is more to be gained by this understanding of identity in terms of a narrative structure rather than of an abstract subject or substance that remains imprisoned within the castle that it is. Not only does the conception of identity as a narrative identity enable one to deal with the issue of substantiality and illusion cited previously, it also introduces as an inevitable constituent the question of morality, imaginatively confronted. As Ricoeur has pointed out, the model of identity as narrative introduces the power that narrative imaginatively wields on the reader, exercising the imagination more than the will, even though it remains a category of action.

It is true that this opposition between imagination and will applies most aptly to that moment of reading we called the moment of stasis. But we added that reading also includes a moment of impetus. This is where reading becomes a provocation to be and to act differently. However this impetus is transformed into action only through a decision whereby a person says: Here I stand!

[7] P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985/1988), vol. 3, p. 246.

So narrative identity is not equivalent to true self-constancy except through this decisive moment, which makes ethical responsibility the highest factor in self-constancy.[8]

It is clear, then, that the understanding of identity as a narrative identity introduces into the picture the issues of imagination and morality. To conceive the human as being best understood when understood as a narrative identity, however, requires that we respect the significance of the imaginative in his living as well as in his projected moral stances. Narration presents the reader a vision of the world that is never ethically or morally neutral, introducing from within the experience, as it does, a new evaluation of the world and of the reader in that proposed world.

In this sense, narrative already belongs to the ethical field, in virtue of its claim — inseparable from its narration — to ethical justice. Still it belongs to the reader, now an agent, an initiator of action, to choose among the multiple proposals of ethical justice brought forth by reading. It is at this point that the notion of narrative identity encounters its limit and has to link up with the non-narrative components in the formation of an acting subject.[9]

Narration, then, presents the reader with a vision that is not morally neutral and with which the reader must come to grips. By the same token, human identity, understood now as narrative, is seen as living his/her life amid situations that call forth some kind of moral response. It is characteristic of the life situation that the person, engaged in whatever circumstances, must meet the human challenge obsequiously or in a forthright dialectic manner. Either case constitutes a moral challenge that one must engage imaginatively and for which one must assume some measure of responsibility and accountability. Seeing one's life challenged in this light, brings one to a confrontation with both one's past and future, along with the moral implications that follow from decisions and actions already taken, as well as those that will follow from the decisions made in the present in virtue of the horizontal projections with which one is currently living. Obviously none of this is possible without the person's imaginative involvement. Indeed, were the narrative to fail to fire the reader's imagination it would soon die, for its entire enterprise is designed towards the imagination. By the same token, it is in the firing of one's imagination that one's personal life takes on its quality, depth and ardor. The life lived with an imagination so touched proves inspirational not only from decisions and actions already taken, as well as those only to the individual person involved, but also to all others whom destiny has brought into the life picture.

Moral Maturity

We have seen that the imaginative plays a critical role in moral living and, through moral living, in our being truly human; that it contributes tremendous strength towards the efficacy of our moral efforts; and, finally, that in a singular manner it furthers the structuring of our human identity understood as a narrative identity beset by challenges that call for genuine moral responses. We shall now return to the analogy with which we began, of the human moving through the path of life as much like a car riding on four wheels: the physical, the intellectual, the emotional and the moral-ethical-spiritual, analogous to the four principal maturities that call for our serious development. Such an analogy provides significant comprehensibility to the human vital endeavor, giving it a context in which to appreciate the meaningful and vital contribution that the respective maturities, in general, and moral maturity, in particular, make to the human endeavor and enterprise.

[8] *Ibid*., p. 249.
[9] *Ibid*., p. 249.

In his study, *The Mature Mind*, Overstreet calls the maturity concept the challenging concept of the 20th century. Valuable as his observations on maturity are, however, they leave something to be desired. Actually there are many maturities that a person must develop in the course of negotiating life — some primary, as we have just mentioned, and others secondary. But even more significant than the question of the respective maturities is that of their integration, how they are brought together in a truly developed person. It is this construct of integration that is slowly emerging as the most valuable of all personality concepts. It expresses most clearly and beautifully the purpose of all our personality efforts. For when the four principal maturities are developed in a person, when all our personal resources (physical, intellectual, emotional and moral-ethical-spiritual) are perfected and available, one can function as a totality, a synthesized human whole, a human integer in one's social setting — and not at loggerheads with himself or herself, others or God. Indeed, it is then that our fractioned life can give way to genuinely harmonized living. Nor need it be said that harmonized living delusionally presents itself as a veritable heaven on earth before the human can be said to be integrated. On the contrary, a heaven on earth is neither possible nor necessary for human happiness.

Human integration is a relative achievement, not an absolute. We labor towards it, be it integrated persons, integrated societies or an integrated world; and we do so, even though our understanding of integration in its various forms leaves much to be desired. Were it realized, however, we human beings could move confidently towards truly human resolutions of our inevitable human misunderstandings and conflicts. Let it be said that our shame, if shame there be, does not lie in the fact that we have our human problems; it lies rather in the fact that we do not avail ourselves of the rich resources that can be placed at our disposal to further the resolution of those problems. This achievement, however, as we have said, calls for personality integration, which, as Martin Dillon has pointed out:

Marks the point of intersection between freedom from and freedom for. . . . To be freed from the conflict between opposed values located in the world structured by one's past is to be freed for the pursuit of becoming one with oneself. . . . The symbols of corporeal existence seeking integration with itself and others are the symbols of incarnate love, and the symbols of the oneness of the divine are purely spiritual.[10]

The human search, then, is the search for increasing *maturity* in critical areas of life and the *integration of those maturities* in a harmonious human whole. This bespeaks a veritable challenge for each of us: on the level of comprehending maturity and integration, and on the level of their respective realization in life. Therein lies our task.

Time was when the significance of physical maturity was ill understood, though it is doubtful if human beings ever dismissed its significance altogether. The ancient Olympics would seem to attest mankind's perennial respect in some manner or other for the role of the human physique. To be sure, our current understanding and cultivation of the body, beautiful and healthy, have developed remarkably over time and will doubtlessly continue to do so in centuries to come. By the same token, the ages have witnessed an astounding appreciation of intellectual maturity, whether it was fostered in a peripatetic form in ancient times, a scholastic form in medieval times or the graduate form of more modern years. It is inconceivable that education at all levels, despite

[10] M.C. Dillon, "The Implications of Merleau-Ponty's Thought for the Practice of Psychotherapy," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* (1983), 14, 1.

its acknowledged ups and downs, should ever pass out of the human picture. No people or government could ever again afford to let it die — nor will they.

Emotional maturity has a history all its own. Relegated for centuries to the realm of the aesthetic, the artistic, the dramatic, the contribution of its emotions to the structure and operation of the human personality has come under serious scientific study only during the past century or two. No longer short-changed, emotional maturity today is earnestly being scrutinized, sought and cultivated in countless circles, even though our understanding and realization of it also leave much to be desired. Again, it is unlikely that this dimension of the human personality will ever again be so peremptorily ignored as it once was. Our comprehension of emotional maturity, still awaiting as it does many significant breakthroughs, has nonetheless reached the stage where it can no longer be dismissed as humanly trivial or inconsequential. Our study to date has taught us at least this, and a lot more besides.

It is in the realm or human morals, however, that we are now experiencing a noteworthy awakening. Slowly but surely we are engaging in rethinking the significance of the much ignored, ill-understood and highly suspect moral dimension of human existence. I say "suspect" advisedly, for the moral dimension has all too frequently been lumped together with the religious controversies of history, and thus been forced to share with religion much of the mistrust and venom that attended those regrettable exchanges. Despite it all, however, the moral dimension somehow remained a non-negligible aspect of human life and a respectable ingredient in the would-be human picture of personalities, societies and the world at large. It remained important, as it still does, and the current awakening is enabling us to see in an entirely new way just how great that importance really is.

Conclusion

In this study our focus has been on the imaginative dimension of moral living — a *sine qua non*, indeed. At first glance, it could have appeared to be at most incidental in the moral picture of human life. But the truth is, that the imaginative dimension insinuates itself in the physical, intellectual, emotional and moral domains as can and does nothing else in life.

While our emphasis remained in the moral sphere, it would require little effort to exhibit its powerful influence in the other maturities as well. Withdrawing the imaginative from the sphere of physical health, somatic illness, human physical recovery and the like; from the sphere of study, research, and creative thought and theorizing; from the complexities of emotional turmoil and psychological breakdown, would render all such related phenomena ultimately humanly unintelligible. By the same token, to extract it from the moral picture of human life would leave that experience inexplicable and miss totally just what it is that moral living contributes to one’s life. Hopefully our reflections have shown that the imaginative belongs *sui generis* to the human picture in general, and in the sphere of moral living is a veritable *conditio sine qua non*.

Chapter VIII

Moral Education, Cultural Inheritance, and the Transmission of Values: Moral Development as Nurturing the Moral Imagination

Henry C. Johnson, Jr.

I do not know why the educators of youth have not long since made use of this propensity of reason to enter with pleasure upon the most subtle examination of practical questions put to them, and, why after laying the foundation in a purely moral catechism, they have not searched through biographies of ancient and modern times with the purpose of having examples at hand of the duties they lay down, so that, by comparing similar actions under various circumstances, they could begin to exercise the moral judgment of their pupils in marking the greater or less moral significance of the actions. They would find that even very young people, who are not yet ready for speculation of other kinds, would soon become very acute and not a little interested, since they would feel the progress of their power of judgment; . . . By the mere habit of frequently looking upon actions as praiseworthy or blameworthy, a good foundation would be laid for righteousness in the future course of life. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*.[1]

Method as a Problem

The provisional argument that I want to advance runs in two parts, roughly as follows: First, unquestionably, there is a philosophical problem and a critical inquiry attached to it; so, too, is there a psychological problem with its appropriate inquiry. Insofar as it is genuinely moral, moral development is a question that must be addressed through the method of philosophy. We must understand what is good and right and continually examine that understanding. We must also understand the dynamics of human development, of action and change in both youth and adults. The question of why human beings do what they do, or don't do what they don't do, clearly involves a subtle structure of behavior and the still mysterious relation of mind and body. But, while both philosophy and psychology are necessary, neither (I want to insist) is in fact sufficient for our practical and pedagogical purposes, nor, even, are the two together. Our aim is not merely theoretical. It is to learn how to foster good character and conduct as we live in the world. It is not to think correctly alone, nor to act effectively alone. Intellect and affect meet for our purposes in life, in experience, in history — however vague or theoretically untidy these terms are. Just as

[1] Immanuel Kant. *Critique of Practical Reason And Other Writings in Moral Philosophy*. Translated and edited with an introduction by Lewis White Beck. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1949). The quotation is from Part II, "Methodology of Pure Practical Reason," and is found in section 251f in this edition.

As will be evident in the paper that follows, I do not attach this quotation because I think Kant provides us with the answers for moral education. Quite the reverse. However right he was about principles and rules, isolated as they are from history and human community, they furnish us with little understanding of our moral life. In this passage Kant means, of course, only to illustrate rules, not to find what is good and right by considering examples. When, however, he makes this concession to the problem of teaching persons to understand the good and the right, even seeing it as a kind of universal and natural phenomenon, he passes over something of great importance that his system cannot take account of. At the one time, I do not want to suggest that Kant has nothing to say to us. That would be an equally egregious error.

there is no question that philosophy and psychology have a place in our considerations, there is no question that moral action is both called for and takes place in the concrete world of ordinary experience, which is also set in a complex social and cultural system. Hence, we also need to examine the matrix of present social and cultural conditions — which have a history deeply embedded in them, a continuity among the changes. Social-scientific analysis can help us here, but it also will be necessary rather than sufficient. As with psychology (and even much of philosophy, perhaps), social-scientific method is abstract, analytical and often reductionist as well, furnishing an important and entirely legitimate perspective in itself but taking us away from the phenomenon we must deal with as educators and citizens. Our aim is to help persons become good and do what is right, not to make either little moral philosophers or little social and behavioral scientists.

The question for a realistic pedagogy, then, I want to argue, is not only how moral action can be analyzed and understood, but how it can be *envisioned* in the real settings of moral life and development such that it makes possible better moral response and, in time, a deeper, more stable moral character. I say "envisioned" because I am arguing that intellect and affect, dissolved and separated by an exclusive reliance on philosophical and scientific method, can best be united under life conditions by a *vision* of the situation and of the self acting morally, and that guidance for this is furnished neither by definitions or rules alone (from the philosophical side) nor by some content-free sense of autonomous activity, no matter how energetic (from the psychological side). To think without feeling is, to revise Kant's famous dictum, ineffective; to feel, or act, without thinking is surely blind. Neither, of course, is even really possible — they are abstractions whose realm is mind, not life. Our problem as educators — that is to say, for all of us in this case — is rarely ignorance of defensible principles and definitions of the good: it is what it means for us to be good and to act rightly in an historic time and place, and how to enable persons to *see* that meaning for themselves and, we hope, to choose to pursue it.

We Are Our Children's Culture

The second element in my argument has to do with the "cultural inheritance" that has attracted so much of our attention. It is, we seem convinced, in some sense both the source of the problem and the source of its solution. But consider the following: The crucial content of moral development is, we have all agreed, "contained" in our "culture" — as its vehicle at least, though not necessarily as its fundamental source. That "culture," however, while indeed radically determining our young, is not in fact constructed or even controlled by them. It is, as our very terms suggest, an inheritance, i.e., something given to them, bestowed on them by their elders. Hence, in its first instance, the moral development of the young is a problem of the adult community, the problematic nature of which is, indeed, manifest in the young but in no sense owing its origin to them. "Their" behavior, so to speak, is in fact a symptom of "our" condition. As a corollary, attempts to change them, apart from changing ourselves — a matter over which, I suppose, we do have some power — are in principle not only fruitless but radically dishonest. Our predisposition to think that our primary task is to correct the young without relation to ourselves may even be yet one more serious symptom of the moral degeneration of us all.

Furthermore, respecting the educational implications of this argument, I doubt whether this process is, or ever can be, reduced to a technique. Indeed, the notion that the "challenge" we are addressing will be met by finding a technique is a testimonial of how captive we are to one of the most seriously morally debilitating elements in our cultural inheritance. It is the notion that the good can be "engineered" from without, apart from involving our own being and character, a being

and character which unites in us, before it does so in our children, society and culture, intellect and affect, past and future.

Before undertaking some further reflections on what the proposed analytical structure and justification have to say to us as moral educators, let me briefly recapitulate the argument. In sum, I am saying that valuable and legitimate as they are in their own right, neither (1) abstract philosophical approaches — i.e., approaches I will later call "juridical" because they focus on defining and justifying principles or rules for guiding behavior — nor (2) abstract empirical generalizations about human action and its development — i.e., theoretical analyses of "human" behavior — will suffice. Even when seen as coming together in "life," if (3) that setting is itself apprehended in the similarly abstract categories of social-cultural science, the prescriptions of conventional moral philosophy and the generalizations of behavioral science are not *sufficient* as the foundation for an educational program of moral development. Furthermore, I have argued that (4) our justification of the needed project as a task to be performed *on* the young raises its own serious questions.

I want now to add (5) that to see our task as a problem that is a consequence of largely *outside* forces (from the control of which we absolve ourselves as adults) fatally masks the nature of a cultural inheritance and further flaws any process of transmission. Clearly, we meet in this colloquium as a consequence of a national and regional history that *can* be described as tragic in the classical sense. For nearly five centuries, Venezuela and Latin America in general have been exploited by *corona, caudillo, comerciante* and *catedratico*. The first two are obvious and have traditionally been useful for the purpose of self-exculpation. *Corona* and *caudillo* both represented an "externally" imposed power that it is difficult to fault our forefathers and mothers from falling under. It is less easy to absolve them or ourselves from exploitation by the *comerciante*since it was welcomed rather more voluntarily as a refuge from the former. And, increasingly, and still more embarrassingly, the *catedratico* — a figure first appearing in an Enlightenment that illuminated only an elite, and who now reappears as the technocrat — is the expert whose arcane knowledge controls, but cannot be shared with, those whose lives it determines. Finally, it has to be said that much of this was done *con clericia*: the Church as a political power exercised a shadowy influence over the centuries, not always or everywhere on the side of injustice, to be sure, but sufficiently frequent to prompt, or at least appear to justify, a widespread cynicism regarding the fruitfulness of theological solutions to our social and moral problems.

Now, I do not wish to appear an ungracious guest. I could construct an equally cynical and conspiratorial account of our past in the United States. Indeed, the radical historians have already saved me the trouble. But, the point is that whatever partial validity such a "history" may have, it is dangerous to invoke it too conveniently, to let it become in its own perverse way the conventional moral wisdom. What is now important, and has been at each stage in our social and cultural development, is how we respond to what we take to be our history, the choices we make in its presence. When used to explain why we are what we are and why we "can't help" being this way, invoking such a history comes dangerously close to what the Freudians call "attribution" — the location of our difficulties outside ourselves as the cheapest form of absolution and self-protection.[2]

But we need not look only to a remembered past to find a debilitating moral posture in our culture. The architects of this colloquium have quite appropriately pointed to the present as well, though perhaps not sharply enough. We must be clear, however, that here again they have pointed to our problems, not just those of the young. We do indeed wrestle, to paraphrase St. Paul, against

[2] Alexander Astin, in the 1987 Annual ACE-UCLA Study of the Values of College Students in the United States.

economic and political principalities and powers, which can be seen to account for corruption and moral retreat. But they are not outside us. To pretend so is, to use your own delicious idiom, "to blot out the sun with your thumb." We choose to cooperate in these institutions and processes, to be willing citizens daily, thereby, furnishing (in our willingness to conform) powerful "moral" images to the young. If we need to confirm the proposition that our problems are not simply the products of an "ancient" history, which we cannot escape, nor simply thrust upon us from the outside, we need only look at our current "mores" and our present institutions and our roles in them.

For example, a now secularized *compadrazgo* is emptied of its erstwhile spiritual meaning and sense of moral responsibility. In the United States it is, we say, "the old boy network" or (even less flatteringly) "cronyism." It is doing favors for self-advantage under cover of what was once a sacred relationship. Like "*Semana Sancta*" and "Carnaval," it is nothing more than secularized self-indulgence. In the second example, a judicial apparatus exists in which justice is sufficiently deferred and circumscribed usually to turn into injustice — at least for the powerless. Its only "virtue" appears to be garnering large revenues for the legal "profession" and an endless procession of bureaucrats. As a third example, an even cruder self-indulgence was born not of the bad (old) times but the good (recent) times in which relatively fewer and fewer have had more and more. Flights go to Miami and New York (not to mention, London, Paris and Madrid) to buy the good life and carry it back. I have seen you staggering under your burdens at the Visa gates in JFK and Miami International. I have learned your expression: "*ta barato; dame dos*" — a moral maxim so plain that I thought seriously of using it as a subtitle for this paper.

My purpose, however, is not a moral diatribe. The point is that social and cultural "conditions" do not, except under the canons of an extreme social and behavioral determinism, destroy the possibility of genuinely moral action, or even weaken it. In fact, they do everything for it. Indeed, if we are to blame "the times" for our moral difficulties, it was perhaps the "*good*" times, not the "*bad*" times that began the process of decline. "Conditions" do set the terms of moral response, but they neither create it nor negate its possibility, let alone its content. And, particularly in the absence of more powerful and shared images, it is our day-to-day choices that embody what is "moral" for our young.

Finding a New Perspective

I am indebted to Robert Coles not only for some of the most important elements in the analysis I have just been making, but for prompting me to reconsider much in our traditional approach to moral education. In particular, his recent book, *The Moral Life of Children*, has led me to look at many of the things about which I have just been talking. Coles "confesses" that, as a good, loyal Freudian behavioral scientist, he had always been inclined to subsume what children and adults thought and did under the standard psychological categories. When he began to look at the moral response people actually made to crises like racial conflict and the most demeaning poverty (not only in the United States but in Latin America), these categories not only did not work, they obscured the process. He found that "these same children (who were in the grip of crisis) forged a moral life — an outlook that often followed, rather than preceded, a series of events." He began to ask, "What sources give them the moral purpose they develop in the life they live?"[3] He gives no

[3] Robert Coles, *The Moral Life of Children* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), pp. 12, 13.

4. Craig R. Dykstra. *Vision and Character-A Christian Educator's Alternative to Kohlberg* (New York, Paulist Press, 1981), et al.

easy, finished answers. But there is something there in these people, something shared with family and others, that allows these persons to interpret the difficulties they have encountered and transcend them rather than simply becoming victims. Much of it is religious content — a content scrupulously avoided by orthodox behavioral scientists, or reduced to some mechanism that is at least faintly pathological. What these children carried was some interpretative images that sprang to life in the face of pain and conflict. They had come to possess in some mysterious way that eludes us (if only because our categories have kept us from looking for it) what can be called a "moral imagination." Through this imagination they could see meaning and value to their lives and apprehend what a moral response would be. Through these images, so to speak, they could see what things meant and what they should do.

It is important to caution, however, that the argument I am trying to give relies not on neo-romantic fiction. Whatever the shortcomings of what we might call, adapting Whitehead, the fallacy of misplaced responsibility — the notion that the moral problematic of our time lies largely with the young — there can be no doubt that we must do something together with the young. While they have not made the conditions that demand moral response, nor are they the bearers of the culture out of which all of us must draw relevant moral content; the young are neither neutral nor automatically morally wise. No more than us, are they merely helpless pawns in a social-cultural game manipulated by powers "off the board." When they are confronted with occasions demanding moral understanding and choice, they must be able to see these situations in moral terms and have something to respond with. The moral educator's question is, then, a deceptively simple one, What do those in moral crisis need, in order not just to think differently, but to respond differently, and how do they get it?

In the United States two of our most popular answers to effective moral development — answers that are, unfortunately, widely exported — are the cognitive-developmental approaches made popular by the work of the late Lawrence Kohlberg and the crudely psychological approaches disseminated by Simon and Raths under the rubric of "values clarification." The difficulty with the latter is that, while it may leave the individual "clear" about his "real" desires (descriptively seen as "values") and their potential empirical effects, he or she is left without guidance precisely at the point where what we have traditionally defined as moral choice is required. Although, for example, I may come to see that I very much desire wealth (and hence it is a "value" to me), the question of whether I ought to pursue wealth (desired or not) in any particular case cannot be answered within this framework. Paradoxically, values clarification has been popular because it is thought to be "value neutral" — though it is not, of course – and, hence, socially and educationally less controversial.

Kohlberg's approaches, under a number of variant forms, do not evade the moral-philosophical foundations necessary for any scheme of moral choice or moral development. The problems arise over their form. Dykstra subsumes these approaches under the category of "juridical" ethics — an ethic focusing on the form of the rules necessary for moral judgment.4 As you no doubt know, this is an approach drawing heavily upon Kant and Piaget for its substance and method. The purpose of this paper is not a full-scale critique of either Kohlberg of any other particular method. Nonetheless, I want to examine some criticisms of the juridical approach that point, I believe, to a pedagogically better solution.

The juridical school focuses on models of rational moral choice as leading to and shaping action seen as a kind of dilemma. In the now-classic example, "*Heinz*," whose "*wife*" is dying, must decide whether or not to steal a potentially life-saving drug from a "*druggist*" who refuses to give it to him without full price. The moral development question is at what formal level of

principle will the person confronted with Heinz's moral dilemma choose to see and resolve the problem of choice. Clearly, this is all meant to point us to life, but it does not, if I may put it this way, appear to be enmeshed in any life we could recognize. It sets some parameters of choice as (admittedly) a necessary condition for acting, but tells us nothing about the carrying out of that action in ongoing experience — and that seems to be as much a part of what we need to become moral as the results of a particular Kantian deduction.

There is in these approaches an attitude that is characteristic of much contemporary moral philosophy and moral educational theory as well. Its source is, I suppose, in the Kantian tradition, in spite of the fact that it manifests itself as variously as in both analytical and situational ethics. It is perhaps not too strong to call it a kind of arrogance, stemming from the notion that we can first think and then will — virtually by ourselves — not only our own perfection, but that of the world around us. In order to become good, we need others only in the sense that they need to think and will the same thing. Our lives have no other necessary interrelationship.

The Kohlberg method thus seems abstract, essentially private, nonhistorical and culturally empty. (That Kohlberg recognized the inadequacy of the private may be inferred from his later work with the "just community." But that seems to me to be only a group effort at a still essentially private activity, and it has not enjoyed marked success.) Note that, in the dilemma, only Heinz has a "name" — though the name is strictly speaking meaningless. Assuming he is a person, he meets moral choice only in formal objects who are abstract functions and conditions: "wife" and "druggist." Earlier, I suggested that principle and desire, the cognitive and the affective, are brought into unity in life. How do we understand life? In a narrative mode, I believe it is a story, peopled, full of history and culturally conditioned — *never* in the mode of naked intellectual deduction alone. Our moral life is lived in a world not of abstract functions and relations, but of persons and things, concrete times and places, feelings, longings, hopes, fears — the characteristics, in other words, of our visions, not our thoughts and, still less, our internal mechanisms and drives.

It is customary to accuse Aristotle of "circularity" when he finally resolves the problem of moral choice in terms of what "the good man does." It seems to me, however, that in the shorthand style of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, we have in this appeal an important move, a stepping into moral life, into living, in the sense that I am trying to get at here. And, as you may have noted from the heading of this paper, even Kant himself, the supreme abstractionist, father to so much of contemporary moral and educational theory, insists that *educationally* it is not only rules for definition but examples of action that must be considered.

Nurturing the Moral Imagination

The problem, it seems to me, is that it is not simply moral rules but moral *vision* that is our concern. That is to say, images of what it means to be good and to do what is right, held in amoral imagination that gives a full account not merely of problems and principles but the rich context within which human beings always act — these images to which I refer are the moral images embedded in our culture and in our history. Because these images are embedded in a culture that transcends individuals and ages, they not only can be, but by nature are, transgenerational, linking us together rather than privatizing us, as is so often the case in contemporary life. They are set in shared stories, enabling us to see our lives as stories — stories that intersect and overlap with others' stories. They unite not only thought and emotion but the adult and the child. They are not

images of moral principle but of moral living — though that does not mean that questions of principle are irrelevant to them.

Moral images, set in social, cultural and historical narratives, are potentially more fruitful than principles and definitions alone in some further important respects. Not only do they address life as it is or can be lived, they initiate moral reflection as a process. Perhaps even more importantly, they do not terminate it. Needless to say, conclusions must be drawn if human beings are to act. And the juridical mode reaches conclusions efficiently. Images of moral action, however, persist after the point of decision, continuing to draw us on and shape us. Our immediate thoughts and actions do not exhaust them.

By this point, I am sure you are saying, the consideration of some examples of these "images," with all their mysterious power, is long overdue. They are, it seems to me, essentially of two kinds: real and fictional. They are mediated through history and biography and through literature, respectively. They rely upon art as the mode of appropriation — but by art I do not mean some necessarily non- or contra-rational process. To be satisfactory for our purposes, they cannot be private, mere day dreams which we invent to please ourselves. They are communal. They are located in the culture *and* the history that we all both share and transmit, the latter not simply in the sense of "to pass on" but continuously to respond to and to create through our own speaking and actions.

Consider first two images, both in this case drawn from the Christian tradition. (The fact that they are drawn from the Christian tradition does not mean that no good moral images can be found outside it nor that these images are unintelligible to others. Nor conversely, does it means that images from outside this tradition are unintelligible within it — crucial matters in a "pluralistic" society.) The images are Mother Theresa and the Good Samaritan in the Biblical parable. One is contemporary, historical, "real." The other is fictional and (as frequently is the case) invented for a moral purpose. The setting of the "Good Samaritan" is crucial. In this narrative, a lawyer interrogates Jesus, demanding a *definition* of the supreme moral-religious *law*. Jesus provides the orthodox formula: unqualified love of God and your neighbor. But the lawyer, wanting to "justify" or "vindicate" himself, poses a further problem: Who is my neighbor? How am I to recognize, to *see*, him? The reply is a story, not a definition or a principle: A man, robbed and beaten and lying beside the road, is ignored by priest and Levite (both experts in making fine, principled judgments). An outcast Samaritan, taking pity (an affective response), washes him, bandages his wounds, carries him to an inn, pays his bill in advance and promises to return. "Which," Jesus then asks, was "neighbor?" "The one who *showed kindness*," the lawyer responds. "Go and *do* as he *did*," Jesus concludes.

There is, of course, a complex of elements brought together in these few words, personal, political, theological. That is to say, there is an insight into life in a real world and (thanks to the masterful art that forms and conveys the story to us) a world that is still real. We have no difficulty peopling it in contemporary terms. When you pass a derelict, a drunk, or an accident victim on your comfortable way home, this story will haunt you because you cannot escape from it by invoking historical or cultural relativism. You can try to put it out of your mind, but you cannot really forget it, once you have heard it. There is emotion, thought, risk, sacrifice, continued responsibility — all that and more. It was easy, as the lawyer knew, to give the principle; the question was what the principle *meant* in the sense of how it was carried out in living — in a life that, because it is dynamic and personal and ongoing, cannot be captured in the most meticulous definition. Morality, character, virtue, is a doing, not merely a caring or thinking, and a doing requires a vision of action in context, not a formula. As Iris Murdoch insists, we must see the world

rightly first, without "fantasy," as a part of seeing what is moral.[4] Finally, it is because it is a story, a *narrative* answer, that we can (indeed must) continue to puzzle over it, growing in our appreciation of it, as we continue living. It not only proposes a decision, it continues to judge us as we carry it out and long after that.

In the case of Mother Theresa, of course, we have a story still in process — a story, it is worth noting, that continues the story we have just considered: When she found herself in India, she saw the poor lying in the streets, showed pity, carried them away and paid their bill, for as long as it took. This was the simplest of acts: to enable human beings who have enjoyed no dignity in life at least to die with dignity. As a "real" story, and a contemporary one, we can actually see her acts — watch her hands and eyes, see her body as it expresses a consuming love totally without self-aggrandizement. We can hear her explanation of her acts — her motives, principles, interpretations and even her recommendations for us. And, we can go out tomorrow — today, in fact — and see right here in Venezuela those who, transformed by her story, are at work continuing her story. That is, we can do so, if we dare. We probably won't, because that story is potentially revolutionary, socially (economically and politically), culturally and personally. But the story won't go away — if, that is, we choose to tell it and risk the vision it can bring about.

Finally, my original intent was to consider a third kind of image, one that might, broadly speaking, be called "secular" and, if possible, one that was Venezuelan in origin and context. Though admittedly I have had to search from afar, I have had difficulty finding any such story. When I first visited Caracas, my attention was immediately drawn to the three or four times daily playing of the national anthem on Venevisión, accompanied by illustrations from the life of Simón Bolivar. If it is still a custom, or if you remember it, I leave it to you to sort out the moral story in the jumble of nationalistic, militaristic and machismo images. It seemed to me nothing but a cartoon of an important life, crudely drawn and failing to manifest the richness of its subject. But it was, of course, an important moral image.

There is, I am told, for the very young the stories about "Uncle Rabbit and Uncle Tiger" (*Tio Conejo* and *Tio Tigre*), in which willingness defeats threatening outside forces — a domestic version of the *Fables* of La Fontaine, I presume, something like our Uncle Remus stories in the United States. Again, it is a significant "moral" image, especially in the absence of any others, but perhaps not the one we most want to communicate. There must be others, and better, but I must leave that to you.

We have, in the United States, a number of potential sources for the moral images I am talking about, though it is important to note that they are often considered old-fashioned and, consequently, not widely used in our schools. At the secondary level, for example, there is much that fills this function in 19th- and early 20th-century fiction, e.g., Melville's *Billy Budd* and a number of recent works by Walker Percy, James Agee and Flannery O'Connor, to name only a few. Among the most powerful potential sources is Robert Bolt's splendid play, *A Man For All Seasons*, based on the life of Thomas More (also available on film). The difficulty is that, when such works are included in the "literature" curriculum they are often looked at therapeutically rather than morally. They are, along with everything else, turned into psychological exercises designed to help us feel "normal" and "accepted," the exact opposite of the coming under judgment from outside our private lives that is characteristic of moral development. Sometimes they are included but made the occasion simply for analysis, their plots examined for examples, not of moral content, but of literary genres or even the scientific "laws" of cause and effect! Not long

[4] Iris Murdoch, as discussed in Stanley Hauerwas. *Vision and Virtue-Essays in Christian Ethical Reflection* (Notre Dame, Indiana: Fides Publishers, 1974).

ago, I saw a second grade class categorizing myths and fairy tales without once being asked to pay any attention to what they are trying to say. None of that will do, of course.

Among others, Coles singles out Harper Lee's brilliant novel, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, to show how the story (again, as a text or in its excellent screen version) can provoke the critical moral imagination of young and old. It is the story of Atticus Finch, a southern lawyer whose lot is to defend (unsuccessfully) a black man, Tom Robinson, on a charge of raping a "poor white" southern girl, Mayella Ewell. The main plot is seen through the eyes of Finch's two children, six-year-old "Scout" and her ten-year-old brother, Jem. There is also a subplot involving a mysterious neighbor, Boo Radley, a mentally handicapped boy who comes to the defense of the children when the community vents its wrath on them because it cannot understand the father's willingness to do the simple, decent thing that his profession demands. Coles shows us how powerful these images are in stimulating moral reflection, in a concrete and personal way, by children and adults.

What does this mean for the content and program of moral education? It seems to me that Coles offers testimony that supports the ethic of vision held in the imagination about which I have been talking, though he does not propose to explain the process in the conventional sense. Coles draws few conclusions at all about the process in general. He finds it at bottom a kind of "mystery," which he addresses with remarks that are brief, open and tentative. Though couched in softly Freudian terms, they are designed to move us to a new kind of inquiry rather than to map authoritatively (let alone doctrinairely) the territory of moral development.

As Coles sees it, the process *may* go something like this: The child moves from the warm world of care for needs (the "garden," in Freud's terminology) and exclusive attention, innocent and self-satisfying, to the experience of *another form* of concern. This concern involves a "No!" momentarily appearing to qualify love. The child struggles with self and others, give and take, limitation, a new sense of self and ideals, and a subjection to others' ideals — the moral content of groups and institutions larger than the family. In this passage "East of Eden," there enter images that interpret and order conflict, shame and confusion. Sometimes these are manifest in personal roles, the living witness of Martin Luther King, for example. Very often, he finds, they are Biblical. What does appear clear is that they are called for by events in which the persons find themselves. "A beckoning history," he says, "offers, uncannily, a blend of memory (of the goodness of the past) and desire; a chance of struggle for a new situation that holds a large promise, while earning along the way the approval of one's parents, neighbors, friends and, not least, oneself." In short, "an ego ideal given a new lease on life and reality," the "moral life gets a wonderful charge of energy: an old dream has become newly sanctioned by a fateful turn of history." But, all throughout, communicated and worked out in a vast array of images as the stuff of a moral imagination that seems vital to moral response.[5]

It is important to note, however, that these moral images need not be highly complex or philosophically contrived. Nor should they be, says even Kant, superheroic.

But I wish they would spare them examples of so-called noble (super-meritorious) actions, which so fill our sentimental writings, and would refer everything to duty only and the worth which a man can and must give himself in his own eyes through the consciousness of not having transgressed his duty, since whatever runs up into empty wishes and longings for unattainable perfection produces mere heroes of romance, who, while priding themselves on their feeling of transcendent greatness, release themselves from observing the common and everyday responsibility, as petty and insignificant.[6]

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[5] Coles, pp. 30-35, the quotation is at p. 35.

[6] Kant, *op. cit.*, p. 252.

We do not need Superman, of course, because he represents not a resolution of our problems but an escape from them by the intervention of a figure from outside. This, it seems to me, is not only a particularly important point in Venezuela — consider, if you will, the current pre-election political scene — but also in the United States where secular (or not so secular) messiahs are becoming increasingly attractive as well. Yet, to make the simple task, the unsung responsibility, not merely "petty and insignificant" is a very difficult thing, especially after an age in which we have permitted ourselves to believe, as one United States school leader used to put it, that "every child can be a winner." My work takes me frequently into diaries and other biographical accounts of very ordinary 19th-century people. What often impresses me is just the way in which they see themselves as participating in an important, ongoing history, no matter how humble their roles. And it is just this quality that seems to separate us from these people and to measure in some sense our moral decline.

What, If Anything, Can We Do?

I will conclude with a few, very modest practical reflections. We cannot, I have been saying, simply transliterate philosophical or psychological talk into educational terms and have a regimen for moral education and character development. Philosophy, psychology and social science can contribute to a radically new regimen if, and only if, they are merged in a life of imagination and vision through which we do not "cure" the young or "set them straight" but in which we join together in the shared process of becoming good. Furthermore, I have been saying that the process is neither outside us nor forced upon us by some intractable social-cultural reality. Our ongoing history does call us; it does not coerce us. "Attribution" is not merely a defective psychological mechanism; it is at least an evil, and it may indeed be a sin.

Whether my argument is accepted and, if so, what should follow from it are questions that should properly be left to the ensuing dialogue. What is most important, I have been arguing, is for us to see the question in different terms as touching not only content and method but cultural context as well. If "the culture" is both the source and the problem, what are we to do? How are we to build new (or revive old) images and narratives so that we can have a genuine moral story, a genuine moral history as a prelude to a "dreamed" future? There is, of course, no one culture anymore, a fact to which I have paid insufficient attention in spite of the fact that the drafters of this colloquium have carefully pointed it out. And, to wait to transform all of our societies and all of our culture as a whole is a counsel of perfection that immediately becomes a counsel of despair. We can, however, move to transform the institutions in which we choose to participate and for which we have genuine responsibility. The family (defective or not), the Church community, perhaps even our schools, are still open to our efforts in some sense. Business and politics? The conventional professions? All, perhaps less certain. What is certain, however, is that any change will involve *us*, not some target group — our youth, the transnational corporations, foreign militarists or even the Medellin Cartel.

It would appear that only where there is still left some genuine pool of shared values can any of this reformation begin. And it is perhaps yet one more example of our modern *hubris* that we often prefer to think in grand, total terms. In the words of Stanley Hauerwas: "The development of men of truthful vision and virtue, however, will not come from wider society. Rather such men will come from the communities that have had the confidence in the truth of their images and symbols to use and embody them seriously and without embarrassment."[7]

[7] Hauerwas, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Complete quotation here.

Finally, I am really saying little more than many of your own leading thinkers and social critics have said, from Bolivar to Betancourt, not to mention a number of contemporary voices. The hope, the long dream, of a better world, a better nation, with more democracy and more justice, less poverty and less oppression for all, rests on the possibility of a shared moral vision. Nothing less. Without it, we shall be left condemned, in those poignant words of Bolivar, "to plow the seas."

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Chapter IX
Imagining Self and Society

Richard A. Graham

Seven Propositions Concerning The Moral Imagination:

1. One must imagine the good before one can seek it.
2. It is not enough to see and feel and be told what is good; one must imagine what one has seen, felt and been told, and one must reconstruct one's own one-of-a-kind imagination of the good.
3. Children begin, almost from birth, to imagine what is good and what it is to be good: they begin to develop moral imagination.
4. One's concept of the good is reconstructed throughout one's life in highly predictable ways, approaching, but seldom reaching, judgment that the good is mostly identified with universal justice and beneficence or love.
5. Whether one's capacity for moral judgment is exercised and acted upon depends upon character and a sense of identity that is largely created by the imagination.
6. The structure of moral imagination that children reach at about age 13 and, more particularly, the level of their reasoning about what is fair is predictive of their moral reasoning as an adult.
7. Parents and schools can learn, on a practical basis, to do much more to help children develop moral imagination that will make for better lives and for better societies.

I cite the following reasons for holding to these propositions.

When Character Begins

For a human being the striving for life that begins at birth is soon directed toward establishing a unique self in a unique place in the world. Increasingly complex desires and aspirations take shape by remembering or imagining what is good. One's imagination — one's own construction of what reality is and might be — continues to change from one's first breath to the last.

If some recent studies can be believed, each individual, in just the first five years of life, has developed a quite comprehensive imagination about what is good and what it is to be good. This is one's moral imagination, and to greater or lesser degree it guides one's striving and shapes one's character forever after. These studies suggest that traditional early child rearing that followed the precepts of a culture or religion was for the good and that, as cultural and religious precepts for child rearing have lost force in societies throughout the world, children's imagination about what it is to be good has lost ground. There is strong evidence that the child rearing practices that traditionally developed the moral imagination of the child need to be revived or that new child rearing practices are needed which, from the beginning of life, will help a child imagine what it is to grow up good.

The basic idea is that the moral imagination is much connected with the character of individuals and of societies, that parents can learn to do more than they tend to do to stimulate the moral imagination of their children and that societies can do more to help parents. Throughout the

world there is now a reexamination and, in some societies, a new division of responsibility between parents and society for the development of character.

The studies I speak of give evidence that one's imagination, from earliest childhood, is stimulated by storytelling, traditionally by the fairy tales and folktales, the legends and myths of a culture and the parables of a religion. Starting from this early grounding, the imagination continues to take shape from the impressions of all that is encountered and, for some, from books and song and verse, from history, biography and fiction, i.e., from the humanities. The evidence is strong that parents who formerly learned good child-rearing practices in traditional societies can learn to do so now in modern societies. They can learn to revive the art of storytelling and, in modern societies, they can learn more about reading to their children in ways that launch the imagination.

The evidence is strong indeed that parents and schools, working together, can do more to stimulate the moral imagination of their children and, in the process, do more to develop the character of their children and of their society.

In what follows I will turn first to evidence from recent studies in human development on how an individual grows in intellect and character. Then, I will examine some recent studies on the education of children and of parents which indicate how parents and schools and other institutions of society can do more to promote the development of intellect and character by stimulating the moral imagination of their children.

As Jerome Bruner noted from his studies of very young children, "From the start, the human infant is active in seeking out regularities in the world about him; . . . behavior from early on is guided by means-end readiness and by search (that produces) active pleasure from successful prediction."

From early on, and throughout life, the individual seeks "regularities in the world"; it is a search, among other things, for regularity in authority in family, in society, in self and beyond self and society. This is a search for what the individual imagines to be good. It begins with the authority of parents on what is good that soon supplants ethological instincts.

By their second year, children begin to exhibit egocentric speech. In these conversations with themselves or as they play alone or with others, their speech patterns, their words and intonations and the content of their talk as they tell a toy or playmate what to do tend to reflect the admonitions of their parents. In the next year or two, this egocentric speech gives way to inner speech, inaudible self-admonitions for conduct both in play and in real-life situations. The patterns and content of this inner speech, like the egocentric speech that preceded it, tends to reflect the patterns and content of parents' speech.

These early standards for correct behavior that had their origins in parents' admonitions tend to persist in a child's inner speech unless they are in some way contradicted or superseded. There is similar perseverance of a child's early standards for being a good person that go beyond doing what one is told to do — standards that have their origins in the examples parents give or the tales they tell that convey the ideas of kindness and courage, of truthfulness and steadfast friendship.

It is storytelling, in particular, that provides the basis for the moral imagination. Throughout recorded history, parents have elicited the moral imagination of their children through the songs, myths and epics of their culture, the stories of magic, of good and evil, of God and devil, of heroism and villainy. They have told fables to guide conduct and parables to found religious faith. Storytelling has nurtured the moral imagination of their children and provided the foundation for their intellectual and moral development.

Predictable Changes of the Child's Moral Reasoning

At first, a child tends to believe that what a parent says is good, is indeed good. In almost every culture what parents say is the right thing to do is, at first, much the same. But, parents soon begin to differ in what they tell their children is good and in the stories they tell if, indeed, they continue to tell or read stories. The personal preferences and cultural traditions of parents, as translated by the imagination of a child, form the child's first concepts of what it is good to do and to be. Thus, while it is highly predictable that a young child's first sense of the good will be based largely upon what parents do and tell them, it is only partly predictable what parents will do and tell.

Whatever parents tell their children, it is highly predictable that a child will soon come to judge that the right thing to do is established by fair exchange, to return good for good or harm for harm. That much is highly predictable, but whether in the child's imagination it is more important to exchange good for good or harm for harm will depend much upon cultural traditions and the admonition and examples of parents, peers, siblings and others.

It is equally predictable that in all but the most primitive societies the adolescent child will proceed to develop reasoning that the right thing to do is, in some combination, what wins the approval of family and friends. Whether, in the adolescent's imagination, it is kindness and generosity or toughness and power that wins the approval one seeks depends largely upon one's perceptions of the values of friends and family and those of the larger society to which one belongs.

If, however, the individual begins to judge that the traditions and the approval of one's group are an inadequate basis for determining what is right — and typically this happens when the values of one's group appear unfair or inexplicably are in conflict with the values of another group or society — the individual predictably will begin to look to laws or social compacts as a basis for adjudicating conflicts between groups or cultures. The individual does so, for the most part, without forsaking the heritage of culture and tradition in which his or her sense of identity is embedded.

If the realization develops that one's laws unfairly benefit one group more than another, a person with highly developed reasoning about what is fair and good still will cherish the cultural heritage and respect the institution of law but will look beyond laws to principles of universal justice and qualities of love or beneficence as a basis for judging what is fair and good.

The Moral Imagination as Guides to Moral Behavior

The moral imagination depends upon the ability to imagine oneself in the place of others. Perspective taking, as the studies of Robert Salmore have shown, is an ability that develops from egocentrism to the ability to imagine oneself in the place of another and then to imagine that person's imagination, and then on to the ability to imagine a universal perspective. The moral imagination depends upon the ability to imagine things from others' perspectives and to judge what is the fair, right and good thing to do from these other perspectives.

The richness of one's moral imagination has much to do not only with whether one develops higher-order reasoning about what is good and what it is to be good, but with whether one will exercise and act upon one's judgment of the good.

Whether an individual exercises his or her best judgment and acts upon it is largely a matter of traits of character and imagined identity which, it seems, are much entwined. Whether a person attends to issues of fairness in order to exercise judgment is determined largely by the effect that past experience has had on the development of attitudes of caring or responsibility, habits of

reaction and self-perception that "I am the kind of person who attends to matters of this kind." Whether a person acts on his or her judgment of what is fair or good in a particular situation depends largely on one's sense of obligation to fulfill the responsibility at hand when weighed against conflicting responsibilities. The decision to act, depends also on one's self-assessment of one's ability to act competently, to succeed in carrying out the responsibility. Judgment tells what ought to be done; imagination assesses what reasonably can be done: "Ought implies can."

The Productive Power of The Structure of Moral Imagination at Age 13

It is not clear why, but the structure of reasoning which is the foundation for judgments of the good for 13-year-olds in a modern society is predictive of their moral reasoning as an adult. Perhaps, it is because one's level of development of moral judgment is closely associated with one's intellectual development and that modern societies tend to offer opportunities for human development to individuals who exhibit early intellectual development. The precise explanation for why the moral development of a child is predictive of later moral development as an adult probably is not important since it appears that what parents and schools do to stimulate the moral imagination acts to promote both intellectual and moral development.

A child's early intellectual development is strongly associated with the early development of language which, in turn, is strongly associated with the amount and content of parents' talk with the child. The broader the content of parents talk and the greater the diversity of ideas and characters and situations that stimulate the imagination, the broader the grounding for moral development. A fanciful search for regularity of meaning in tales of animals, of magic and of quests can become a happy part of a child's play. The regularities and contrasting irregularities of cord play — of rhyme and repetition and of nonsense verse — help to enrich the vocabulary, to teach rules of grammar and to establish patterns of syntax that prepare a child for formal education.

Parents and Schools and the Stimulation of Moral Imagination

Storytelling provides context for talk that enriches the imagination. In studies of the content of conversation throughout the day between mothers and their children, the talk of what others were thinking and feeling, of the content of good and evil, of the interplay of courage and kindness, of the differences in the lives of rich and poor and the fates of the ambitious and the self-effacing occurred mostly at story time.

In the past few years there have been some highly promising programs to teach parents to be better storytellers or storyreaders, hence better teachers of language, better simulators of moral imagination and better in developing character.

All parents, the studies found, begin by teaching their children the names of things: in modern societies, rich and poor alike, parents will use books or magazines to help.[1] But sometime in the child's second year the difference increases greatly between parents in their use of books in child rearing. The difference increases in the amount and content of what they read to a child and, generally, in what they do to stimulate the child's moral imagination. Parents who read more themselves tend, but not always, to read more to their children and to engage them in word play. The most encouraging finding from assessments of experimental programs for parent training was that even parents who were not good readers themselves could learn to be better storytellers if only they were willing to try. They learned to do so, enjoyed it and tended to make storytelling and

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word play a regular part of the day's activity. A regular time for storytelling with the child on a parent's lap helps, in the words of Paul Copperman, to bond child to parent and child to books. Children who grow to love stories and books tend in modern societies to become good readers and to do well in school. Literature is more likely to become a part of their lives, and children who read literature tend to become self-educating adults. They continue to enrich their moral imagination since literature, as defined by *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language* is "Good writing which deals with ideas of universal and lasting interest."

The schools, it seems, can and should do more to help parents learn to stimulate their children's moral imagination and, in the process, to become better teachers of language and character. They should do so because so many children now arrive at school so ill-prepared in language and with such underdeveloped imagination about what it is to be a good person that the schools cannot cope. The schools can afford to help parents become better teachers of language and character because the evidence, limited though it is, suggests that the intellectual and moral development of individuals and societies which is the purpose of schooling is more likely to be achieved — and at less cost — by helping parents become better educators. The promise is that it will cost less in public education and in public welfare to help parents prepare their children to enter school than to invest in programs of remediation to help student's leave school, often with barely functional levels of basic skills and far short of the levels of intellectual and moral development that make for good lives and a good society.

Chapter X

The Role of Imaginative Narration in Moral Education and Character Development

Alberti B. Msuya

Introduction

I will begin with a story. In the summer of 1979, a friend from France visited me in Tanzania. After two weeks of showing him the beautiful National Parks of Ngorongoro, Manyara and climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, I took him to see my parents. In the course of the conversation between my friend and my mother, he asked her, "How many children do you have?" Instead of giving him the number, she started to narrate their names. "My firstborn is called Chewale. The second born is Kinyule, who is followed by Tukule, who, in turn, is followed by Kitururu (the one who brought you here). After Kitururu came Kinyutu, who was followed by Maranga. Then came Kaheta and after him, Nangumbi. After Nangumbi came Mseii, and finally, the one who closed the door of my womb, Nakipula. Then we spent the evening talking about hundreds of other things.

As we were driving back to my place, however, my friend raised again the issue of children. He asked me, "Why did your mother go to all that trouble of mentioning all those names? All I wanted to know was the number of her children, not their names." Then he went on to remark, "You Africans love to talk and talk, sometimes unnecessarily."

This is the explanation I gave to my friend. I said to him, "You see, as far as your culture is concerned, your question is genuine, and there is nothing wrong with it. When we are dealing with an African culture, however, your question could be misunderstood for various reasons. African parents do not count their children as if they were a bunch of bananas in the market. People have names and, because of this, whenever they are an object of conversation or discourse, one enters into a personal relationship with them by mentioning those names."

Then I went on to elaborate this point further. "My mother understood your question as merely abstract and speculative, based on mere curiosity and the sheer joy of accumulating information for your own sake or your own enjoyment. As far as she is concerned, however, each child has a name. That means she relates to each child uniquely, according to how the story behind the name unfolds gradually as the child grows up. There is a story behind each name. Therefore, each name proclaims, represents, realizes and celebrates unique, transcendent meanings and realities. You may realize, therefore, that although she is quite capable of thinking abstractly and speculatively, she prefers to put her thoughts and feelings in vivid concrete terms by mentioning the names. She avoids the danger of treating people as things."

What Is in a Name?

From the story above, it should be understood that almost all African names are charged with meaning. A name is not a mere label by which individuals are identified and distinguished from each other. Parents do not look in a dictionary or encyclopedia to select a name for their child. Rather, they pay attention to historical, social, familial, economic, political, cultural and religious factors when they want to choose a name for their child.

There are, therefore, all sorts of names — ethnic, clan, family, personal, special — even nicknames are taken seriously. For instance, in my case, Msuya is a clan name, meaning a person belonging to Suya lineage. Kitururu is my grandfather's name, meaning "something which resounds," "something which is much alive and full of life." When my grandfather was growing up, he became inquisitive, always searching for novelty, dissatisfied with half measures; he would not settle down until he had found what he was looking for. His contemporaries, therefore, nicknamed him Mkobori, the Restless One. I inherited this name as well. Nevertheless, as I grow up, I unfold my own original name within these names which I inherited. Therefore, my contemporaries may give me new names which reflect the way I unfold my uniqueness. Thus, one person can have many names, according to his way of behaving.

Missionaries who come to Africa are always surprised when they realize that people do not call them by their family names, but by the names they have been given, many times secretly and privately, by the way they behave. For example, some are astonished when they hear people calling them "Lion, the Roaring One," or "Leopard, the Hot-Tempered," "Antelope, the Lovely One" or simply "the Humble One," "the Crooked Mind," etc.

Thus, over and above the clan or family name, one may receive a special name. Special names may describe a significant event, marking the occasion of the child's birth. For example, if the birth occurs during drought, a child may be called "Nzota" — Starvation. If the birth occurs at night, a child may be called "Cha Usiku" — Belonging to the Night, or if it occurs during the daylight she may be called "Namthi" — Daylight. Names will also reflect the gender of the child. In addition, if the wife fails to conceive, but when the couple has almost given up, she becomes pregnant, the child may be called "Buchizya" — the Unexpected One, like President Kaunda of Zambia.[1]

It may be interesting to mention, just in passing, that some devoted Christians are ill-at-ease with the foreign names they received at baptism: names like Albert, Stanley, Joseph, Mary, Susana, Katarina. Unless parents experienced a particular favor and they attributed it to the petitions of that saint, most of these names are regarded as barren and void of meaning. To be sure, one can trace and find out the life led by that particular saint and try to imitate the values he or she stood for. Many are doing this to give meaning to their names. One may sympathize, however, with those Christians who are not happy with their foreign names.

We return now to our question, What is in a name? There is a story behind a name, names may be taken as the starting point for moral education and character development. Names enable individuals to enter into themselves and disclose their unique personality. They also allow these individuals to enter into a relationship. Kenneth Kaunda puts it so admirably when he writes:

The importance of Man having a name is that it speaks both of his uniqueness and of his dependence upon others. Because he is called by name there is no one else on earth quite like him. This is, of course, literally true because no other individual can share the same point in space and time. Every man is unrepeatable; once and for all. Yet he is a dependent being — a member of a family, a work situation and a community. And because he has a name it is possible to enter into relationship with him. Is it not the tension between that element in his nature in which he differs from all others and the element which he shares with them that produces most of the great things of which he is capable?[2]

Thus, the significance of names lies in the fact that individuals can be what they are truly called to be and they can enter into a relationship with others. Because of his or her name, a person

[1] Kenneth Kaunda, *A Humanist in Africa* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1966), p. 45.
[2] *Ibid.*

does not lie like a dead leaf in a vacuum. The name gives him or her the" confidence he or she needs to be himself or herself — to be original. It is only by being original that one may grow to true humanity. People easily lose their originality by blindly conforming to public opinion. They, therefore, lose their original names, and sooner or later they find life meaningless and cruel. Taking our names seriously facilitates moral growth.

The meaning and the reality that the name stands for is inexhaustible. A person with a name remains a mystery, but not in the sense of a crossword puzzle that may allow clear answers. Rather, he or she is a mystery in the sense that he or she is a meeting point between finite and infinite, immanence and transcendence, transitory and permanent, human and divine.

The Notion of Transcendence

So far we have shown that African names are symbolic pointers. They move us from known to unknown, from obvious to mysterious. Traditional Africans, like my mother, feel more at home with symbolic than with abstract thinking. This being the case, they are deeply transcendent in their approach to life. They easily see the deeper meaning in people, events and things.

It is not only people that have names, but also cows, goats and sheep. I remember last year when I went to visit my grandfather. He has over three hundred cows, goats and sheep. What surprised me is that he knows each animal by its own name, from the oldest to the newest born. He relates to each animal according to its name. What surprised me even more is that when he took a sheep from his flock and decided to kill it to entertain his grandson, he first conducted a ritual. He put the knife on its throat, and before he cut the throat he said these words: "You know I hate to do this, but I have no choice today. You and I have to offer our visitor the best we have. In this way we ensure the continuation of life and healthy relationships. So you have to bear with me." Then he cut the throat and made sure that no drop of blood was wasted. Later when the blood had been well prepared, the guest was given a bowl to drink as a token of respect and hospitality.

This symbolic approach to people, events and things enhances their transcendent dimension. It is from this symbolic approach that John S. Mbiti remarked that "Africans are notoriously religious. . . . Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it."[3] He goes on to write:

Because traditional religions permeate all the departments of life, there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular, between the religious and non-religious, between the spiritual and the material areas of life. Wherever the African is, there is his religion: he carries it to the fields where he is sowing seeds or harvesting a new crop, he takes it with him to the beer party or to attend a funeral ceremony; and if he is educated, he takes religion with him to the examination room at school or in the university; if he is a politician he takes it to the house of parliament.[4]

When one studies very closely how symbolism enters into the very fiber of all relationships, one wonders whether an African can genuinely and sincerely claim to be an atheist. For the whole notion of symbolism, with its corresponding dimension of transcendence, explains that Africans do not understand the Supreme Being as a pure spirit, invisible and untouchable, without beginning or end. Rather, for them the Supreme Being is nothing else than the Source of Life, nay Life Itself. For instance, the Bantu word for Supreme Being is Mlungu-Lungu, meaning clan. It is in the clan

[3] John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1969), p. 1.
[4] *Ibid*., p. 2.

that Life is passed from one generation to the next. Therefore, Mlungu is the One who gives Life. It is no wonder, therefore, that traditional Africans cherish life more than any other thing.

In fact, to get married and have children is almost a "religious obligation by means of which the individual contributes the seeds of life towards man's struggle against the loss of original immortality."[5] As Mbiti goes on to say:

Biologically both husband and wife are reproduced in their children, thus perpetuating the chain of humanity. . . . A person who, therefore, has no descendants, in effect quenches the fire of life, and becomes forever dead since his line of physical continuation is blocked if he does not get married and bear children.[6]

It is from this background that celibacy as understood in the Catholic Church poses a problem. The problem is not that these men and women cannot abstain from sexual intercourse; rather, it is because they terminate the flow of life. The moment they die, their names are forever forgotten as far as the traditional approach to life is concerned.

The point I am trying to make, however, is not about marriage or celibacy, but, rather, to show the significance of symbolism in enhancing transcendent living. Traditional Africans are rooted in symbolism because they sense the presence of a vital force that influences and affects their lives. Dominique Zahan reports correctly when he writes:

In the eyes of the African, who valorizes it to the utmost degree, in fact (as we already know) almost as much as he does himself, the cosmos does not constitute a fixed, cold, and mute world. On the contrary, it is a world charged with meanings and laden with messages, a world which "speaks." Thus, man finds in his surroundings a partner with which he can enter into communication, with which he must in fact maintain an almost constant dialogue if he wants to be informed about himself. This is because the macrocosm contains in itself all the potentialities of the microcosm which is man. In this sense the world possesses an absolute value. Consequently, to know oneself it is necessary for one to know the messages which the universe continuously sends. It is through these messages that one can interpret one's own destiny.[7]

The world speaks because behind or across physiological laws is the act of Mlungu. Mlungu, as a vital force, converses with the created universe. Just listen to this answer which David Livingstone received when he asked a Tswana what he understood by the word used for "holiness" (*boitsepho*). "When copious showers have descended during the night, and all the earth and leaves and cattle are washed clean, and the sun rising shows a drop of dew on every blade of grass, and the air breathes fresh — that is holiness."[8]

Therefore, traditional Africans, as symbolic thinkers who sense the presence of a vital force that influences and affects their lives, are full of awe and wonder. How could they possibly express this experience of awe and wonder except in narration, in stories, in proverbs, in riddles? Since the Supreme Being is telling a story in and through the entire universe, is there any way of

[5] *Ibid.,* p. 133.

[6] *Ibid.*

[7] Dominique Zahan, *The Religion, Spirituality and Thought of Traditional Africa*, trans. Kate Ezra Martin and Lawrence M. Martin (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 81.

[8] *Revelation: The Mystery of God's Self-Gift to Humanity* (Eldoret, Kenya: Spearhead, No. 57, Vol. 2; Gaba Publications, 1979), p. 53.

encountering and enjoying Life other than in narration? Is it not in narration that we are in touch with our deepest selves, too deep for others to truly understand us? Can a person deny the existence of the Source of Life and desire for an audience to which to tell his or her own story?

Narration Discloses Who We Truly Are

It should be obvious by now that the African tradition is a narrative culture. The moments I enjoyed most in my childhood were those evenings when I sat in the living room (*barazani*) with my sisters and brothers and listened to wonderful stories told by my father while my mother was preparing supper. My father is a very good storyteller. He captured our young, inquisitive imaginations so much that, although we were very hungry, we forgot all about food and were totally taken up by the stories of rabbit, monkey, lion, and the like. He told the stories in such a way that we felt that those animals were not only very much alive, but here, also, just like us humans. They cheat, they lie, they play tricks, they get angry, they despair, they feast, they laugh; they do everything just like us. The following story may illustrate the point I am trying to make.

The Cock and the Fox

A fox was trotting past a farmyard early one morning when he heard a cock crowing. Upon investigation, he found that chanticleer was perched in a tall tree far out of reach of anyone who might be entertaining thoughts of having him for breakfast. "Why, cousin cock," the fox called up to the bird in the tall tree, "what a pleasure it is to see you! Won't you come down and let me greet you properly?"

"I would love to," replied the cock (who was no fool), "but, as you know, there are some animals who would like nothing better than to grab me and eat me."

"Why, my dear cousin," exclaimed the fox," do you mean to say you haven't heard the news? All the animals have agreed to live in peace with one another."

While the fox was speaking, the cock kept craning his neck as though he could see something very interesting in the distance. Naturally, the fox was consumed with curiosity. "Cousin, what in the world do you see up there that is so interesting?"

"Oh, nothing much — just a pack of hounds headed in this direction and coming at a fast clip," said the cock.

"Please excuse me," said the fox nervously. "I just thought of something I had forgotten."

"What's the hurry?" asked the cock. "I was just coming down for a talk. You don't mean to say that you have anything to be afraid of now that you know about the wonderful peace plan?"

"Well," replied the fox, as he started to run, "maybe those hounds haven't heard about it yet!"

Moral: The best liars often get caught in their own lies.[9]

Telling and listening to stories at this time had a double function. On the one hand, we were kept away from the kitchen so that, because of our empty stomachs, we would not make our mother crazy with our cries for food. In this way we gave her enough time to prepare peacefully a delicious meal. On the other hand, stories were one of the chief means of passing on, or handing over, the wisdom of the clan or the ethnic group from one generation to the next. The other means of passing on wisdom is that during puberty we would spend up to six months away from home in the forest

[9] *Aesop's Fables* (New York: Lancer Books, 1968), p. 82.

and undergo a rigorous program of formation. These initiation rites were significant in making the passage from childhood to young adulthood. Nevertheless, the best way of handing on the wisdom of the people remained storytelling. Time and again we would beg our father to tell us one more story, even when food was already on the table. The food was no longer important.

Another occasion when one witnessed the amazing power of storytelling was when the elders of our village gathered together under a big tree to resolve a conflict between two families or two hostile parties or to discuss a development project. The discussion was conducted in a democratic manner because they would talk until they agreed. No one would simply impose his or her opinions, no matter how sublime they might be. The way these elders could use stories, proverbs, riddles or poems to drive a point home was amazing. I had the chance to attend these meetings because I carried my grandfather's bag containing his pipe, tobacco and other things. Many times a stubborn or an arrogant individual would be subdued not by a force of law, but by simply relating a riddle or a proverb which would vex his or her conscience so much that he or she would freely and willingly correct his or her disorderly conduct.

Yet another instance where one would be almost awed by the power of narration was when two clans were arranging a marriage between their sons and daughters. A person who was not familiar with the language game of narration might understand the grammatical part of narration but remain totally in the dark as to the meaning behind such language. This language is still very much alive today. In Tanzania, for example, the government has introduced it in both primary and secondary schools. Even in political meetings, this language is alive and, of course, used in daily conversations.

The question which we now have to answer is, Wherein lies the power of narration? First, we have to remember that the flowing or the issuing of life is an event; life is an event. Therefore, the primary mode of describing life is by narration — to tell what happened or what is happening. As such, life contains a plot with both its dimensions of episodes and configurations (chronological and nonchronological).

To be historical, an event must be more than a singular occurrence, a unique happening. It receives its definition from its contribution to the development of a plot. Reciprocally, a plot is a way of connecting event and story. A story is *made out of* events, to the extent that plot makes events *into* a story.[10]

As such, an event always contains a surplus of meaning — a meaning which cannot be exhausted by words. Therefore, if we do not want to remain silent, we metaphorize. Metaphorization is more successful in dealing with the surplus of meaning than mere words. Metaphorization may not be successful most of the time. Consequently, symbolism enters the picture. We may, therefore, understand when it is said that life is a mystery to be lived, not a problem to be solved. No matter how thoroughly and precisely we try to describe it, life always has a "more than."

Tellers of stories and their listeners are aware of this mysterious nature of life more than anybody else. Storytellers, more often than not, will work very hard, sometimes to the point of complete exhaustion, in trying to express themselves. It would not be so difficult if they were narrating a play or simply repeating the words of another person. However, to express the event of life which is embedded in mystery is not as easy as it seems to be.

One of the reasons we say that life is a mystery is because it comes in pairs or opposites. Life is full of paradoxes and ambiguities. It is not a matter of black or white or either/or. Many times it

[10] Paul Ricoeur, "The Human Experience of Time and Narrative," *Research in Phenomenology* (1979), 24. Emphasis original.

is a question of both/and. For instance, some may be surprised to find oppressed people who are fighting for their freedom or undernourished children who barely make it through the day singing, dancing and laughing. One may ask, "How do they reconcile the two? Kenneth Kaunda explains this well when he writes:

Africans, being a pre-scientific people, do not recognize any conceptual cleavage between the natural and the supernatural. They experience a situation rather than face a problem. By this I mean they allow both rational and non-rational elements to make an impact upon them, and any action they may take could be described more as a response of the total personality to the situation than the result of some mental exercise. I think, too, that the African can hold contradictory ideas in fruitful tension within his mind without any sense of incongruity and he will act on the basis of the one which seems most appropriate to the particular situation.[11]

What Kaunda is saying, therefore, is that Africans, being symbolic thinkers more than analytical thinkers, share their experience not by conceptualization but by telling a story. The primary focus is not on the conscious, critical awareness but on the unconscious forces that are at work in our lives.

As such, narration appeals in a unique way not only to the conscious aspect, but to the unconscious as well. In fact, symbolism upon which narration is built is difficult to deal with because it resides at the level of unconsciousness. Stories, therefore, have a unique power to penetrate the underground currents of our consciousness and spark deep thinking and conscientious reflection. Only narration can deal so effectively with the unconscious nature of the human mind.

Moreover, because narration is full of images, it engages or involves the whole person. Thus, there are certain features of good narration. The narrator employs his whole body. He or she will vary his or her voice — it may be gentle and quiet or firm and loud, according to the story or the part of story he or she is telling. Sometimes he or she will chant or sing the poetic parts. Sometimes he or she will have to repeat some of the parts of the story. In this case, a good deal of exaggeration is not uncommon in storytelling. "The lazy monkey slept and slept and slept. When it woke up, it found itself in the middle of the sea and, because it could not swim, it drowned." The moral of the Story is obvious.

Storytellers present the drama in the story so vividly and so powerfully that they will not labor on the moral lesson to be learned. Listeners are able to make their own conclusions easily. It follows, therefore, that what is more significant than anything else in good narration is that the narrator must make the story personal.

It has to come out of the narrator's mouth just as though he were telling something which happened to him or which he witnessed. He must show fluency — the story should not be told with breaks. He has to be sure and confident, so that every sequence follows on naturally and without the omission of any major part. . . . The narrator not only tells the story: he actually "lives" it. He can, therefore, pass on the feel and the ethos of the story to the listeners who will in turn participate in the experience of the story.[12]

A good narration, therefore, intensifies us. The journey of intensification occupies our minds as well as our hearts. We are no longer mere spectators, but active participants. David Tracy writes:

[11] Kaunda, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[12] John S. Mbiti, *Akamba Stories* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 25.

The moment named "intensification" is, in fact, fundamentally a moment of experience and understanding. More exactly, a person gives oneself over to, is caught up in, the most serious game of all, the game that Eric Voegelin, recalling Socrates and Jesus, calls the game of "the truth of existence." The self can no longer keep at arm's length from life. I am haunted by the thought that I have not lived, I have not entered, I have not allowed myself to be caught up in the self-transcendence of the "game" of life. . . . Timidity is no longer possible. A courage to allow oneself to be played and thereby to play this game of the truth of existence must replace the fears and the opinions of the everyday.[13]

Hence, good narration touches us so much that it intensifies our search for the truth of existence. Conceptualization and abstractionism do not fare so well in initiating this journey of intensification. Possibilities which are presented to our consciousness set in motion our longing for the fullness of life. Usually, one of the reasons why people go to see a therapist is that they have reached a point in their life where possibilities are no longer available. Their story, instead of beginning at the beginning, starts in the middle. Only when the horizon of possibilities is restored, do they start to put the pieces of their story together.

Nothing restores this horizon of possibilities more easily, yet painfully than a healing narration or a healing talk. Healing narration enables the narrator to hear again his or her own words in a way which astonishes even himself or herself. He or she may even ask, "Did I really say that?" "Oh! yes, you did. Who else was talking, except you?" A person gets a chance to listen to his or her own language as words echo back or reverberate. Images at this time play a significant role in disclosing who we truly are.

From what we have said so far, we may state that Africans would not quickly congratulate Rene Descartes when he says: "Cogito ergo sum" or the Greeks who define a human person as a rational animal. They would rather say "loquor ergo sum": man/woman is a talking being. It is by talking that we raise the possibilities of knowing who we truly are.

"To speak is, in a mysterious way, to do what God does of necessity."[14] The urge to talk and the desire to speak are more acute in us than we would be prepared to admit. Even when we are totally alone, we are longing for an audience who would listen to our story. Since my childhood, I was always fascinated by elderly people, especially grandmothers. Many times I met them talking aloud to themselves while walking alone along the road. It always fascinated me.

Imaginative Narration

This brings us to the question of the imagination. We have seen that narration employs symbols. Narratives are built on symbolism. Symbols are images which evoke deep and universal experiences. Tad Dunne writes that "extroverts talk in order to think, and introverts think in order to talk. But everyone talks."[15]

Nevertheless, Aristotle observed ages ago that "the soul never thinks without an image."[16] And Paul Ricoeur observes that "we only see images insofar as we first hear them."[17] Where do these

[13] David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination* (New York: Crossroad, 1989), p. 126.
[14] Tad Dunne, *Lonergan and Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1985), p. 152.
[15] Dunne, *op. cit*., p. 151.
[16] Aristotle, *De Anima*, 431-a16.
[17] Paul Ricoeur, "Imagination in Discourse and Action," in *Analecta Husserliana,* ed. Anna-Theresa Tymieniecke, Vol. VII (Dordrecht, Holland, 1978), p. 9.

two observations leave us? It means that we can affirm that imaging depends on talking and talking depends on imaging. But, first we must talk. It is no wonder, therefore, that Paul Ricoeur, instead of starting with perception in the discussion of the imagination, takes semantic innovation as his point of departure.

Ricoeur's observation has brought a remarkable change in understanding the imagination. When our talk echoes back, or reverberates, we are provided with images. A talk can be a dialogue or soliloquy. Man/woman being a talking being is, also, an imaginative person. It may, therefore, be surprising when one hears a person saying, "I have no imagination." He or she is talking and yet he or she says he or she can't imagine. Roberto Assagoli tells us that "every image has in itself a motor-drive; images and mental pictures tend to produce the physical conditions and the external acts corresponding to them."[18]

This discussion leads us to conclude that imaginative narration (imagination and storytelling) mediates abstract and concrete, known and unknown, spirit and matter, immanence and transcendence. It has been said that narratives can only be produced through bodily instrumentality. Narrators employ words as well as nonverbal body language to express their experience. Africans take the body very seriously. Whatever they are talking about, they have to get the feel of. Kenneth Kaunda explains this aspect admirably when he writes:

Much has been written and recorded of our love of rhythm. We are renowned for our laughter, music and dancing. Rhythm is the very expression of the life-force within us; it is the illumination of our spirit. It is symbolic both of our relationship with other people and with all created things. This strong rhythmic pulse beats throughout all our culture. In speech we make no clear-cut distinction between prose and poetry. Our utterance is rich in proverb, and artistry of expression is as important as the communication of meaning. The idea of solo performance in music is foreign to us. It is an intolerable strain to sit passively in a concert hall and be played or sung to. In spite of ourselves, our whole body responds to a musical beat; we cannot resist swaying our heads, shuffling our feet and clicking our fingers.[19]

Kaunda goes on to express his feelings thus:

The pulse of life beats strongly within us. Our laughter, music and dancing are an expression of grace. We are glad to be alive and thankful that we have been preserved from natural hazards (and some unnatural ones) such as disease, wild animals, slave-traders, conquering armies and colonial oppression. Every important event in the life of the village and all the major milestones of our personal lives are commemorated by ceremonials which include music and dancing. And it is at such times that the barrier between the natural and the supernatural crashes down. We are conscious of only one world — living generations sway in rhythm with gods and ancestral spirits. Even the most devout Christian is likely to have second thoughts at times such as these.[20]

Here we see the unlimited capacity Africans have of suspending judgment for a while. It is very rare to find a traditional person going to see a therapist because of depression, loneliness, anxiety, fear, frustration, etc. Suspending activities, staying away from a problem for a while and taking time to chat with a friend, to dance, to share a drink — all takes care of depression. There are no offices of therapists, as such. The family, the clan, the community, one's peers provide the healing place.

[18] Robert Assagioli, *Psychosynthesis* (New York: Penguin Books, 1976), p. 144.
[19] Kaunda, *op. cit*., p. 35.
[20] *Ibid.*, pp. 35-36.

It follows that imaginative narration opens people to the whole — the more than. Suspending judgment for a while enables them to see life wholly rather than piecemeal. By mediating the abstract and the concrete, imaginative narration gives people a foothold upon which they can encounter various limits imposed by their human condition.

It is encouraging, for example, to meet people who are assailed by malnutrition, civil wars, apartheid, underdevelopment, drought, etc., but who still can afford a smile or a dance. The power of suspending judgment tells them that these limitations are not the sum total of life. Life is larger, much larger than these apparent evils. Thus, it is not uncommon to find a family who is in dire poverty but still manages to entertain a guest or a total stranger, even if it means that one member of the family will have to give up a meal. Life is larger than this one meal.

All these examples tell us that imaginative narration strengthens in humans the sense of "more than": hence, the fecundity of transcendence in the thought-patterns of a traditional African. Being predominantly symbolic thinkers rather than abstract thinkers, traditional Africans would easily agree with Paul Ricoeur when he says the following about imagination:

The effect of reverberation, resonance, or echo, is not a secondary phenomenon. If, on the one hand, it seems to weaken and scatter sense in the case of daydreams, on the other hand, the image introduces into the entire process a note of suspension, an effect of neutralization, in short, a negative moment thanks to which the entire process is placed in the dimension of unreality. The ultimate role of the image is not only to spread meaning over diverse sensorial fields but to hold meaning suspended in this neutralized atmosphere, in the element of fiction. . . . But it already seems that the imagination is really what we all mean by this term: a free play of possibilities in a state of noninvolvement with respect to the world of perception or action. It is in this state of noninvolvement that we try out new ideas, new values, new ways of being in the world.[21]

Thus, talking provides images which open us to the transcendent. Small wonder, therefore, that in spite of themselves, traditional Africans are very appreciative of life. They have a sunny outlook on life. They would also easily agree with Philip S. Keane when he describes the imagination as:

the basic process by which we draw together the concrete and the universal elements of our human experience. With imagination we let go of any inadequately pre-conceived notions of how the abstract and the concrete relate to one another. We suspend judgment about how to unite the concrete and the abstract. We let the two sides of our knowing play with one another. By allowing this interplay between the two aspects of our knowing, we get a much deeper chance to look at what we know, to form a vision of it.[22]

Understanding imagination as a playful suspension of judgment, leading us toward a more appropriate grasp of reality, silences those who think that imagination has more to do with the nonrational than the rational. To be imaginative is to be deeply rational. It is to be deeply rational because imaginative narration opens us more uniquely and more genuinely to the transcendent. Indeed, we may even say that it is in imaginative narration that we live and move and have our being, or as Martin Heidegger says: Language is the house of Being. It is in the story we tell about ourselves that we find out who we truly are. Our being is hidden in our narration. Understanding

[21] Ricoeur, *op. cit*., pp. 8-9.
[22] Philip S. Keane, *Christian Ethics and Imagination* (New York: Paulist Press, 1984), p. 81.

the imagination from the viewpoint of spoken language also enables us to understand what spiritual masters mean when they say that, when the soul journeys toward God, it reaches a point of union with God, which is an imageless state. This is correct because at this time there are no words which are used, no story that is told. The soul simply gazes with awe and wonder upon that Loving Light. The heart is so wrapped up in love that words seem mere straw, useless, indeed even a hindrance. No words, no reverberation, no images — nothing, only heart talking to heart in a hospitable silence.

From this background of imaginative narration, one can easily understand African hospitality. Missionaries from Europe or North America are always surprised by this hospitality. A stranger is welcome at any time of day or night; people will always share their best with strangers. Wapare, for instance, will share food while Wachaga will share *mbege* (local beer). A guest will not be allowed to leave the compound without eating some of the food or drinking some of the beer. This has always amazed me.

People will almost compel you to wait so that they can prepare food for you. They regard it as inhuman to let the guest go away without eating something, even if it means only drinking a glass of water. I later discovered that, for most Africans, entertaining a guest or a stranger is not only a cultural obligation, but also a way of getting a blessing or finding favor with Life. Thus, a host will be greatly offended if the guest or the stranger refuses his or her hospitality. Refusing another person's hospitality is depriving him or her of a blessing. Many times you will hear a host saying, "Don't do that to me, please." The deeper meaning of that statement is, "Don't deprive me of blessings, please. Don't be so selfish."

Since they are so used to sharing their experiences — their search for the truth of existence — in storytelling, traditional Africans do not find it so hard to share their material goods. A good narration enhances the deepest form of hospitality: that which may be called spiritual values. In fact, David Tracy holds that every journey of intensification needs expression — that of distancing or the second journey of intensification. He writes:

The hero, the artist, the thinker, the saint: each must express that understanding and that experience in a life, an action, a symbol, an image, a gesture, a text. Each must, therefore, risk the final moment of intensification and understanding: the moment of distancing of the self from itself in order to express, to render, to produce, a communicable, shareable, public meaning, . . . The notion of distancing on the side of production is analogous to the notion of "explanation" on the side of reception and interpretation. The distancing of the self from its experience, especially its intense and paradigmatic experiences, can, like explanation, prove alienating and reductive, just as the initial shock of the realized experience and understanding in the interpretation of the classic can resist any explanations which deny this experience by alienating us from it and reducing it to something else.[23]

Since the journey of intensification needs expression, it follows that a good narration will always bring people closer together. In the African context, I would say that a good narration facilitates a formation of a healthy community. In the process of intensification, people realize that they have more in common than they had known before. Individuals realize that there is another human being who shares a similar pain or joy, or anguish or hope. This realization that a person is not alone strengthens individuals, giving them hope and courage in their journey toward fuller

[23] Tracy, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.

humanity. More importantly, Africa being a poor continent economically, people realize that they either stay together or perish. Therefore:

the ordinary person in Africa does not merely talk about community. He or she lives and experiences community every day. . . . We can generally describe community as a conscious commitment to give and share one and the same life with a limited number of people in a defined geographical area. The sense of community is a precious value because it binds people and families together, and this value leads to common understanding, mutual trust, respect for personal freedom, mutual responsibility and help. Community is an inescapable experience, and truly, no one is an island. But community is also a conscious commitment, and, if it is to happen, there must be constant inter-action and inter-relationship among people, working to the benefit of all.[24]

In traditional Africa, narration reveals to people that each person is responsible for the other. Each individual is accepted as a precious member of a clan or an ethnic group. Therefore, the test, the measure, the criterion for any form of narration is whether or not it facilitates the formation of a better community, i.e., a community where individuals take responsibility for their actions and are for one another. This is especially true for the elderly who were responsible for handing on the wisdom of generations and whose presence is still desired because they are always ready to share their story which is full of wisdom and insight.

Imaginative Narration in Contemporary Africa

The above reflection may have given the impression that all Africans as symbolic thinkers are deeply transcendent. It may also have given an impression that traditional Africans are leading an ideal kind of life, that they have reached the highest degree of moral growth. Now, that is not the case.

To begin with, there is a big difference between traditional Africans and all those who went to school, to the "classroom." I recall an incident which took place when I was in Standard IV or fourth grade. One day I came home from school. After performing after-school chores, I sat with my grandfather just to have a chat. That day he shocked me. He asked me to spread my hands open, and then he spat on my palms. After this, he told me to rub my palms together and then smear my face. Of course, I refused. I said to myself, "We have just been taught today in class about the importance of hygiene, and now he is asking me to smear his saliva on my face? No, not me!" Then my mother, who was close by and had overheard what was going on, commanded me, "Do as your grandfather is telling you." I may try to fight with my grandfather, but against my mother I have no chance of winning; I am always the loser. So, reluctantly and grudgingly, I did what he said.

Then my grandfather held my hands again and said, "You have been so obedient to me! Whatever I ask you to do, you do it instantly and without arguing. May Mlungu bless everything you put your hands into." As an obligation I said, "Thank you" and regarded it as just a frivolous matter. I immediately forgot all about it. It was only later, much later in life that the incident surfaced in my memory. Looking back and seeing how many good things have happened to me, I said, "Certainly there is a hidden hand guiding all things for the best." Last year I went to my grandfather's grave and expressed my sincere thanks by weeding it and talking to him.

[24] *Community Called Church* Spearhead No. 60, Vol. 5; (Eldoret, Kenya: Gaba Publications, 1979), p. 46.

This story shows that the conflict between symbolism upon which narration is built and what I may call "scientific" pride began early in life. Most of us who received a so-called Western education have been dominated by the passion to break the whole into small pieces for analysis, classification, definition, appropriation and domination. We are predominantly analytical, speculative, abstract and theoretical. Instead of living the symbol, we try first to conceptualize it in order to analyze it and satisfy our inquisitive minds. The majority of the "elite" are living more in their heads than in their hearts. We classify and analyze to satisfy our intellectual pride and gain social prestige. Unlike traditional Africans who prefer to put their feelings and thoughts into concrete terms, who "dance their ideas," we live on the plateau of abstractionism. We may, at times, give an excellent exposition on symbolism, yet remain untouched and unmoved.

We are assailed by what I may call the sickness of abstractionism. Some wonder, "How can they talk about symbolism and yet remain sad, serious, tense, gloomy and devoid of a smile." A smile reveals the soul. Symbolism is a royal road to the soul. So if we are travelling along this royal road and cannot afford a smile, there is something terribly wrong somewhere — the sickness of abstractionism.

What is wrong with us who are predominantly abstract and theoretical in our approach to life is that we have divorced our narration from lived experience. Yusuf O. Kassam captures well our condition in this poem:

Emptiness
People walk,
But where is the sound of their footsteps?
People talk,
But where is their charm and humor?
It is warm and bright,
But I cannot see the sun!
It is cool and romantic,
But I cannot see the moon!
The trees sway,
Without the rustling of their leaves.
The music plays,
Without rhythm or enchantment.
The lamps light devoid of any glow;
Hot coffee is served devoid of any aroma.
I shake hands but cannot get the grip;
I hit a ball but it does not rise.
Someone pronounces, "Arise!"
But where is the energy?
Another pleads, "Enliven?"
But where is the blood?
A third says "Illuminate!"
But where is the light?
I seek in vain for color and lustre,
For the dew and spice,
For the warmth and radiance;

Yes, the very soil under my feet lacks fertility.[25]

Some people have begun, therefore, to talk about "the walking deal": people who walk, but it is as if they are spiritless. There is no life that radiates from them. Their handshake is lifeless, their relationships are cold and impersonal.

The result of this emptiness manifests itself with people's obsession with money, at least in Africa. Money is one of the most abstract of human inventions. Ten shillings can represent a bunch of bananas, a pair of shorts, an offering in the Sunday collection. It can also be used as restitution for hurting someone, or whatever. It is an abstract thing that stands for no-thing in particular. This, obsession with money is an obsession with abstractionism.

This obsession is breaking up human relationships in families, associations, and nations. Some government leaders would even beg Western countries to dump their sludge in African territories as long as they are ready to pay a "fat purse." This obsession is like a deadly cancer eating the continent of Africa alive. It dehumanizes relationships and abuses narration. I remember last year I went to a shop to inquire, just to inquire, the price of a thermoflask. The shopkeeper appeared to be such a nice and warm person that I began to like him. When I realized, however, that he was trying to sell me the thermoflask for twice its original price, I was disgusted. I was astonished to see that he had greatly refined his imaginative narration, not for enhancing human values, but for the purpose of abusing people. He possessed one of the most beautiful kinds of narration but was full of deception, manipulation, treachery and guile. Since imaginative narration helps us to know the true meaning of humanity, an abuse of this mode of speaking appears to be one of the most inhuman actions we can perform. The narrator presents himself or herself as a trustworthy individual, while in reality he or she is full of guile.

Of course, our imaginative narration falls into inauthenticity more often than not and even more frequently than we would be prepared to admit to ourselves. What is needed is our conscious effort to emerge from what Martin Heidegger calls idle talk.

Discourse, which belongs to the essential state of Dasein's Being and has a share in constituting Dasein's disclosedness, has the possibility of becoming idle talk. And when it does so, it serves not so much to keep Being-in-the-world open for us in an articulated understanding, as rather to close it off, and cover up the entities within-the-world. To do this, one need not aim to deceive. Idle talk does not have the kind of Being which belongs to *consciously passing off* something as something else. The fact that something has been said groundlessly, and then gets passed along in further retelling, amounts to perverting the act of disclosing (*Erschliessen*) into an act of closing off (*Verschliessen*). For what is said is always understood proximally as "saying" something — that is, an uncovering something. Thus, by its very nature, idle talk is closing-off, since to go back to the ground of what is talked about is something which it *leaves undone*.[26]

A predominantly abstract, theoretical thinking is very vulnerable to idle talk. People can hide behind statistics and theories and forget the concrete, lived experience.

This brings us to the question of technology. Technology is a result of analytical thinking. Thus some would blame analytical thinking and technology as the root cause of all the evils we see in the present world. They insist that technology dehumanizes. The way they tell their story, one gets the impression that if they were given half a chance, they would wipe out all technology.

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[25] David Cook and David Rubadiri, (eds.) *Poems from Africa* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1971), p. 80.

[26] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans, John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 213.

We must remember, however, that human beings are technological in nature through and through. That is why the first person to discover how to make fire was just as surprised as the one who landed on the moon. Imagine the person, who has been eating raw food all his or her life, now having discovered something which will enable her or him to cook it and enjoy a delicious meal. No, technology and its corresponding field of analytic thinking is a great blessing to humanity. Technology may be regarded as people's language, a people's imaginative narration.

The question which most people wrestle with is this, Is there any way that "people can have the blessings of technology without being eaten away by materialism and losing the spiritual dimension of their lives?"[27]

Reclaiming Sensitivity to Symbolism

I explained earlier how symbolism enters into the texture of African traditional life. I have also explained how a predominantly abstract and analytical mind glosses over symbols. We know however that, when people try to express their deeply felt experiences, the best way at their disposal is the use of symbols.

The symbol is the best way we have of articulating deeply felt experiences. We can even say that the human understanding of reality is primarily symbolical, and not rationalistic. But symbolism is not just a satisfactory means of expressing religious experience: symbols also tell us something about the nature of all human experiences. Everything that exists is a symbol of a higher reality.[28]

One way of reclaiming sensitivity to symbols is to take our *imaginative narration* seriously. Indeed, imaginative narration is the most fundamental and the most profound way by which we express our attitudes, feelings, convictions and states of our minds and hearts. Hence, to take symbolism seriously implies that first and foremost we have to take the stories of our lives seriously. For it is true that we tell the stories of our lives not only to communicate with others, to share our story, but also to be one with our deepest selves. Instead of taking refuge in an exclusively abstract narration, we say, enter more deeply into ourselves and learn who we truly are.

Symbolic thinking and analytical thinking should compliment each other. Traditional Africans are predominantly symbolic thinkers, but lack a scientific elucidation of their experiences. This means that how something is happening, the way it is happening, is often inadequately articulated scientifically. The scientific findings in psychology, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis and philosophy have not yet penetrated to the ordinary citizen. Imaginative narration should be complimented by scientific elucidation and vice versa.

An emphasis is put on *imaginative narration* because it is the primary way of articulating human experiences. Without imaginative narration — people telling their stories — there would be no way of developing a human science. So, human sciences have to take imaginative narration very seriously.

Another, more fundamental reason for this is that it enhances human freedom. Narratives provide possibilities and leave a person at the crossroad to make his or her own judgment. Narratives truly respect human freedom, Unlike legalistic morality which remains fixed on the minimum performance, imaginative narration opens a vast horizon, an unlimited universe within which an individual can make choices and transcend morality based on laws.

[27] Kaunda, *op. cit*., p. 24.
[28] *Revelation* (Spearhead, No. 57), *op. cit*., p. 52.

We need, however, to understand the correct meaning of freedom. To understand freedom as the possibility to choose between good and evil is the lowest and most mediocre understanding of freedom. A person who can choose evil is not really free. An evil choice is not free choice; it is slavery. A person who is truly free is the one who desires, chooses, and does good — the one who is consistently growing in goodness. In listening to stories, we are always impressed by those characters who are always out there doing good — characters who are truly free and courageous enough to do good, even if that will cost them their lives. Imaginative narration has a creative way of imitating life. It captures and presents to us so powerfully our deepest longings. A narration that is based on do's and don't's is not so effective in the long run. It may be effective for a while, but not for long. The success is limited once people's freedom is taken away. How can they be good if they are not free to be good, if they are dominated by fear? Moreover, how can they take responsibility for their actions if they were not free to do them?

To be free responsibly demands an understanding of conscience. It seems to me that, in traditional Africa, conscience was enslaved in the mores and customs of the family, the clan or the ethnic group, depending on the behavior expected at a given time and space. I recall one evening when I was in Standard III asking my grandfather, "How is it that our ethnic group (Wapare) and the Masai (the neighboring ethnic group) always fought over cows and committed such senseless killings?" He answered me, "You see, the Masai strongly believe that all cows were created only for them: they are their divinely-bestowed property. So when they come at us and take our cows they do not consider it stealing. They assume that our cows are their cows which have just strayed away. But we cannot just sit idle and let them take them. How are we going to feed our families? In the squabble, life may be lost. We know they are wrong." With my young imagination I asked him, "Does that mean that God's home is in Masailand?" He answered, "I see that your brain is not yet fully developed. You will understand these things when you grow up." Since I was not prepared to let things end there, I asked him, "But doesn't Masai know that killing another person is wrong?" My grandfather said, "For them, killing in this case is not wrong. It is justified because they are reclaiming their property. The killing is a case of self-defense."

I can say that the superego dictated most of their behavior. Following Freud, I can say that the superego is the voice of parents, the clan, and the tradition or the authority of the ethnic group. The superego is more concerned with acting according to the code or the voice of the authority. In this case, the superego is looking more to the past than to the present and the future. Moreover, the welfare and the interests of the individual come first. It is like saying, "My mother is the best cook in the whole world." Whose mother is not the best cook? But, it is more correct to say, "All mothers are the best cooks in the world."

Nevertheless, conscience is "the preconceptual recognition of an absolute call to love, this being the unique means by which a person creates his true future,"[29] has a different approach to life.

Conscience is more concerned with others than with self and sees its own fulfillment in terms of service, not success. It is *flexible* not in the sense of compromising, or giving in to principles, but in being able to make a living response to every new situation, and in being open to new insights and values. *Conscience is directed towards the present and the future* and does not preoccupy itself with what is past. It moves towards new beginnings, and does not dwell on the past that is buried in us. . . . Conscience is concerned with action not with ideas and speculations.[30]

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[29] *Human Response to the Call of God* (Spearhead, No. 58, Vol. 3; Eldoret, Kenya: Baba Publications, 1979), p. 57. Emphasis original.

[30] *Ibid*.

Since imaginative narration fosters hospitality and brings people closer together, it follows that whenever it is taken seriously, it facilitates the growth of conscience to the point where people realize that their sole responsibility is to enhance true humanity. Imaginative narration enables the conscience to mediate the past, the present and the future. In narration, we imaginatively go back to our past and reclaim the values we have ignored, forgotten or suppressed. We also imaginatively project a future full of possibilities to be realized in the present. Hence, imaginative narration prevents the conscience from falling into extremes.

The first extreme is that conscience is merely the result of conditioning by one's environment, the mere internalized voice of social convention, and identical with the superego (as Freud seemed to think). The second extreme view is that conscience is entirely an individual thing that necessarily implies the rejection of all law, convention and legalism. In the past, thinking about conscience tended to follow the lines of the first idea, with an emphasis on tradition and authority. . . . Now the tendency is to stress the need to reject conventional morality and to strike out for oneself. In the past, conformism and obedience was the ideal, but today we seem to be getting to the ideal of the anarchist, or perhaps the superman (or superwoman).[31]

Conscience formed by imaginative narration, which is built upon symbolism, liberates individuals from the clutches of complete conformism and complete individualism. It fosters the uniqueness of each individual and, at the same time, forms a healthy community.

Because we have to live with others and relate to them, we must accept certain ways of doing and acting and speaking, which are "conventions." But because we are beings "on the way," we must also be ready to question these conventions, to see if they are truly fulfilling their purpose. The superego, the voice of convention and tradition, is necessary in certain situations, but it is not enough for human life, nor is it the more important element in our moral understanding; and it can even be harmful if it is not transcended, as we have seen. But a total rejection of authority and tradition is equally faulty. Conscience is the place where both extremes find their values preserved and their shortcomings rebuked.[32]

Imaginative narration has a unique way of expressing very forcefully what we have said about conscience, as can be seen in this short story:

The Boy Who Wanted to Become Rich

Once upon a time, there was a boy who said to his parents, "If you follow me and do what I tell you, we shall become very rich." His parents would never refuse to do what he said. So they accompanied him, and as they went, they came to a stopping-place. The boy here sold his mother; he was given many valuable clothes. He and his father went on, and came to another place, where he sold his father; he was given a horse. Then he took his horse and clothes and went on with his journey.

As he went along, he came to another place, where he found a group of men gathered together. It was at the king's palace. The boy went near and asked them, "What is going on here?" They answered, "The king has said that if any man mentions a saying which is proverbial, it will be sought in the king's large book. If it is not found there, he will be given the king's daughter to become his wife. But if the saying is found in that book, the man will be thrown into a den of wild animals to be eaten."

[31] *Ibid*., p. 60.
[32] *Ibid*., p. 61. Emphasis original.

The boy said, "As you see me, I am wearing my mother, and am riding on my father." The king's wise men sought for that saying in his book but they could not find it there at all. They said to him, "Sit in that room over there. You will be called presently."

As he waited in that room, the king's daughter brought him food. She asked him, "Would you please explain to me the saying which has puzzled my father's wise men?" He replied, "I sold my mother and obtained these clothes that I am wearing; and I sold my father and obtained this horse which I am riding." The girl was very pleased to hear the explanation of that wise saying. She ran out and went to her father and told him the meaning of the saying. The king sent for the boy, and told him that the saying he had uttered was in his book, and that he could order him to be killed, but he spared him and gave him another opportunity.

The boy now gave them another saying: "The dove made a nest somewhere, and when she flew away, she left a feather there." They sought for that saying in their book, but could not find it. So they asked him to interpret it for them, and he said, "The king's daughter came to the room where I was sleeping, And when she went away,, she left her handkerchief there. Go, and you will find it still there." They went and found her handkerchief there; it was true and not a lie.

The king said to him, "You have won. Take my daughter to your home." He was also given a miracle ring, and told, "Whenever you need anything, turn this ring around, and speak to it about your needs." He took his bride, and began to return to his home.

They passed by the place where he had sold his father, and he returned the horse and his father was given back to him. They came to where he had sold his mother, and he gave back the clothes and she was returned to him. So they went on, and before they came to his home, the young man said, "I want to find a very beautiful house, and excellent food, and good furniture in my home when I get there." When he arrived, he found all these things as he had said to the ring. When other people saw this, they wondered and were amazed. The young man became rich, and had everything that he wanted. He looked after his parents; and he and his wife lived happily together, for a long time.[33]

Normally, the listeners or readers enjoy the story much more if the narrator lets them make their own interpretation. There are so many *subtleties* that if a narrator imposes his or her own interpretation, he or she ruins the beauty of the story. Therefore, the only thing I can say is that conventional wisdom would condemn the boy for selling his parents in the first place. Nothing would justify selling one's parents even for five seconds. The boy, however, did not fall to the temptation of dissolute living; he did not become an anarchist or a superman. He simply made use of — what else? — his imagination.

Rather than starving to death and fatalistically blaming his misfortune on fate, he made use of the best gift life could give: the grace of imagination. According to Walter Brueggeman, one of the functions of the imagination is to create an alternative consciousness.[34] Like a prophetic minister, the boy evokes, forms and reforms the lifestyle of his whole family. But remember, his intention was always to grow in goodness in an authentic way. Did he lie? Did he cheat? I don't think so. His narratives emerged from his own life and more importantly from the goodness of his heart. The story inspires listeners because they, too, can become imaginative in their own way and overcome many handicaps or obstacles they may have regarded as insurmountable.

To summarize my reflection, I conclude that imaginative narration ought to be taken more seriously, especially today when the analytical and speculative aspects of our thinking seem to dominate all dimensions of our life. By taking imaginative narration seriously, we are enabled to

[33] Mbiti, *op. cit*., pp. 200-201.

[34] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978), p. 13.

live the symbols through which we experience the infinite in the finite, the transcendent in the immanent, the permanent in the transitory, the divine in the human. Moreover, this commitment to imaginative narration enables us to become participants, rather than to remain mere spectators in the "game" of life: the search for the truth of existence. Imaginative narration grounds us more solidly on the journey to discover who we truly are.

Chapter XI

Formation of Character in Traditional Nigerian Moral Education

Izu Marcel Onyeocha

Personally I'm always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught. Winston Churchill

Conduct will not be right unless the will to act is right; for this is the source of conduct. Nor, again, can the will be right without a right attitude of mind; for this is the source of the will. Furthermore, such an attitude of mind will not be found even in the best of men unless he has learned the laws of life as a whole and has worked out a proper judgment about everything, and unless he has reduced facts to a standard of truth. Seneca

In discussing the subject of moral education in traditional Nigeria I would like to apply, in the light of the overall theme of this seminar, the word imagination in the active sense of imaginative, creative, inventive, rather than the passive sense of imaginary, unreal, and illusionary. I will say right away that even though it is no formalized textbook codification as are the contemporary urbane Western and other versions, it contains within itself its operators needed in order to achieve the good life as understood and envisioned within the society.

Philip Wheelwright posits four ways of imagination in his book, *The Burning Fountain*, namely Confrontational Imagination, which acts upon its object by particularizing and intensifying it; Stylistic Imagination, which acts upon its object by distancing and stylizing it; Compositive Imagination, which fuses heterogeneous elements into some kind of whole; and Archetypal Imagination, which sees the particular object in the light of a larger conception of a higher concern.[1]

It is my claim here that there is an element of each type of imagination involved in the operation, rather than the construction of the system. My central argument, however, is not on the aspect of imagination but on the aspect of character formation. Later in the discussion I will try to show that no individual or group could claim to have established the system; this is why I stress the word *operation.* In this operation every element finds a place such that there is no separation of concerns. The moral, the political, the social, the religious, even the banal, find a place within the scheme. The over-all grounds for justification have been a reference to *òménàlà* which has been didactically referred to as *òmèrè-àlà*.

When Theophilus Okere defines morality as *òmèrè-àlà*[2] — that which enables society to function properly[3] — he hits precisely at the definition of the various aspects of behavior and

[1] Philip Wheelwright, *The Burning Fountain* (Gloucester, MA: Smith, 1982), pp. 33-34. See also Timothy Rogers Martin, "Andy Warhol As Artist and Teacher" in *Religious Education*, vol. 84 no. 2 (Spring 1989), p. 285.

[2] Theophilus Okere, "The Role of Religion in Moral Education," in *New Perspectives in Moral Education*, edited by O.A. Nduka and E.O. Iheoma, p. 52. Etymologically the term *omere-ala* can be broken down into *òmèrè*, meaning maker of and that which constitutes, and *àlà*, literally meaning the soil or land, but in this instance it signifies human society.

[3] Okere's interpretation while significantly differing from the common usage of the term *òménàlà* is not necessarily contradictory to it. *Òmèrè-àlà* or "maker-of-society" would refer not to the order of material but that of efficient causality in the Aristotelian sense. It is "that-which-puts" human society on its way by giving it precisely the nudge it requires to be human. Okere's interpretation is, therefore, quite in order. On the other hand it will be a mistake to

social activities that are acceptable as desirable. Also included in this concept are those actions and attitudes that are rejected as undesirable. While Christian and Islamic moral codes point to some form of revelation for their origins, Nigerian traditional moral code is built up from the injunctions of the earth goddess *Ala* (for the Igbos) and through the ancestors *Nudity* or Ndibunze.[4] These injunctions made up of approved observances and prohibitions, constitute what the Igbos call *omenàlà — the ought* of the land. Those prohibitions are referred to as *Nso-àlà* — actions abhorred by Alà. In this traditional code, there is emphasis on group morality rather than on individual cultivation of goodness itself, and the most important element is the idea of Life as the highest good.[5]

One is accounted as *Onye árúrú-àlà* — a perpetrator of abominable things; or *onye ùrú-àlà* — one in the business of doing abominable deeds — when one does things disruptive to the socio-cosmic order. *Urú-àlà* or *arúrú-àlà* therefore pertain to the realm of action that is already performed or could possibly be performed. On the other hand, when one is reckoned as evil in one's general disposition, one is described as *Ajo mmadu* — an evil person. The concept of good is expressed by the word *mma*. The same word expresses the idea of beauty, health, order. The antonym is *njo* (adjective *ajo),* which expresses the idea of something evil, bad, ugly, unseemly.

In the traditional moral code, prohibitions seem to outnumber positive injunctions. The few positive injunctions gravitate largely around religious duties, observances and rites. These must be properly observed for the enhancement of the Good Life, which is regarded as constituting the supreme good.

A communalistic outlook is very prominent too, and stems from the people's world view. Professor Ilogu suggests that because of the emphasis on the community, its well-being, and its ordered existence, the maintenance of the proper links of relationship in human kinship as well as in the relationship between humans, nature, and the ancestral spirit, most members of the traditional society do not readily see the value of goodness for the exercise of personal responsibility. Goodness is seen primarily as a means of realizing the social morality of the group, and this is capable of removing from moral life the joy of inner motivation. It is inner motivation that is the essence of responsibility.[6]

An inevitable question that arises with any group-oriented morality is whether it is capable of bringing about a sense of personal responsibility which manifests itself in the feeling of guilt or of exultation. Very likely, it would be based on the sense of shame. On the other hand, the sense of having done well will be based mostly on public opinion. According to Milton Singer there is no scientifically demonstrable reason why in group-oriented morality — heavily influenced by the community's rigorous enforcement mechanism including shame and taunting, improvised,

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consider the common usage *òménàlà,* in its literal sense of "what-obtains-in-society," "what-thrives-in-society." That would limit it to the merely conventional sense of practices of whatever type and rob it of its primary meaning of "the-ought-of-society." It is thus a value-studded system of mores, ideals and standards that undergirds the people's behavior. Therefore its role in society is in the order of final causes: that which confers on human society its raison d'être precisely as a human society. This meaning gives the term *òménàlà* the crucial place it has in the moral education of the people.

[4] Edmund Ilogu, *Christianity in Ibo Culture* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), p. 123.

[5] *Ibid*., p. 128.

[6] What Ilogu seems to suggest here is that the Igbos separate duty from the realm of virtue, almost in line with the Kantian idea of duty for the sake of duty. This point of view, though plausible, is quite debatable. A detailed discussion of its deeper implications is, however, not within the scope of this exercise. Since the sense of achievement is highly cherished among the Igbos, one who falls short of this ideal could hardly expect any esteem in society.

denigrating songs — members of such groups could not develop inner remorse or guilt.[7] Thus it is not a question of either/or; the two elements are substantially present in the system.

The Traditional Nigerian Moral "Code"

No written moral code existed in traditional Nigerian society for the obvious reasons of illiteracy. The moral laws were generally conventional, and specific legislations were made to cater to specific needs. Professor Ilogu, however, was able to put together a set of twenty-four injunctions and prohibitions that could serve as a residue of the morality that regulated, and in many cases still regulates, both the conduct of the individual members of the community and the entire community as a whole. The following are the twenty-four injunctions put together by Professor Edmund Ilogu:

1. Stealing of yams either from the barn or from the farm.
2. Homicide.
3. Incest.
4. A freeman *díàlà* having sexual relationships with an *Osú* (one dedicated as slave to a deity), or spending the night especially with the *Osú* in his or her house.
5. Suicide, especially by hanging.
6. Poisoning someone with intent to take his or her life secretly.
7. Theft of domestic fowls especially a hen in her hatching pot where she can easily be taken along with her eggs.
8. A woman climbing a palm tree or kolanut tree, especially if she does so with a climbing belt called *ètè*.
9. Theft of any kind committed by an *Ozó*-titled man.
10. Adultery by a wife – (not by a husband!).
11. A wife throwing her husband down on the ground in the course of a domestic row.
12. Deliberately killing or eating any totem animal; if accidentally the liability is more benignly regarded but the act is abominable all the same. Totem animals include the sacred or royal python, sacred cows, goats or rams associated in one form or another with the communities origins or destiny.
13. Deliberately cutting the tendrils of young, growing yams in another's farm.
14. Secretly altering land boundaries, especially during the night.
15. Willful arson.
16. Divulging the identity of the masquerade – especially if the offender is a woman.
17. A woman breaking confinement by cooking and serving meals during her menstrual period, especially if the husband is an *Ozó*-titled man.
18. A widow having sexual relationships while still in the period of mourning her dead husband.
19. Dying a "bad death" – that is, death resulting from an infectious disease like leprosy or small pox, or dying within one year after having sworn an oath. Perjury in traditional society is akin to the Biblical unforgivable sin; anyone guilty of it was denied the normal courtesies of mourning or a decent burial.
20. A husband deliberately breaking or throwing away his wife's utensils.

[7] See Gerhart Piers and Milton B. Singer, *Shame and Guilt: A Psychoanalytic and Cultural Study* (New York: W. Norton & Co., 1971), p. 99.

21. A cock crowing at an awkward time in the night, between the hours of 8:00 p.m. and 5:00 a.m., which was supposed to be the business time of the spirits and the ancestors. It is the height of impudence to disturb them.

22. A woman giving birth to twins. (The practice of tabooing twins has long ceased!)

23. A baby delivered "feet-first" rather than "head-first."

24. An infant cutting the upper teeth first.[8]

Many important features could be noted by looking at these rules of conduct. First of all, they cannot be called societal laws in the sense of regulations established by the people for the smooth-running of the community. The reason for this is that no one could claim authorship or even knowledge of the precise origins of these rules of conduct. A typical member of the community, say an elder, will explain their validity by saying: "That is what our forebears and their own forebears practiced since the beginning of time. Anyone who goes against them does so at his or her own risk." The sanctions apart, whatever they are, one would like to know the reason for, and authority behind them wherever they apply. Conformity for its own sake is in itself clearly not a sufficient vindication of the agent's status as a rational and autonomous agent. Its moral import could only be at best marginal.

Secondly, in general no one took any personal offence at the breach of any of these laws. Rather, it was the community that took action against offenders. The more serious breaches were said to be offenses against *Alà*, the earth goddess, on whose behalf maximum stiff penalties were inflicted on offenders. The land has always been there since the beginning of time and is technically considered eternal and inviolable.

Thirdly, there is a cyclic interplay in the universe of beings among the superhuman, the human and the subhuman, and the human is always at the center. Even though human concerns are at the center, the principle behind these ethical generalizations is in base cosmological inasmuch as it covers the entire spectrum of beings, rather than anthropological in the sense of limiting itself to rules that are meant to guide human conduct. In this connection the rules affect even domestic animals (see number 21) as well as crops in the field.

Fourthly, sequel to this is the lack of direct reference to the divine element which might lead to suspicions of the lack of a teleological explanation. The masquerades are about the only reference to the superhuman element, since masquerades were considered to be the revered spirit of the ancestors come back to earth. Furthermore there is in most traditional explanations a constant reference to *Alà*. This reference besides providing some justification, also introduces the teleological explanation often sought in ethical determinations.

Fifthly, religion does not show up directly either; it seems to be only presupposed. This presupposition is demonstrated by the fact that a breach of any of these injunctions would attract sanctions of a religious nature by way of expiatory or purificatory rites. The conclusion one may draw from this is the fact that morality and the religious sense are so inextricably bound together.

Sixthly, these laws or rules appeal to the heart rather than to the intellect. That is not to suggest that they are irrational. Rather, their validity depends not so much on their ability to persuade the mind as in their functionality in maintaining order in the community. In this respect one may be justified to regard them as intuitionist in character. The general attitude with regard to the traditional moral code is to challenge one not just to take-it-or-leave-it but to take-it-or-face-it.

A closer look at the twenty-four injunctions would reveal a great deal of emphasis on justice and equity. Hence, there are many prohibitions against stealing (numbers 1, 7, 9, 14) and vandalism

[8] Ilogu, *op. cit.*

(13, 15, 20). While the stealing of a fowl was considered a disgrace of the most debasing kind, stealing yams was a very serious offence because the yam stands as a mark of masculine achievement. It could be compared with one stealing another's hard-won Olympic medal. By far, the most demeaning was for a titled man to steal since the conferral of an *Ozó* title amounted to a universal acknowledgment of one's integrity of life. The lesser the worth of the object stolen, the greater will be the attendant opprobrium.

Prohibitions against murder come out strongly (2, 5, 6, 15) and include both suicide and attempted murder, such as poisoning and arson. Also strong are prohibitions against sexual impropriety (3, 4, 10, 18). Sexual activity, which by its nature procures some bodily pleasure, was rightly considered inappropriate during the period of mourning since it showed lack of respect for the memory of the deceased. When it is said that the rule of abstinence applied to women, it does not mean that men had a free ride. Because of the polygynous, rather than polyandrous, nature of marriage in traditional Nigerian society, a woman had only one husband to lose, but a man had other wives he could turn to. Where the man had only one wife, he would obliged to observe the period of mourning and the abstinence from sexual activity that went with it.

Allied to these are prohibitions against a woman climbing trees or serving meals when she should be confined. The former was considered to be in bad taste and offensive to the beholder because the anatomical structure of the female body was considered ill-suited to the hazardous activity of tree-climbing. The latter was purely due to hygienic considerations.

Divulging the identity of a masquerade was considered abominable. It amounted to blasphemy – saying that the masquerade was a human being when it was actually taken to be the spirit of the ancestors. In the Bible, Jesus considered blasphemy one of the sins against the Holy Spirit "which can be forgiven neither in this world nor in the next."[9] A woman guilty of this was doubly liable of overreaching and impropriety. Since women were not supposed to approach the masquerade in the first place, they could not have ordinarily known; therefore, she could only have known illegitimately by going out of her way to find out. There lies the impropriety.

A Westerner reading numbers 22-24 surely will find them surprising. What may seem excessively brutal can be better appreciated if one considered the logic behind them. In 22, humans are supposed to be unique and single. Only animals come in multiples. To enter the human race in multiples was considered demeaning to human nature and as introducing the bestial element into the human forum. This was unacceptable.

It was a bad omen for a child to be born feet-first. That was considered the exit, rather than the entrance posture. One exited the human community feet-first when his or her body was being carried out of the house for the last time. A child born feet-first was an omen of death and disaster. The head touching the ground first was taken as a sign of humility and loyalty, while the feet hitting the ground first was a sign of rebellion and intractability.

To cut the upper teeth first was considered bestial, for it reminded one of the fangs of deadly serpents, tigers and lions, and such domestic animals as cats and dogs. It was also considered to be an omen of avarice and wrangling. In the name of peace and Wiggins and in deference to the perceived order of the universe, these phenomena were viewed with foreboding and "normal" people had the duty to forswear them. There is an Igbo proverb that clearly shows this resolute disposition: *Nwata puo eze-elu ma a-kpopeghi ya, o ga epukwa ozo*, which means if a child cuts the upper teeth first and you do not knock them out, he is likely to do even more unseemly things.

[9] The whole verse reads: "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," (Mt. 12:32).

Professor Ilogu's was a brave attempt to put together on paper what previously existed in people's collective memory. Hopefully, he will have the occasion to refine his collection by showing more clearly the fine tuning in various aspects of the "code" and make it more comprehensive to cover the details of daily living. It will then be easy to translate it into basic material for formal education, reflection and criticism. As the code stands, it is based on the natural law, and the demands it makes on the individual are take-it-or-face-it.[10]

In other parts of Nigeria, there are different points of emphasis, but the principle is the same. S.F. Nadel studied the situation among the Nupes of Northern Nigeria. According to him, law in the Nupe kingdom is a concern of the political organization and forms part of the elaborate coercive machinery of the state. Forms of redress and sanctions exist and are applied outside the political framework. This restricted form of redress covers two types of offenses: religious offenses and kinship offenses. The former includes such acts as the desecration of sacred objects or places, whether Islamic or traditional, while the latter include litigation over inheritance and offenses against traditional marriage rules. Among the most common such offenses are marriage in the forbidden degrees of consanguinity and incest.[11]

Traditional Nupe law operated with legal distinction which, corresponding in certain respects to the modern distinction between civil and criminal law. The law defined two classes of delicts: simpler delicts, *Gyara,* which were settled by "repairing" the damage that had been done, and graver delicts, which called for formal judgment and punishment, "*Sheri'a."* The following table summarizes the various crimes and offenses according to this twofold classification:

Offenses Involving GYARA
1. Small debts.
2. Minor thefts carried out during the day.
3. Theft of fowls, sheep, and goats.
4. Adultery: seduction of a girl by a man who is willing to marry her.

Offenses Involving SHERI'A:
1. Large debts
2. Theft on a small scale and during the night.
3. Theft of cattle or horses, and theft committed during the night.
4. Adultery leading to fights and bloodshed.
5. Seduction by a married man who refuses to marry the girl.
6. Murder and manslaughter.
7. Highway robbery.
8. Arson.
9. High treason, i.e., rebellion of feudal lords against the king — lèse-majesté, *gi toko nya tsu*, literally, abuse of the king.

The local authority dealt with the *Gyara* offenses, while the graver crimes were referred to the central authority — the court of the king and *Alkali* in Bida. Punishment of ordinary criminals took place in the open market inside the capital and might range from flogging, or *shela*, to capital punishment.

[10] Ilogu, *op. cit.*
[11] S.F. Nadel.

Sexual Morality in Traditional Nigerian Society

An important point that requires some discussion is the question of sexual morality. In traditional Nigerian societies, sex was not a subject to be glibly discussed. It was, in fact, considered remiss for adults to discuss matters regarding sexuality either with or in the presence of the young. By the same token it was unthinkable for young persons to make references to sexual things in the hearing of their elders. Whatever they needed to know about sexuality was casually told them as they physically and sexually developed. At the onset of puberty, for example, the adolescent would probably complain of some ache or pain or physical distress. The parent would understand the connection and instruct him or her on how to cope.

In the past, it was not uncommon for young maidens to go about their daily business without clothes until the time of marriage. Boys also went about their daily activities without clothes until they were officially "clothed" in a special ceremony initiating them into adulthood. It was at the initiation stage that anything a young initiate ever wondered about was frankly explained since he or she would in a short time need to apply this knowledge in the course of adult and marital life soon to follow. The Efiks, Yorubas, Igallas, Igbos, Fulanis, practically all the peoples of Nigeria, had their own versions of the initiation process.

Contrary to the impressions created by the earliest European and foreign nationals, there was no pornographic intent involved in the scantiness of clothing. On the contrary, the humid climatic conditions rendered clothing unnecessary as a protection against the weather and as an ornament. Thus, even in Europe and the rest of the industrialized world, hot summers have led to various degrees of scanty clothing, at times to a state of complete unclothedness.

In traditional Nigerian society, the moral standards were absolute; parents had an absolute control over their children — male and female alike. The boys played and interacted among boys while the girls played and interacted among girls. This removed unnecessary occasions for temptation. Where a boy or girl was in a state of sexual restlessness, it became embarrassingly manifest to any casual onlooker. In traditional society, sex was not to be indulged in for the pleasure of it even though the craving might be there. The element of pleasure was considered as incidental rather than central to the course of human mating. As a result, sexual promiscuity rarely, if at all, occurred. Society was very strict, and anyone indulging in promiscuous activities earned the scorn of the neighbors.

It was probably this strictness about sexual matters that led S.M.E. Bengu to assert that all sexual perversities were alien to Africa.[12] These perversities, he insists, "have been imported into Africa through the cities, with the whites as their carriers, since they were the creators of the cities themselves."[13] This assertion, though somewhat an overstatement, is likely to be endorsed by most African purists. One need only consider the degree of tolerance accorded to certain sexual practices in industrialized societies which are almost unmentionable in more traditional society. On the other hand, however, Bengu fails to define just what constitutes a sexual perversion, especially because there is no unanimity on the issue just as there is no strict homogeneity in African cultures. Besides, he never tried to show how he came to his conclusion.

Flora Nwapa, a leading Nigerian female novelist, discusses the issue of prostitution and rejects it as bad for the African woman. In her novel, *Idu*, the heroin of the novel by the same name, denounces prostitution outrightly: "Our Woman of the Lake [the Sea Goddess] frowns at it, and

[12] S.M.U. Bengu.
[13] *Ibid*.

that's why prostitutes of our town never profit by it.'"[14] The Woman of the Lake, also the goddess of virginity, is said to punish prostitutes. Idu drives her point further: "If prostitution is to be practiced let it not be native women, but women of other lands to practice it."[15]

Professor Wole Soyinka, Nigeria's Nobel Laureate for Literature, depicts a scene where the traditional sexual morality is given expression. A grandmother brings pressure to bear on her granddaughter, Dehinwa, not to abort a child that she evidently seemed to have conceived either in or out of wedlock:

You were plump when you first came back from *"ilu oyinbo"*. (She looked up sharply, boring into her eyes, then shook her head in relief and mischief). No, she chortled, I don't think so. But listen girl, I know this new habit of you modern girls; don't join them in the foolishness. If you are expecting a baby, have it. A child is a beautiful thing; have it. The important thing is to know the father.[16]

Dehinwa is not being encouraged to be promiscuous, but rather to face up to her conduct if by accident or design she had conceived a child, she should not seek to escape by the back door. Here was an emphatic objection to any contemplation of abortion. Progeny are to be preferred in all circumstances above personal convenience or cosmetic considerations. Thus, a woman's womanhood was assessed by her actual ability to bear children. Where she was unable to bear children, her esteem waned.

Another Nigerian writer, John Munonye, touches on the predicament of a woman that failed to bear children. In his novel *Obi,* a friend Warrior congratulates Obi, the hero of the story, on his marriage to a well-bred, beautiful wife. Nevertheless, Warrior wastes no time in declaring his stand on any woman who fails to bear children: "We could never call her wife until she has produced children for the family; for what use is a kolanut tree if it fails to bear fruit."[17]

A similar attitude finds expression in the case of Flora Nwapa's Idu, who was unhappy over her inability to be a mother after three years of marriage. Of her it was said: "She was not pregnant, she had not even had a miscarriage. She was, like any woman in traditional society, meant to be a mother and not a mere sex object."[18]

Within marriage itself, adultery, especially on the woman's part, was highly condemned. Yet, men were not given a blank check. They could, as has already been shown, meet their sexual needs from their several wives; and, if they had only one wife, they were expected to remain faithful to her. The only exception to the rule is concubinage.

Traditional Moral Education of the Young

James Hake points out that the factors that affect the moral training of children in Northern Nigeria (and other parts as well) were the customs, practices and religious beliefs of parents.[19] Children were required to show their parents and elders prompt obedience, respect and an unquestioning submission to their will. The belief is that if one were to be too lenient in training

[14] Flora Nwapa, *Idu*.
[15] *Ibid*.
[16] Wole Soyinka.
[17] John Munonye, *Obi*.
[18] Nwapa, *op. cit.*
[19] James Hake.

the child, one would bring misfortune to the child and its family. According to traditional and religious beliefs, a child is born imperfect, and, if given his or her own way, he or she will do foolish and harmful thins not only to him or herself but to other people as well. Parents, therefore, felt it was their bounden duty to try to curb the incipient evil tendencies in their children and to use corporal and other punishment as they saw fit.[20]

In addition to the small but recurring misdeeds of children which would irritate parents, stealing and then lying were considered serious negative character traits. Quarrelling, fighting, tardiness, rudeness, disrespect for elders, breakage of family utensils – are other types of misbehavior that cause parents to use disciplinary measures on them.

The most common form of punishment was thrashing, and in many cases it was often preceded by a good scolding. In some extreme cases of breach of discipline or persistence in obstinacy, the child could be locked up in a dark room and temporarily be denied access to his most cherished belongings and playthings. Sometimes he or she would be denied a meal. The idea was to let the child see the full impact of his or her conduct. Most children would break down and cry; that was considered an act of contrition that would earn them reprieve. It was left to the parents to determine just the right measure of strictness that would not border on cruelty; but they would prefer "to be cruel to be kind."

These traditional methods were thought to have been quite successful in maintaining discipline. In the light of present-day sensitivities, they are likely to be criticized as trials by fire. It is arguable whether it was not after all a case of parental sadism and child abuse which did no more than impose compliance rather than real, spontaneous obedience. Could acts of compliance be reckoned in terms of virtue as acts resulting from a developed and autonomous judgment? Or, are they mere conditioned responses to stimuli? If the former, it is all well and good; but, if the latter, the children's autonomy or capacity for virtuous action becomes, at best, severely impaired and, at worst, permanently distorted.

John Kambalame and his companions put together a clear-cut code that gave specific directives to specific groups in the community: children, adults, parents and married couples. They were meant to provide relevant instruction for various stages of development – initiation, marriage, family and society in general. Though designed for Kenya, Uganda, Malawi and other East African countries, the contents are very relevant to Nigeria. The details may vary, but the substance is basically applicable.[21] It has all the makings of a social catechesis.

When the time of initiation came, the children were gathered together, taken into the remote forest away from their parents and exposed for the first time to life in its most rugged and most challenging state. The boys would experience for the first time what it meant to be their own men beyond the protective shadows of parents and under the strict supervision of one skilled in the job and designated to guide them. Their food would be simple and their shelter would be the barest possible. There was no question of the boys feeling "crushed" or "punished" by the experience. On the contrary, their punishing experiences were meant to "prove" to proud parents, peers and prospective female admirers that they could hold their own in tough conditions and difficult circumstances. The "tutor" or mentor would proceed to explain the significance of every object and action so that the boys would understand perfectly what they were doing and why. Then they would be issued specific instructions which they were supposed to carry out.

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[20] *Ibid*.

[21] See John Kambalame, et. al. *Our African Way of Life*, translated by Cullen Young & Hastings Banda, United Society for Christian Literature (London & Redhill: Lutterworth Press, 1946), pp. 48-54.

Male Initiation

Initiation Introduction of 12-14 Years Old. Twelve to fourteen-year olds are taught as follows during the course of initiation:

1. The porridge they bring here for you has this meaning: that you belong now to your own group, that you have set out on a journey.
2. These ceremonies mean that when you were small you played about as you felt inclined and held off from disagreeable things.
3. The cruel leader of *vinyau* symbolizes those trials in life that you will meet in the world; if you go on childishly, such things will come to you from this side or from that.
4. Blindfolding you signifies that there will come to you troubles that the eye does not see, such as illness, trials and death – things that can take you unawares.
5. Making you separate from your mother means putting modesty between you and her because you and she are not alike in your physical parts.
6. This little temporary shelter here signifies the grave where you will lie without seeing any person from your village.
7. Your sponsor signifies the spirits who will stay with you among the dead, and who, when the time comes, will present you to *Mulungu* (God the Just, Upright and Immutable), accompanying you as witnesses to your good character.

Initiation Injunctions to the 12 to 14 Yeas Old

1. Be obedient and do gladly all that you are ordered to do.
2. Honor all who are older than yourself.
3. You must always help, particularly those in need and especially the aged, lame and children. Never deride, never revile and never strike them.
4. Be ready to fetch and carry wherever you go.
5. Honor your father and your mother for all the good things they do for you in looking after you here on earth.
6. You must love *Mulungu*, who looks after the spirits of the dead and make offerings of worship to him.
7. You must always speak what is true.
8. Take nothing belonging to another without asking for it.
9. Never entice another man's wife.
10. Take care of your body day by day.
11. Eat nothing that is stolen.
12. Be amiable to everyone.
13. Always be busy at your work.
14. Be kind to all created things, such as dogs, cats frogs and lizards.

Female Initiation: The Ofosi Guild

There is also a special initiation for females. It is the initiation into the female priesthood, the *Ofosi* Guild among the Owe people of Kwara State of Nigeria.[22] As a rule, the traditional religion of the Owe is an affair completely controlled by the adult males of the community. Women and children are practically of no importance, just as they have no direct say either in the other decisions concerning the well-being of the tribe. A significant exception to this general rule in the religious sphere is the phenomenon of *Ofosi*. They are women who are initiated into an esoteric and deeply religious society, involving periodic and authentic spirit-possession.[23] They are considered the "wives of the *Ebora*," and unlike other women who have no active role in the *Ebora* cult, they have some specific, though limited part to play in the worship of *Ebora*. Their part consists mainly in singing and dancing in honor of the *Ebora* on the appropriate occasions such as the major religious festivals: *Eye*, *Oka* and *Ekiho* as well as for the promotion of a man to the *Orota* grade and for the funeral of an *Orota*-grade member, his mother or one of the *Ofosi*.

The rite of initiation into this cult occurs only when there is a suitable spiritual atmosphere in the town, generally on the occasion of the promotion of a great chief or the burial of an important priest-elder. As soon as the atmosphere is declared propitious, parents who have daughters and husbands with wives whom they intend to *Ebora* take the necessary steps with the directors of the guild to have the prospective candidate enrolled. A woman, too, may decide on her own to get initiated, but she has to obtain the permission of her husband who then puts forward her name.

On a given day, the head of the *Ofosi* calls down the spirit. She performs secret rituals involving palm oil on the sacred pot of the *Ofosi* and calls out the names of the candidates. As the names are being called into the sacred pot of "medicine," the *Ofosi* spirit gets into the candidates wherever they may be. They suddenly begin to experience serious pains in the head, fall into a trance and rush into the bush – generally up into the *Ebora* hill – for days.[24] After some time, the *Ofosi* women go in search of them and bring them to a sort of novitiate.[25] Here, as the blood of a sacrificed goat is poured into the sacred pot, they regain consciousness and begin right away the long period of elaborate initiation, divided into three stages.

The first stage consists in three months of complete isolation. In Olle, this used to be spent in the depth of the forest. Then comes three months of communal life in the premises of the *Oba Ofosi*, i.e., the chief of the *Ofosi*, during which time they learn the language of the *Ofosi*, songs and ritual dances under very rigid discipline and seclusion. At the last stage, again a period of three months, they leave the seclusion, go around in small groups performing the ritual dances they have learned from house to house, and begging for food and money.

The candidates at this stage came often into the town, "very scantily dressed, with at small piece of cloth that just about went round the waist, and stopping far up above the knees."[26] Their bodies were smeared with red *osùn* or ochre; the upper part of the body was completely bare, except for beads swung around the neck and many others not inelegantly piled on the waist. Since they had, so to speak, just been born to a new life, "they behaved like children in speech and mannerism, and were even called *Akiyeye* or *Akitata* which means ‘mad’ or ‘moronic.’"[27]

Though strictly cultic, the *Ofosi* has a lot of features in common with the initiation rites already described. There is a common interest in the esoteric, in the need to retire "away from the

[22] See E.A. Ade Adegbola, (Ed.), *Traditional Religion in West Africa* (Ibadan, Nigeria: Daystar Press, 1983), pp. 34-45.
[23] *Ibid*., p. 34.
[24] *Ibid*., p. 38.
[25] *Ibid*.
[26] *Ibid*., p. 39.
[27] *Ibid*.

crowd," rigid discipline, reference to a leader or guide. The final result of cultic "regeneration" is also noteworthy. The initiates emerge as "new creatures," untrammeled by the banal habits of the world around them. Henceforth, they are no longer ordinary people but must be referred to in quite special circumstances.

The scantiness of dress makes them no one's object but relates them more to the spirit world then to the world of sense since at the very beginning of the ceremony they were taken possession of by the spirit. They had learned to make-do with whatever they could to endure isolation and terror, to survive in tough circumstances, to keep secrets and to employ the discipline required for learning and using esoteric language, songs and dances. Using St. Paul's expression, "It is no longer [they] who live [and operate]" but the spirit who lives in them.[28] Their actions and attitudes in that state are completely adapted to the promptings of their possessing spirits.

The fact that a new name is imposed on initiates is very important. Names in traditional Nigerian culture express the very personality of the bearer. Taking a new name is a significant expression, for by initiation the *Ofosi* has become a new person. In the Old Testament of the Bible, God changed Abram's name to Abraham and Jacob's name to Israel. In the New Testament, Simon became Cephas or Peter, and Saul became Paul.

It was a great honor to be made an *Ofosi*. The *Ofosi* women were held in respect by the local people. A husband, who had to pay the expenses, considered it and honor to have an *Ofosi* as a wife. The hands of girls who became *Ofosi* prior to marriage were highly sought in marriage, for it was generally conceded that an *Ofosi* woman was more trustworthy, obedient and moral than other women. It was rare for an *Ofosi* to try to leave her husband.

Special Post-Initiation Instructions

After initiation, the male and female initiates basically were ready for the marital stage of life. Special instructions and hints were offered them about successful family-craft and mother-craft as they were gradually eased into the family life of their own. The parents, too, had their own sets of instructions about the most helpful attitudes to adopt toward their son or daughter and the spouses each might have chosen.

To the Parents of the Young Lad

1. Never tempt or try your child needlessly.
2. Care for your child most watchfully as he comes to his full maturity.
3. Your child has left your hut and sleeps in the lads' hut now with his contemporaries, but never say that he has left you.[29] Care for him as usual.
4. If you see that he is late in coming home to his hut, ask him about it. He has sense and will tell you.
5. Be patient and forgiving with your boy. As he goes out with his equals (i.e., peers), he will get into trouble. You should rescue him and forgive as well as console him.

[28] The entire citation reads: "I have been crucified with Christ and yet I am alive; *it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me*," (Galatians 2:19b-20a). (Italics, mine.)

[29] At about the age of seven, a boy was considered too old to remain an inmate of the parental hut. See Kambalame, note on p. 50. This is hardly surprising since in traditional Nigeria, once a child was up to seven years of age, he was almost treated like an adult and would often be brusquely reprimanded for misconduct: "You are not going back to your mother's womb, are you?" It was not uncommon to procure wives for nine-year-olds who gradually grew into it.

6. Remember to watch over his health. Give him medicine when he is not well.

7. Do not forget that as he grows up, he will do what you did. Desire will come upon him to seek for a wife so that he may build a household for his very own.

8. Now that your lad is one who eschews such-and-such things, never knowingly give him what he should not have, lest he sin.

As the boy develops into adulthood and takes a wife in order to start his own family, there was a set of instructions for him, for his wife and for their parents.

To a Newlywed Husband

Listen, O Husband. You have lived with your father and mother. They brought you to birth, they nourished and fed you. They clothed you and looked after you well until you matured until you desired and sought a wife. Today, here is the wife that Mulungu has given you. She is also just as yourself: she has lived with her old folk who brought her to birth, fed and cared for her, as was the case with you. Today, you note her beauty and, desiring her, have caused her to separate from those people of hers so that she may be truly yours. You ought to pay heed to my words, to hear them and to act by them:

1. You must bear affection to her with the whole heart.
2. You must care for her, even as her own people did.
3. Let her want for nothing.
4. You must seek medicines for her should she be ill.
5. If you want people to hold you and your wife in esteem, you yourself should esteem her.
6. Do not forsake her for another.
7. Honor her parents and her friends.
8. Love your wife's relatives as your own and be obedient to them.
9. Never despise your family and fellow-villagers.
10. Continue as you have been that you bring no cause of separation between your father's people and those of your in-laws, so that both may be made one large community through you.

To a Newlywed Wife

1. You must love your man.
2. You must listen to what he says and do it.
3. You must have that care for him that his parents had.
4. You must be friendly to your husband's guests as with your own and those of your own people.
5. You must not leave your man and love others.
6. Honor the parents of your man and all his kin.
7. Let your kindly feelings for your husband's circle be as if to one large community with your own people.
8. Defend your man from any frightening things which are within your knowledge.
9. Never despise parents or kin.
10. Continue as you have been that you bring no cause of separation between your father's people and your in-laws, so that together they may be one, single, large community.

To the Parents of Newlyweds

1. Love your children and guide them rightly in this their home.
2. Honor their household so that others, too, may honor them.
3. Listen to their troubles and help them with their difficulties.
4. Do not be the cause of unhappiness in your children's home life.
5. Unite your own home with that of your children, so that you will make one large community together.
6. Hasten to their aid whenever they complain in any sort of trouble.

There are some important features that manifest themselves in this code. More than anything else, it concentrates on the family unit and could easily pass as a set of instructions for successful family living. There is a great premium on forming a large community. For this reason, the individual gets little or no consideration. The ideals of unity and reciprocity in rendering honor and respect run strongly throughout. The ideal of solidarity in times of trouble is another of these important features. Lacking, however, are injunctions of a religious character, a sexual ethic and some guideline for social interaction. The deity is only sparsely, if not indirectly, introduced. All these are important elements that could not safely be ignored in any serious attempt at moral education.

Methods of Traditional Moral Education

Even though there were no systematized, formalized, school-type methods of moral education, educators in traditional Nigerian society had at their disposal a variety of tools for effective moral education. By far, the most pervasive was emulation, by which the student learned to do things by actually doing them. The educator accomplished his or her task by a repeat-after-me approach. This was the way of apprenticeship. It was applied in practically every field of endeavor: professional, recreational and educational. Thus, one learned to be an herbalist or fortune-teller by actually being an apprentice to an already accomplished herbalist or fortune-teller and by doing as the master craftsman would direct. The same applied in learning a new dance or song or game. Besides apprenticeship, other approaches included the use of stories and fictitious characters, the use of proverbs, riddles, aphorisms and other words of wisdom as well as the so-called "negative way" of caution and prohibition. Though generally arranged to cater to various stages of development, they are by no means isolated from each other. Their effect is supposed to be cumulative rather than occasional. I shall attempt to say a bit more on each of these methods.

Learning by Doing: Apprenticeship and Emulation

The quick Nigerian child learned not only from his or her parents, but even more by using his or her eyes, ears and faculties. Children were not isolated from the activities of their elders. There was no baby-talk in the home; parents talked to their children as though they expected them to understand normal adult speech. They also expected them to behave in the normal manner within their level of development. There were things which were supposed to be avoided: there were words, gestures and demeanors which were considered to be in bad taste for any young person to adopt. The child saw how his or her parents, elder brothers and sisters behaved towards each other,

towards strangers or seniors or those of the opposite sex and was expected to imitate them. In instances not previously or clearly defined, it was through their manifest approval or disapproval of certain things that the child did what he or she was able to know if they were right or wrong, permissible or impermissible. In general, the great facts of human life and the origin of things were introduced into the child's mind by means of incorporation into the daily activities. It was the manner rather than the amount of instruction that was of prime importance.

In their initiation ceremonies, Nigerians showed themselves to be good, practical psychologists. They knew that the child was very impressionable and, therefore, took every measure to ensure that the impressions children received at initiation were so strong and positive as to serve as a beacon in their later life. At the appropriate time, the boys were taken away into a camp by themselves and isolated from the villagers. No woman was permitted to enter the camp.[30] The same was true of the girls; males were not allowed into their camps. It was important to maintain and atmosphere of seriousness and mystery as a safeguard against levity of mind. Special costumes might be worn, and men representing terrifying monsters (i.e., masquerades) would confront the boys at the most unexpected instances.

The aim was to teach them courage and resilience in the face of the fearsome, the unusual and the unexpected. The initiates were subjected to the severest disciplines and would emerge as "new" beings – strong, brave, confident and courageous – having overcome fear, infantile dependency and timidity.

Use of Stories

It was a common practice in traditional Nigerian society that the family gathered to tell tales illustrating human activity, consequences for good behavior and penalties for misconduct. Moral lessons were often drawn at the end of each story. Sociological facts were illuminated in the same way to explain the origins and consequences of divorce, murder, incest, friendship, courage, treachery, etc. Edwin Smith, reflecting on the content of African stories, credits them with moral and religious content that influences the formation of the young people's attitudes towards their environment.[31]

Stories mould ideals since they inculcate a high code of social ethics of excellent quality for their ability to combine entertainment and moral lessons. Another important feature of the stories was the high degree of participation they engendered. Since the tale was combined with song and the teller acted as soloist, the participants had the opportunity to take the refrains. Often, the audience was questioned by the storyteller when a character had to justify the behavior he manifested. Interpolations of assent from the audience as a tale unfolded were regularly heard. Edwin Smith gives his assessment of the instructive value of African tales:

African tales not only amuse and express feelings; they are educative . . . In recent years, the educative value of storytelling has come to be recognized among ourselves. By educative I mean parents have always realized its value in practice. Tales are seen to be the natural carrier of racial tradition or information and ideals. They are declared to have two functions: they are a molder of ideals and they are an illuminator of facts.[32]

[30] See Instructions for 12- to 14-year-old lads, number 5.
[31] E.W. Smith, *Knowing the African*, p. 138.
[32] *Ibid*., pp. 157-158.

The following two stories illustrate the use of tales to draw moral lessons as well as to achieve other educational goals.

Story I: The Bride With Stained Teeth

A certain father found a bride for his eldest son and sent him off with the bride-wealth to bring her home. As they were returning, the girl began to sing: "I am a beautiful girl, but I have no teeth." He looked into her mouth and was horrified to find a black ridge where the teeth should have been. And he took her back to her father and claimed the return of the cattle he had handed over.

On hearing what had happened, the second son went to get the girl, for he thought that his brother must have made a mistake. But once again on the road the girl sang her song, the black ridge was revealed and she was rejected with scorn. Then amidst the jeers of his friends, the youngest son of the family set out to try his luck. He handed over the cattle, and on the road the girl sang her song again.

When he looked into her mouth, lo! the black ridge, and he knew his brothers had not been mistaken. But he acted differently. "Never mind," said this magnanimous, or less fastidious, young man, "Let us go on." They came to a river, and as they were crossing he seized her, told her to open her mouth, and he scrubbed her mouth vigorously with sand. To his joy, the black came away and beneath there shone a set of beautiful, white teeth. The father reproached his son for wasting good cattle. But to his delight and to the utter chagrin of the brothers, the girl smiled and showed that her teeth were as beautiful as the rest of her comely person.

At the end of a story like this, participants were invited to give their reactions and share any lessons they could draw from the story. A variety of lessons could be drawn from the story. A few samples will illustrate: heaven helps those who help themselves; do not cry with horror over a bad situation – do something about it; better light one candle than curse the darkness. On the negative side: a girl's beauty is severely tainted by carelessness over the rules of hygiene; a little diligence enhances anything. Since everyone was expected to come up with his or her own lesson deriving from the story, passive listening would be completely out of the question. No one would like to be exposed to the ridicule of others for inability to draw a simple lesson from a story.

Another important feature which adds to the merit of this method was that each participant was able to view the story in accordance with his or her own experience and situation, and everyone benefited in the end from the sharing. A final point here is that each person's appraisal subtly revealed his or her own kind of psychology and would help those around to understand and appreciate him or her more.

The foregoing story contrasted the good, the better and the best between judgment and prudishness, between practical resourcefulness and lethargy. Now, we shall consider another brand of moral lessons – not the contrasts of opposites this time but the awareness that, through cooperation, virtues can and do complement and enhance each other. On the other hand, they could hardly stand in isolation from one another.

Story II: Who Is the Hero?

A certain man had five children, four sons and a daughter. Sometime after his death, the daughter disappeared. The mother called the sons together and set them to finding their sister. They were remarkably gifted men. The eldest was able to see things at a very great distance. On casting his eyes around he discovered his sister fifty miles off in the clutches of a lion. The second brother

had the power of transporting himself through space unseen, and he rescued his sister from the lion's claws.

On missing his prey, the lion went rampaging about, but the third son killed him. The girl was brought home dead; and the fourth son, by virtue of his powerful medicines, restored her to life. The mother was overjoyed, and taking a large piece of meat she gave it to her sons, saying: "Eat, my sons. I give it to you in gratitude for your cleverness and faithfulness." But the brothers said: "No, give it to only one of us — the one who did most in restoring our sister to you, safe and sound."

The brothers in the story pass all tests and have shown themselves to be optimally formed, well disciplined characters. They cooperate in solving the problem using the best of brain and brawn. None tries to claim the credit to himself alone. When their shrewd mother tests them for vanity, they come out in flying colors by throwing their mother's challenge back to her. They are not about to accept rewards for doing what they consider to be their bounden duty towards their sister. Their preoccupation is to save their sister, and having successfully accomplished that, there was no point in getting lost in such trivialities as fighting over a piece of meat.

The two stories make use of fictional characters and fictional circumstances that are in some respects true to life and in other respects unreal. The important issue is not the verifiability of the facts of the story but the applicability of the principles behind the actions and attitudes of the characters depicted. In many stories of this instructive nature animal characters are often used and given human roles and human words. In that way, the message is graphically delivered without the risk of anyone taking it as a personal affront.

At the end of each storytelling session each child had a homework to do, namely to pester a parent or uncle or any senior person to teach him or her a new story for the next day, including the moral lessons and the responsorial songs that usually accompanied and punctuated each story. Apart from the formalized, customary, introductory greetings the storyteller built up self-confidence and at the same time drew the attention of the listeners by posing a series of rhetorical, aphoristic questions to which the audience was expected to respond *Mbà!* (i.e., an emphatic No!).[33] Such questions involved truisms of daily experience like whether the most skillful climber ever attempts climbing an *ópètè*;[34] whether Fish ever drowns in the river; or Frog ever trips in the mud; whether one could crack a nut with an egg; whether the weight-lifter ever lifts the ground; or the child in the womb ever speaks, etc. These aphoristic one-liners were an important tool used in highlighting moral impossibilities, or rather, moral improbabilities. They were designed to sharpen the moral sense of the little ones by drawing attention to the folly of one who would attempt the impossible or the inadvisable. The simple principle being demonstrated by them is, in a word, that one should know oneself, one's limitations and possibilities, and act within the realms of possibilities, rather than exposing oneself to the folly of attempting the ridiculously impossible.

[33] For the sake of a foreign reader, I will reproduce the first few lines of exchange exactly as they are used. The storyteller (S) begins by calling on the participants' (P) attention the same way as a fan solicits a roar of support by shouting "Hip-hip-hip!" which promptly draws the response: "Hurray!"

S: Takwru chee! (This means nothing specifically beyond the onomatopoeic sound that draws a response.)

P: Eèh!

S: Takwru chéè!

P: Eèh!

S: Ote elu o na-ete ópètè?

P: Mbà! (And so on.)

[34] Ópètè is a flimsy, pulpy, leguminous reed that crumbles under the slightest pressure. The accents, here, are supplied to aid pronunciation.

Children would from time to time in the course of play and interaction intone a whole range of such aphorisms, with their friends chorusing the second half of each. In traditional society it was a mark of erudition to be able to invoke strings of apt aphorisms to match any point of discussion. More importantly, people seize the opportunity of even seemingly inconsequential occurrences, like sneezing, to reaffirm their rule of life or what might be called a secular creed. Upon sneezing, those around will say the equivalent of "bless you," but the one who sneezed will proceed with a barrage of "spontaneous" affirmations of a rule of life called *íjù-ógù*.[35]

In many ways, the casual but effective process of internalizing and applying the content of these aphorisms, without the stress associated with formal school work, has something to say to Western formalized methods of inculcation of ideas. By effortlessly invoking the appropriate "principle" to match a given situation, a child manifests a thorough grasp of the principles, their implications and their connections with one another with respect to daily moral determinations.

Use of Proverbs and Riddles

Intimately related to folk tales are proverbs and riddles. The moralizing aspect of the tales is expressed in the terse statements of proper behavior appended to them, often as the culmination of the action, but sometimes only as an admonition that seems to have but little to do with the sequence of events leading up to it. Riddles, for their part, while not a part of the tales, form the prelude to storytelling sessions, where some of them are usually "pulled up" as a brainteaser to sharpen their wits for intelligent and participatory listening. A few examples will illustrate:

Question: What is it that tortures you in the presence of your parents?
Answer: Hunger.
Question: What happens to the fly that could never be advised?
Answer: He is buried with the carcass.
Question: What happens to the despot to whom no one dares to speak?
Answer: He could never be informed when his ceremonial clothes are soiled.

The use of proverbs involves an interesting methodological point, for, while it is not difficult to record a long series of these short, pithy statements, it is quite different when one attempts to discover their significance. This can be achieved only by employing the technique of question-and-answer, where a hypothetical situation that seems to be in accord with the meaning of a given saying is presented to the informant, and then varied until the addressee is able to identify the understanding that most accurately reflects the meaning of the saying in the particular instance.[36] Proverbs are used to warn, to admonish, to reprove, to guide, to praise and to encourage. Facility in their use is a mark of erudition and elegance in speech. They reflect more clearly than other forms of folklore the deepest values of the people, showing the drives that motivate behavior and the controls that regularize the relations of an individual to his or her fellows. Here are a few samples:

1. Just one soiled finger and the entire hand will be rendered soiled. (Warning about the social implications of misconduct.)

[35] See Chapter Seven for details on íjù ógù.

[36] See Simon & Phoebe Ottenberg, (Ed.), *Cultures and Societies of Africa* (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 452.

2. If the ear persistently refuses to hear, when the head is cut off, the ear goes with it. (Admonition against obstinacy.)

3. When one resembles what one is caricatured with, laughter becomes irrepressible. (Reproof against foolishness of conduct.)

4. A child is never scalded by a piece of yam given him by his mother. (Exhortation to trust and confidence.)

5. When one is told to "keep it up," it means that his or her work is being appreciated. (Compliments for action performed.)

These proverbs flow freely in the course of daily speech and conversation. One is expected to understand them by applying them in the context. Some, however, are highly charged with meaning — sometimes ironical, sometimes cynical and sometimes humorous. The addressee must do the homework him- or herself and apply the message accordingly. The wise person will draw the lesson, the foolish will fail to see the point. Here are some examples:

i) "*The lazy man eats little*" is used to chide one who is eating heartily, but who had earlier refused to work.

ii) "*When an oil-palm nut is eaten in a hurry, ants get the lion's share*" is used to bring back to reason one given to precipitous actions.

iii) "*Taking out with one hand and replacing with the other keeps the store stocked for tomorrow*" is a thoughtful reminder for injudicious spending or use of things.

An important feature that renders such proverbs effective in driving home the moral message is, as has already been shown, that they could be attributed to an animal or even an inanimate object such as a Tortoise, or Lizard, or Python — anything whose characteristics could demonstrate the point being made. If the addressee chooses to take offence, let him or her refer to the animal quoted.

In style, Igbo proverbs employ terse and archaic terms for maximum effect. Such archaic words as *ògòrì, ògòdò, nnékólóchìe, úmù-nnadi,* are preferred to the more modern equivalents of *nwányì, ákwà, óké-ìbìrì nwányì, ndi-mmádù,* and mean respectively woman, clothing, old woman, and people. Thus the truant child is often warned: *"Nwátà a nághì àgbáláhá mbèmbè yá n'ósó"* — no matter how fast or far a child tries to flee, he could never outrun his buttocks. That means that one's task, though unpleasant, could never be escaped by flight. (In contemporary language *mbèmbè* or buttocks will be expressed by "*íkè*.")

When one manages to pull through some personal difficulty in spite of a neighbor's refusal to help, the former is likely to declare as follows: *"Ihé á wòrò nwányì à gbáálá n'áhíá"* — literally, what a woman has been tantalized about has glutted the market, i.e., what was vaunted as being beyond anyone's reach has turned out to be something commonplace. The preference for archaic terms is dictated by the need to strike the chord of antiquity with the attendant authority it lends the principle being invoked, and to show that it was there before the speaker referred to them.

The Negative Way of Caution

Victor Uchendu points out an important method of instilling traditional morality through deterrence from laxity. He observes that Nigerians "tend to wash their dirty linen in public." Thus, the fact that all eyes are watching and all tongues are ready to wag, places a strong check on

people's tendencies to laxity. When women quarrel, for instance, they mercilessly expose each other's follies and foibles — as they might have gathered from local and domestic gossip. Yelling at the top of their voices they narrate with graphic details each other's darkest sides. Uchendu calls this a transparent orientation, and anyone who would not have his or her sins told in the marketplace had better watch his or her conduct.[37]

The negative way, though prevalent at the level of speech is not limited to speech alone; it applies also at the level of action and daily living. In daily social interaction, for example, foods and drinks are tasted by the host prior to their being offered to a guest. This is to show that they are free of any harmful contents. The host thus manifests good will in first tasting what he or she has to offer. Not to taste a victual before presenting it can be construed as not to vouch for its wholesomeness. More importantly, to refuse something offered even after it has been tasted speaks volumes about how the host's moral, social and spiritual standing has been perceived by the guest. Usually words are not required to make the point.[38] Anyone that must enjoy the confidence of those around him or her must be seen to be beyond guile. It goes beyond an individual's clear conscience. A clear conscience must manifest itself in ways that are identifiable by the community, or it is as good as no conscience at all.

The concept of the good life is so built on transparency that the individual would dread anything with the potential to bring about shame or loss of face in any form. It is the people that give praise or blame, and they base their judgment on what they know, see, hear or in any way perceive about a person's external conduct. Thus, the major deterrent of crime, concludes Uchendu, is not guilt-feeling but shame-feeling.[39]

Conclusion

Traditional moral education in Nigeria has been able to provide comprehensively for all facets of human conduct and interpersonal relationships. It may lack the complexity and sophistication of the nuclear age, but its very simplicity has been its great strength. In its pure form, it has been free of the assaults of casuistic rhetoric that has characterized many modern ethical theories. The theories are often criticized. Barry Williams and Donald MacKinnon, for example, in their book *Soundings*, claim that a great deal of what Christians often call virtue, on closer inspection, turns out to be cowardice.[40] Paul Tillich speaks of the moral law as too intolerable to be borne. John A.T. Robinson criticizes the idea of moral laws which come down direct from heaven and are eternally valid for human conduct.[41]

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[37] V.C. Uchendu, *The Ibo of South Eastern Nigeria* (New York, Chicago, London: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1985), p. 17.

[38] The host should draw his own inference. If he feels he has been misunderstood, he could either approach the host and explain himself or invite the neighbors, state his case and make a public declaration of his innocence of any wrongdoing or bad intentions. Following his declaration, special ceremonies are performed that restore communion between him, his former host and the community. (Woe to him, however, if his declarations prove to be false, for his ostracism by the community would become total!)

The usual reasons for rejecting such victuals range from the host being perceived as guilty of either double dealing; a tendency to perjure; a known tendency to apply poisons in foods for those he disagrees with, fears of hates; or scandalous living, e.g., being associated with incestuous conduct. (This includes any sexual activities involving people of the same village since people of the same village are considered blood relations and are not supposed to be sexually involved with each other.

[39] *Ibid*.

[40] Alec Vidler, ed., *Soundings* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1962), p. 81.

[41] J.A.T. Robinson, *Honest to God*, p. 106.

Considered from those points of view, both the Judeo-Christian decalogue and the Kantian universalism of moral law will be found to be in instant trouble. Hegel would argue that nature and the moral agent are governed by separate sets of laws. In his view nature has no concern with moral consciousness, and the moral consciousness has no concern with nature. Nothing matters to the moral consciousness except its own inner purity. The moral agent, nevertheless, has to act and carry out purposes in the world, with the result that he cannot dislocate himself from the world altogether, but must in some measure at least subordinate it to himself.

J.D. Mabott goes further to argue against the Kantian universalism: he insists that universalization produces a self-contradiction since no new rules would be possible. According to him, if everyone said what was false, no one should expect the truth and so no one could be deceived. Therefore, "universal lying" is a self-contradiction, and so would be universal stealing.[42]

[42] J.D. Mabbott, *An Introduction to Ethics* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1986), p. 39.

Chapter XII

Imagination and Urban Development in Villa El Salvador, Lima

Hortensia Ferrand De Piazza And Doris Gonzales De Bariola

Creating Life in Villa El Salvador

Lima, the capital of our country, Peru, readily evokes the deeply human struggle between life and death, particularly in its newly occupied outskirts, where the many homeless who cannot afford a piece of land put up their shelters and begin urban developments. One should be impressed by their amazing capability to organize themselves, overcome adversity and create life in the barren deserts. Here, within a dramatic setting, one admires the ability to "give birth to the joy of saying yes within the sadness of finitude."[1]

The face of death is reflected in our history in what domination and exploitation implied for a vast, once proud population. Ethnic groups were scorned, negated as persons, their cultures marginalized; this situation has not changed significantly and has been recently aggravated by a profound crisis, which is not only economical. In Peru today, death is experienced as generalized violence. Its main traits are the break up of the institutions with its sequels: terrorism, kidnapping and murder, which seem to be hidden anywhere and might attack anytime. For the many, who suffer most of the consequences of this critical situation, hunger has become death's most threatening vision.

It is mainly in poverty where death abides. As Gustavo Gutierrez has said:

Poverty, in the final analysis means death. A deficit of food and shelter, the inability to attend to health and educational needs, job exploitation, permanent unemployment, lack of respect for human dignity and unjust limitations on personal liberty in the areas of expression, politics and religion, that is, daily suffering.[2]

But now, let us see the hope of life that arises here, the promise of life that comes with its creation.

At the same time — it is important to remember — poverty does not consist only in needing. The poor often have a culture with its own values; to be poor is a way of living, of thinking, of loving, of praying, of believing and waiting, of spending free time, of struggling for one's own life. To be poor also means, today and progressively more, engaging in the fight for justice and peace, defending one's life and liberty, searching for a more democratic participation in society's decisions, as well as getting organized "for an integral living of own's faith" (Latin American bishops in Puebla n. 1137) and to commit oneself in the liberation of all human persons.[3]

In summary, Gutierrez says that:

In this complex and wide universe of the poor the predominant traits are, on one hand, their insignificance for the big powers that govern today's world and, on the other hand, their enormous

[1] David N. Power, O.M.I., *The Imagination in Post-Kantian Philosophy*, Seminar on "The Humanities: Moral Imagination and Character Development," in Press.

[2] Gustavo Gutierrez, *Teologia de la Liberacion* (Lima: CEP, 1988), p. 17.

[3] *Ibid*.

human, cultural and religious resources, in particular, their ability to create new forms of solidarity within these areas.[4]

Imagination Forming Destiny

During the last decades a massive shift has taken place from the countryside to the city. This exerts a pressure on the State which, nevertheless, has not developed an adequate housing policy. Thus, the invasion of the deserts by the homeless has become a solution to the problem, accepted by the system.

When the settlers arrive at the barren deserts, they have to start from the very beginning. They actually create a new urban geographical space, imprinting upon it a new countenance through the weaving of a copious network of interpersonal relationships. These relations spring from the need to cooperate in the solution of their urgent common problems and also from the previous experience of community, deeply rooted in family and/or village ties, which provides the human context and the solidarity needed to face the new challenges.

Based on an urban model of development, they organize themselves through a structure which starts from the election of representatives by blocks. Through participating in this organization they are able to respond to their common needs, such as the installation of basic public facilities like water, electricity and drainage, which might take them up to ten or more years to obtain. Furthermore, they strive for survival through the development of common kitchens, workshops, production and commercialization cooperatives, etc.

Putting it all together we could say that the poor, pioneers of the deserts that surround Lima, have developed organizational skills in order to solve their own problems of survival, not only at the communal but also at the personal level, including that of the building of a house for the family to live in. Urgent problems have to be solved in everyday life and here their imagination plays a role of major importance, covering practically every facet of life at the personal, family and communal levels.

According to some authors, the settlers seem to be exhausting their energies in these survival strategies leaving no room for using them to achieve more substantial changes. Nevertheless, there are places, such as Villa El Salvador, in which the neighbors, by engaging in active participation, are liberating themselves as persons in community. It is through their active participation in the communal organizations that they are taking hold of their own destiny, developing strong bonds of identity and becoming historical subjects. This is perceived not only by those who like us can see this process from within; the District of Villa El Salvador, one of the most representative of these organized developments, has won the "Principe de Asturias" Peace Award for its achievements.

Within this community and due to its characteristics, a project developed in an effort to palliate the lack of affordable, durable buildings. It began with the construction of community centers, developed with the active participation of the neighborhood, architects and engineers and adapting traditional materials and techniques to present conditions.

The project aims at developing a building system which might constitute an alternative for the construction of houses. Nevertheless, the idea is not to try to impose a building system but merely to offer it as an example, as another possibility, since the intention is rather to contribute to a better quality of life.

[4] *Ibid*., pp. 20-21.

Moral Imagination in the Communal Construction of Schools

In order to contribute to the solution of the urban housing problem on the coast of Peru, the School of Architecture of the Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS), Canada, and the Department of Engineering of the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru (PUCP) coordinated research on the development and application of a building system.

Among the building systems developed by the PUCP is one of modular panels of "quincha" (Peruvian technique of reeds and mud) with cemented flooring. This was chosen due to its simplicity and to the fact that it utilizes the same materials with which the settlers build their precarious shelters, though combined differently to produce interesting, permanent constructions.

Once financial support was obtained from the International Development Research Center of Canada, the next step was to select a geographic area and community in which to implement the project.

Villa El Salvador was selected due to the fact that its inhabitants were well organized as the CUAVES community (Urban Self-determined Community of Villa El Salvador). From the urban point of view, this community is formed by well-designed modules of development for each residential group. Each one of these modules consists of lots forming sixteen blocks around spaces reserved for open plazas and various community buildings. Each residential group elects its own local authorities and possesses, through their intermediation, considerable autonomy. This was thought to facilitate both a direct relationship between the community and the project and prompt implementation. In addition, through the process of participation, each neighbor is a generator of his habitat, deeply committed and strongly identified with his environment.

Villa El Salvador is today a district with a population of about 300,000 inhabitants. Started and developed through the occupation by the landless of the deserts south of Lima in 1971, it now forms part of the greater metropolitan area.

A cooperative agreement was signed between the CUAVES community and the PUCP in order to allow the development of the Quincha Project. Considering the social and multiplicative effects of such a process, the project offered support in the construction of communal buildings in the least consolidated residential groups of the district, which were also the ones in greater need.

The Quincha Project

The Quincha Project's overall objective was to develop, through its application, a construction system, utilizing traditional materials and techniques which could be well adapted to present conditions. The system should be simple, economic and safe, employ materials and techniques available in the area and be easily reproducible.

In order to adequately adapt the system to reality it was necessary to involve the population in its process of development. This would only be possible through the establishment of good levels of communication between the population and the specialists and by propitiating its active participation. In order to achieve this a community building was constructed that would further orient the work of the specialists to concrete problems. Active participation and dialogue directed toward the construction of the communal building generated a praxis through which the population would familiarize themselves with the construction system and the specialists would learn more about this reality and be better able to respond to challenges.

Particular importance was given to organization and participation. The project was meant to be an opportunity for the population to exercise its practice of organization and for the specialists

to develop their team work competence. Team work would make possible the integration of the three areas of work contemplated in the project. These three areas would support and complement each other in order to achieve a common objective. Even though each one had its own objectives, the intention was that, due to interaction, the common objective could be better achieved.

Areas General Objectives

Technical To develop a building system (in charge of
the PUCP) which would ameliorate, make
more secure and reducethe cost of housing,
utilizing the cost of housing, utilizing materials
accessible in the area of application. Architectural To develop a language of (in charge of the
TUNS) architectural design based on the
building system, appropriate for the needs of
the population and which could later serve for
the development of housing projects.
Fieldwork (in charge of the PUCPthe technical and
architectural and the CUAVES) aspects, by
means of their implementation in the field and
the establishment of a communication network
between the specialists and the population.

Although each area would pursue its own objectives with a certain autonomy, the project, centered in the application of the construction system and the incorporation of the community in its development, would pivot around fieldwork which would serve as the link between reality and laboratory and between the specialists and the population. We thus proceed to list fieldwork objectives and methodology.

The specific fieldwork objectives were the following:

1. To apply and adjust the building system, in its technical and architectural aspects, to the satisfaction of concrete needs of the population of Villa El Salvador.
2. To establish a communication network between the specialists and the community.
3. To evaluate the process of construction, as the application of the proposed building system.
4. To evaluate the constructed prototypes in the aspects of: duration in time, quality of the system once in service, distribution and use of generated spaces, satisfaction of the needs and aspirations of the community.
5. To diffuse the achievements of the Quincha Project in its field of application.
6. To propitiate the practice of organized participation of the neighborhood in all the stages of work.

The fact that the activity of the specialists would revolve around the user and his needs, incorporating him in their solution, would put technology at the service of the user. The subjects would participate in the process fulfilling their respective roles, which derive from their institutional positions, thus, in a certain way, integrating the institutions to which they belong.

As a general methodological approach the empiric-practical, trial-and-error method was chosen, going from practice to theory and then back to practice, which would gradually adapt the solutions to actual conditions.

The specialists and the population were defined as the interacting subjects or partisans in the project, a direct relationship being established between them, in informal terms, which would give way to an ample interchange of information. Nevertheless, considering the understanding between two dissimilar and numerous groups problematic, for decision taking, the representatives of each group were assumed as their spokesmen, through whose intermediation the working integration of neighborhood and specialists would become more practicable.

A detected need of the community was satisfied. In this case, the need of a communal building, was satisfied through its construction, for the neighborhood to use. Work was carried out through three areas or aspects, the technical, architectural and fieldwork, and was accomplished by architects, engineers, building technicians and sociologists, together with the community. It was parallel, joint work, based in dialogue. Nevertheless, each group assumed responsibility for a certain aspect. Thus, the preliminary sketches, which gave way to the architectural plans, were both the responsibility of the architects, who worked them out with the community. The development of the structural and plumbing and electrical installation plans was the responsibility of the engineers, who worked in coordination with the architects and were backed by the research being done at the Structures Laboratory of the PUCP. The organization of the community, regarding its participation in the construction, was the responsibility of its representatives with their (bases), who presented their proposals, on the basis of which the engineers and technicians in charge of the construction, would prepare the specific project for each construction. All of this work was constantly discussed with an Advisory Committee, which also participated with sociologists.

The buildings were constructed consecutively, in order to be able to introduce the necessary modifications and, thus, to develop the construction system. Chart A presents, in synthesis, the methodology utilized in each of the specific projects developed for each of the buildings constructed.

Once the residential group was selected to work with, then contact was established with their elected representatives. The community's need had already been defined by CUAVES and its constituency, corresponding to the first priority of education. This meant that, at the level of a residential group, the first thing to be constructed in the space reserved for the community buildings would be a preschool.

In order to define a proposal it was first necessary to make clear what was offered and what was expected. The Project provided materials, technical direction and part of the work. The population was responsible for part of the work, particularly in the form of communal work on Sundays.

The architectural project was developed on the basis of the preliminary sketches presented to the population for discussion. The structural project was developed in the laboratory since it is difficult to engage the population in its development. The working plan was prepared first as a schedule presented to the community for discussion. On this basis, they prepared a plan for the organization of communal participation to be discussed in turn with the working team. Here it is worth mentioning that sometimes formal and technical languages are insufficient to ensure an adequate communication with the population and that efforts were made to create new forms of communication.

The construction phase consisted of the execution of the project for each building, and its sequence corresponded with the stages of the building system, as shown in the general scheme.

The contribution of the population, in economical terms and of direct participation in the construction, contributed to their feeling that the building was their own. The communal work further facilitated a direct dialogue between specialists and population.

Evaluation, done by both the specialists and the population, referred to their relationship and to the building system. In general terms, evaluation was of a qualitative character and the process was permanent, taking place along all the phases of work by means of a dialogue which permitted a constant feedback and readjustment. We did not intend to find "the solution" to a problem but simply to choose a reasonable one for this case, under these conditions. Besides that which could be adequate to the situation, we considered reasonable that which was based in an agreement, and dialogue was necessary for both things.

Dialogue was considered not only as a means for achieving an agreement, understood as consent, but also as an aid to clarify an issue. Each person, defending his or her point of view, is obliged to clarify it, to give reasons for it and thus the participants become more conscious of their own interests. Only from this starting point can we really speak of an agreement, when the participants, conscious of their own interests, agree about something which is of common interest. Centered in this process of dialogue, parameters of evaluation were essentially qualitative, subjective aspects, being taken into consideration. If not, besides inhibiting dialogue, a very rich source of information would be lost.

The building system was evaluated in the laboratory, the studio (atelier) and in the field of application. In the laboratory, evaluation parameters were quantitative, since hypothesis had to be validated (which would allow for a better adjustment to reality) and a model of structural design, adequate for the construction system, had to be generated. This work was done in close relationship with the one done at the studio where the specialists, a team working, would perform the evaluation through the group dynamic itself.

Evaluation was realized in the field through the application of the proposed building system, by means of a close follow-up of each step, in order to analyze the feasibility of the solutions adopted for the details of the construction. Both the building system itself and their way of participation were evaluated with the neighbors through permanent dialogue and specific sessions held for this purpose.

Regarding the evaluation of the chosen solutions (since it is impossible to control all the variables, for reality always overflows any possible conceptualization of it), when no conflicts showed up, it was supposed that the solution roughly adjusted to reality. Only when a contradiction showed up did we delve into its causes. Thus, analysis of conflicts became a central element of the process of evaluation. The aspects which presented contradictions, both at the level of the building system and the relationships, were reexamined. The model was then readjusted and served as the starting point for the development of the following building project.

A further follow-up of the buildings would allow for the evaluation of aspects such as duration, resistance to seismic activity and weather conditions, in addition to the appropriateness of resulting spaces to the uses given to them by the community.

Project Results

The Quincha Project has been developed with the cooperation of five Residential Groups, each one now in possession of a preschool. One of them also has a communal kitchen. One

thousand one hundred eighty-two families have benefited by the work done. At least one member of half of these families has become acquainted with the building system, by having participated in the communal work. Most of the leaders have acquired a good handling knowledge of the system due to their more constant participation. Besides, eighteen neighbors have been thoroughly trained through their daily work in one of the buildings.

The building system has been developed with the assistance of the work being done at the laboratory. Optimal utilization of the materials was sought: the cost of the foundation was lowered, the number of sections in the wood structure was reduced and the cover was used not only as such but as a structural element. The foundation evolved from a conventional one to being reinforced with ditch reed instead of iron, the volume of concrete being reduced and the reinforcement becoming cheaper. The roof, besides being very inexpensive, is very convenient for the weather conditions of Villa El Salvador. A model of structural design was developed whose simplicity promotes the utilization of the building system.

Through field application, construction details have been resolved in very economical and simple forms, also taking into consideration the aesthetic aspect. From the architectural point of view, agreeable, roomy, multi-use spaces have been achieved, adequate for the needs of the community. The project has also given the neighbors the opportunity of exercising design, experience through which they will be able to understand better spatial proposals. This has been possible by means of dialogue and the elaboration of a language which facilitated communication regarding spatial distribution. Thus, having common language and the technical one of plans proved to be insufficient, scale models and mobile volumes were used, with which the neighbors were able to understand better the specialists' proposal and make their owns.

Beyond the construction of the communal buildings, the spatial distribution of the community plazas has been discussed with the population. Moreover, an approximation to the solution of communal equipment in harmony with the conception of Villa El Salvador has been attained.

Final Reflections

Our project's main contribution is the original concept of the technician-reality and university-community relationships. This, of course, has important methodological implications.

Starting from a badly felt need, namely, the urgency of changing "shelters" into "homes," we put imagination to work in order to facilitate the unfolding of possibilities, some of which might have already existed within the cultural tradition. Actually, the building technique itself, similar to a traditional one, is a combination of familiar elements that produced an original synthesis when confronted with a technological vision.

Our logic started from reality and its challenges. Then, imagination was set free to move back and forth to reality, understanding that this is not a subject-object relation but that it implies the participation of the involved subjects.

The specialists wanted to develop and try in reality their quincha construction system and the population was interested in having a communal building. Starting from two different interests, by means of dialogue, they were able to achieve an agreement on what was of common interest, the construction of the communal building (for the population: "even if it were made of quincha"). The participating parties, once having in prospect this common objective consciously elaborated by them, became motivated, not only for the acquisition of the product itself but for committing themselves in the process of achieving it. Thus, participation became meaningful: instead of being

the participants at the service of the object, they put it at the service of their own interests, acquiring the process as much significance as the product.

Along this process, the participants had a chance to exercise on various types of practice. In general terms, the problem-solution perspective meant going from stating a problem to really solving it jointly. More specifically, each phase of work gave each of the participating subjects the opportunity to exercise a particular type of practice.

Planning, for example, was the occasion for the population to practice design and planning in terms of organization and participation while, for the specialists, it served mainly to develop their communication competence. One of the elements which most favored communication during this phase was counting with the previous buildings as a reference. The leaders and some of the neighbors of the residential group with which we were planning a new building, were taken to visit those in construction or the ones already finished. They were thus able to appreciate the construction at various stages, concrete experience which generated dialogue.

Construction was the phase for the specialists to develop the construction system, resolving its details, and for the population, besides learning the technique, to develop its organization and participation practice.

All the participants in the process, while having a common goal, would be also mobilized by a series of personal and group interests. Emphasis on the process gave way to collateral practices which let the participants develop various aspects meaningful to them.

During the evaluation sessions held with the neighbors, some declared that the project had been an occasion for them to get better acquainted and develop and consolidate community bonds. They also mentioned that the buildings reminded them of their parents' home at their homeland, thereby, starting to revalue the technique and feel proud of it. Someone even recalled some secrets, learned from the aged, about how to handle the technique, manifesting the traditional respectful attitude toward what is handed down by their tradition.

As has already been mentioned, dialogue was necessary to bring about a collaborative action of specialists and population in all working phases. Dialogue was conceived in terms of interchange of information and as a means of achieving agreements. Information was exchanged through informal conversation besides the two evaluation sessions held with each group, which were taped.

Though formalization and universalization were not pursued, Habermas' theory of communicative action was taken as a starting point for the achievement of agreements. Following Habermas, we can say that to attain dialogue the participating parties must be willing to reach an understanding. For this, three conditions are required: their good will, a certain degree of knowledge of the matter to be dealt with and that the situation be free of domination.

In this case, two groups were meeting which had different world views, different ways of approaching reality, each knowing very little of the world of the other and one of which was, besides, very numerous. This, in a society with a harsh experience of domination and where the specialist is perceived by the population as "the one who knows" and as part of the dominant class. Thus, to make decision making more feasible, the representatives of the two groups were assumed as their spokespersons, leaving up to their responsibility the establishment of dialogue with their respective groups. In all cases, the elected leaders of the residential groups acted as their representatives; and, in the case of the specialists, the one who usually represented them would be the fieldwork coordinator.

Through these two years of work, we have found that Habermas' first requisite is insurmountable, for, without the good will of the parties, dialogue is impossible. We have also

found a tight relationship between the second and third conditions since knowledge is related to power and since "he who knows" is part of the dominant class. In order to overcome this difficulty, much time was devoted to the preliminaries of the project, holding as many meetings as seemed necessary to establish mutual trust, develop an understanding of the technique and achieve a more horizontal relationship.

Decision making between the spokespersons was consensual. In only one case, a conflict had to be resolved. The intermediation of the leaders, when they worked with the population in the same terms we did, gave very good results, being optimal in two of the residential groups.

Working in these terms of participation, dialogue and agreement turned to be a very significant, gratifying and creativity-promoting experience. We want to point out, nevertheless, that the achievement of dialogue does not warrant the attainment of agreement. Even if all the conditions have been met and a good empathic relation, based in trust, exists, agreement may not be attained if the participants make different types of validity claims.

An example of the latter was when Residential Group 8 of the Sixth Sector asked for technical assistance for the structural design of their library and medical post. They had obtained a donation of cement with which they were making concrete blocks. They were warned of the inconvenience of using them for their resistance had proved to be very poor and several alternatives were considered, the cheapest one being to change part of the cement for bricks. Nevertheless, the leaders did not want to risk being misinterpreted by the neighbors if they changed. The technical criteria of the inconvenience of using the concrete blocks thus entered in conflict with the leader's interest of keeping their image unstained.

Habermas' model of the ideal communication community results abstracted from actual context by being agreement considered to be a function of the interaction itself. He does not pay enough attention to the fact that the conditions for the attainment of an agreement often lie outside the interaction itself, originating in the relationships of the interacting partners with other external agents.

What we consider most important in experiences such as this one is learning from the elements that favored its application rather than pretending to justify it in formal terms. If a model such as Habermas' is taken as a starting point, one should not forget that its conceptualization arose from a different reality than ours. Upon the need to understand our reality and be in a better condition to manage it, what is needed is the elaboration of new adequate concepts or else to adapt the ones used in contexts other than ours. Even when using concept and models abstracted from our reality, these should be taken as such, trying to avoid the tendency to consider the model as if it actually were reality.

We also find it difficult for the specialists to overcome their tendency to approach whatever the issue in subject-object terms. A technician usually places himself as a subject in front of an object with which he cannot maintain a dialogue. This would be a monologue in a laboratory. He would try to take into consideration as many variables as possible to solve the problem which, once resolved, would mean that he has found the "truth," understood as the model which corresponds with reality. He might the graciously give the truth he now possesses to others who would then be supposed to be ignorant and thankful. What is most pernicious of this technical attitude is that from the point of view of the expert he is the owner of truth, the master key that resolves everything. In this case, such an expert would probably "know" beforehand what the appropriate mode of incorporating themselves to urban society would be for these people. More or less explicitly, he would have already elaborated a model of "adaptation" of these people to the great capital city.

This way of approaching reality not only affects negatively the necessary levels of commitment but also that the specialist, thus trying to be objective, usually disregards aspects considered subjective, hence wasting a very valuable source of information. And upon the claim of a mainstream expert that he would have been more efficient, we have firm grounds to sustain that our work has not only been very efficient but that it has sacrificed neither our technical contribution nor goals. All we did was to offer other possibilities for the population to use freely, either by applying them as such or by using them, if they wanted, to create their own solutions to their home building problem.

Chapter XIII
Moral Imagination and Character Development in Ancient India

M. Prabhakara Rao

Introduction

Morality may be classified into two categories, namely, 1) changeable morality[1] and 2) unchangeable morality.[2] The former depends upon the objects, such as, the objects of senses, Gods, etc., and the latter stands on the universal truth of human life. In other words, it can be said that the former is object-based morality and the latter subject-based.

Changeable morality can be classified further into sub-categories based on i) gender, ii) power, iii) physical strength, iv) psychological and sensuous enjoyment, v) personal Gods, vi) religious Gods, vii) patriotism and so on. The practice of any object-based morality rests on different beliefs, faiths and human weaknesses, such as, i) fear of God, man, punishment in unseen worlds, etc., ii) desire for happiness in the unseen worlds, iii) expectation of gifts from Gods, iv) aspirations to extraordinary or supernatural powers, etc. Thus people have viewed morality differently in various places, which diversity results in conflict among human beings.[3]

The achievement of a stable society could be only an illusion as long as it is thought that morality is changeable and alterable according to the objects of one's convenience. The achievement of stable, peaceful, cheerful and unexploited society is possible only when man discovers and practices unchangeable morality which is a work of the subject and depends on the maturity of moral imagination. Any moral practice is expected to convince man of why he should be moral at all. Morality must have universally acceptable reason and experience as its backdrop and suit the interests of all human beings without prejudice. One will not follow any moral practice until one knows its benefit. Being forced to do good actions cannot be called the practice of unchangeable morality. Moral practice is that which man deliberately accepts to conduct his actions in a particular way for universal benefit. In other wards, the unchangeable moral practice is a discipline by which man directs all his actions towards the universal peace and harmony of all human beings. This orchestration is a work of moral imagination and in turn helps man to realize the truth behind his existence and quest in life.

The ancient Indians[4] uncovered as universal facts of human life, for instance: that man wants always to be free and happy;[5] that his actions are always directed to achieve happiness; that his actions sometimes fail to give happiness, etc. Man might pose that his actions are aimed at keeping others, such as, wife, children, friends, etc., happy, when, as a matter of fact, all his actions are

[1] The morality (concepts of good and bad), that is, changeable or alterable according to man's convenience or social circumstances is called changeable morality.

[2] The morality (concepts of good and bad) that is not changeable or alterable according to man's convenience or social circumstances is called unchangeable morality.

[3] Hereafter, the words, namely, human being, man and student are used interchangeably in the sense of human beings.

[4] Ancient Indians in this paper primarily represent an early Vedic ancient Indian tradition, which belongs to pre-epic and pre-sutra period. However, we have also referred to later Vedic tradition and Theravada Buddhist tradition wherever necessary.

[5] The Mahabharata, Vanaparva, xxxiii.42 "But O king, all beings desire happiness and moksa is the highest good for them."

done only for himself and his own happiness.[6] The ancient Indians also found as reasons for the failure in stabilizing the human happiness, that man seeks happiness only in the world of objects, etc. Each object becomes an individual goal of man and requires a specific direction of action to achieve the same in the pursuit of happiness in the objective world. Thus one performs actions in many directions depending on the number of desired objects. The achievement of any object necessarily involves confrontation for, in the name of achievement, man takes control over the object either from the object itself or from one who possessed it. Controlling the objects involves resistance either from the object or from its possessor and causes confrontation and disgust. Confrontation leads to loss of freedom. For, desires and objects are innumerable, man acts in multiple directions in order to accomplish the same and eventually lands up in so many confrontations, which lead to choicelessness. The multidirectional activities of man cannot serve as the ultimate goal of human beings for they often change.

The practice of changeable morality is based on multidimensional goals and actions. It cannot have universal applicability and its acceptability is always limited to those who have similar goals. But the practice of the unchangeable morality is supported by the universal facts and the core existence of human beings; it has a direction towards a universal goal of all human beings. Thus one has to understand that the simple and fragmented directions of man's actions, which, always change, do not stand for scrutiny in the practice of unchangeable morality. Also the character development of man is grounded in the practice of unchangeable morality and inappropriate moral practice topples one's character. This paper will attempt to elucidate the practice of the unchangeable morality and its role in character development as advocated by the ancient Indians.

Moral Imagination in Ancient India

If man is always happy and his existence does not cause pain to others then there is no need for any control over his actions. But in fact neither man is able to make himself happy nor does his living fail to cause pain in others. Therefore, there is a need for some kind of discipline over man's actions so that he will be happy without causing pain in others. Ancient human beings have imagined and formulated methods in many ways to control human actions in order to attain peace, happiness and harmony in society. The practice of these methods of control of human actions is called the practice of morality. Imagination in the methods of moral discipline can be known as moral imagination.

The goal of moral imagination is to secure the welfare of all beings, which man achieves by learning to live in harmony with others and his surroundings. Man generally tends to act selfishly for his own happiness and does not consider other's feelings. When all people act in a similar way without attempting to the influence of their actions on others everyone has to live in fear for others might disturb one's attachment to things at any time. Fear causes disharmony with others. The

[6] Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, II.iv.5, pp.346-7, Translated by Swami Madhavananda, Advaita Ashrama, Culcutta, 6th Edition. 'It is not for the sake of the husband, my dear, that he is loved, but for one's own sake that he is loved. It is not for the sake of the wife, my dear, that she is loved, but for one's own sake that she is loved. It is not for the sake of the sons, my dear, that they are loved, but for one's own sake that they are loved. It is not for the sake of wealth, my dear, that it is loved, but for one's own sake that it is loved. It is not for the sake of the Brahmana, my dear, that he is loved, but for one's own sake that he is loved. It is not for the sake of the Ksatriya, my dear, that he is loved, but for one's own sake that he is loved. It is not for the sake of worlds, my dear, that they are loved, but for one's own sake that they are loved. It is not for the sake of gods, my dear, that they are loved, but for one's own sake that they are loved. It is not for the sake of beings, my dear, that they are loved, but for one's own sake that they are loved. It is not for the sake of all, my dear, that all is loved, but for one's own sake that it is loved.'

moral imagination therefore, should be aimed at suppressing the selfishness of man and elevate him to altruism.

The ancient Indians therefore, have constructed their moral imagination in the direction of the ultimate goal of human life, that is, liberation (*moksa*),[7] which is freedom from suffering and attainment of the highest happiness. The discovery of the ultimate goal of man does not depend on blind faith. Man can directly experience liberation within himself. Since, everyone knowingly or unknowingly aspires for liberation, no one can contradict the fact that the liberation is the highest goal of human beings. The practice of unchangeable morality forms the foundation for the attainment of liberation.

Moksa Is the Ideal Direction of Human Life

People generally live by working with or without specific goals and those who do have goals keep them very limited. The strength of misery in life depends on how small are one's goals: the smaller the target the higher the misery. Human beings generally tend to work only with small goals and find themselves in misery. Some may claim that their goals are higher because they work for achieving greater objects, such as, discoveries, inventions, political liberations, attaining supernatural powers, etc. But whether one is a genius or a dull head, and whether achieving so called greater aims or petty small objects, one finds oneself in misery.

The ancient Indians have observed that man always tends to deal only with things of the world and while doing so finds himself in misery. There cannot be any solution for misery in life unless man discovers his fundamental expectation behind all his activity and routes all his actions towards the same. It is in this context that the ancient Indians have contributed the discovery of liberation (*moksa*) as the highest goal of human life, towards which all actions of human beings should be directed for the peace and happiness of people. In other wards, man should realize that the underlying fact of his unknown quest of life is liberation and strongly determine that his ultimate goal of life must be *moksa*. Thus the ideal, namely, liberation, stands as the direction of human life towards which all activity must be directed.

The Moral Domain

Morality, which can be understood in simple terms as being good or bad, or right or wrong, generally is viewed as associated with, and operational only among, actions of human beings, for, man believes that none other than the human being has the capacity of discrimination between good and bad. The ancient Indians have clearly restricted the domain of morality only to voluntary actions of human being performed when conscious.[8] According to them, morality must begin with one's own self and further be shared with the whole nature. In other words, man should be good not only for himself, but also for other living beings: being good to nature is good for all. It is now necessary to know the definitions of good and bad actions given by the ancient Indians.

[7] Visnubhagavata, IV.xxii.35 '— moksa is the truly ultimate end —'.

[8] According to ancient Indian wisdom, the human life is divided into three specific experiences, namely, i) waking, ii) dream and iii) dreamless sleep. Waking experience is identified as the ground for moral actions. For, man's volitional actions in waking experience alone can affect him or the others and therefore, they alone are worth calling either good or bad actions.

Definitions of Good and Bad Actions. The definitions of good and bad actions[9] given by the ancient Indians can be consolidated in the following manner.

Those volitional actions of man which do not result in pain immediately or eventually in one's own self or in the object of action (a person, a living being towards which the action is being done) or in others, are called good actions.

Those willful actions of man which result in pain immediately or eventually in one's own self or in the object of action (a person, a living being towards which the action is being done) or in others, are called bad actions.

Tools of Human Actions. Man performs moral actions by his physical body, mind and speech, each of which acts on its respective objects. Thus moral actions are classified into three, depending on the tools of actions, namely, a) physical actions, b) mental actions and c) actions of speech. Similarly the objects of moral actions are also classified in three ways; 1) the whole of worldly gross objects are divided physically into five, namely, i) objects of sight, ii) objects of sound, iii) objects of smell, iv) objects of taste and v) objects of touch; 2) the objects again mentally divide into two, namely, i) objects of likes (*raga*) and ii) objects of dislikes (*dvesa*); 3) the objects of speech are classified into two, namely, i) words of gentle speech and ii) words of harsh speech.

Need for Unchangeable Morality

When one perceives any physical object one forms an impression of the same in mind. These impressions are instantly categorized as objects either of likes or of dislikes. The impressions of the physical objects, when converted into sets of objects of likes and dislikes become mental objects (*vasana*). Man creates *vasanas* as long as he is in mental states.[10] The *vasanas* form the ground for human desires. Human desires are endless and every desire takes some time to yield results. Past desires which are yet to yield results (working desires) form the foundation for the continued existence of man. The existence of life continues through different physical bodies depending on the working desires. Life existing through different bodies based on the desires is called the cycle of births and deaths (*samsara*[11]). The *samsara* is based on desires and their results, the desires are grounded in the *vasanas* and the *vasanas* are formed by likes and dislikes.

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[9] The Mahabharata, santiparva, cclx.20, 21, 23 and cxxiv.67. "To give joy to another is righteousness; to give pain is sin." "Let not any man do unto another any act that he wishes not done to himself by others, knowing it to be painful to himself. And let him also purpose for another all that he wishes for himself." "Let not any one do an act that injures another, nor any that he feels shame to do." Also see Yajnavalkya Smrti, iii.65 "Let him not do to another what is not good for himself."

[10] Waking and dream experiences are called mental states, for, among three states of experience, mind functions only in waking and dream states.

[11] The ancient Indians have explained samsara in three ways.

(1) Discarding the existing human physical body and getting into a completely different kind of physical body after natural death.

See The Bhagavadgita, 2.13 and 2.22 "As the dweller in the body passes in one body through childhood, youth and old age, so passes he on to another body. The well balanced grieves not threat." "As a man, casting off worn-out garments, takes new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, enters into others that are new." Also see Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, IV.iv.4 "Just as a goldsmith takes apart a little quantity of gold and fashions another – a newer and better form, so does the self throw this body away, or make it senseless, and make another – a newer and better form."

(2) Existence of life continuing through three levels of experience, namely, waking, dream and dreamless sleep. Being in waking and dream is called living and getting into dreamless sleep is called death. Again getting into waking state is called rebirth. See Sankara, Upadesasahasri, 2.2.110 Jagratsvapna laksana.

Man always wants to be happy by attaining the objects of likes. But he does not have control over the objects of dislikes. Therefore, one always struggles in life to escape the objects of dislikes and to attain the objects of likes. One lands either in happiness or in pain in the struggle and such experience of life through fickle happiness and pain is called *duhkha*. In other words, living the very ordinary and ignorant life is *duhkha* but it is not the purpose of human life to continue to live in *duhkha*. For ancient Indians, human life is the only life form in which *duhkha* can be eradicated for it contains all the necessary capabilities to get rid not only of *duhkha* but also of *samsara*. Thus the main purpose of human life discovered by the ancient Indians is the attainment of liberation (*moksa*), that is, termination of *duhkha* and the attainment of the highest happiness.

In order to attain liberation one needs to understand the causal chain of *duhkha* and *samsara*. *Samsara* is caused by desires which are based on the *vasanas*, which are created by likes and dislikes, which are dependent on physical objects. Man does not have control over the appearance of the divergent objects in waking experience. The appearance of the objects cannot be the cause of suffering (*duhkha*). Therefore, one need not work on the appearance or disappearance of the natural objects to attain liberation. Man can control the things that happen within him, such as, his creation of *vasanas* and desires. He can even destroy the influence of his past *vasanas*, actions (*karma*) and their results.[12] He goes through the cycle of births and deaths and does not attempt to destroy *samsara* though he has the potentiality to come out of *samsara*.[13] Why? Because, he does not know how he creates the *vasanas* and is influenced by them. If man discovers how he is yielding to the *vasanas* then he can understand how stupidly he has been living in aspiring for capricious happiness through objects which cannot last for more than a moment. The ephemeral nature of the objects of desire can be realized when one learns to have a vision of the formation of the desires and *vasanas* within oneself.

Man needs to know that he is drawn away from knowing what is happening within himself by the present and past *vasanas* involving him always in the craving for the objects of desires. He should begin to be aware of what he is doing inside and outside himself in order to get rid of the influence of *vasanas* and desires. The awareness within is possible only when man can concentrate his mind within himself. The ancient Indians have found that one ought to practice the

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(3) According to the ancient seers any physical body changes every moment continuously. In other words, change is the truth of physical nature. Since man's physical body also changes every moment, it is understood that man lives for a moment and gets new life with new physical body. Buddhists explain samsara in this manner and according to them the present existence lasts for a moment and gets destroyed by giving rise to a different and changed body. It does not matter how one understands the word samsara, but one should seek liberation, either every moment as per the third explanation, or from the three states of experience as per the second explanation or from the natural death and rebirth as per the first explanation. In depth level liberation in all the explanations means the same.

[12] The Bhagavadgita, V.10 and 11 "He who acts, ascribing all action to Brahman, abandoning attachment, is unpolluted by sin as a lotus leaf by the water." "By the body, by manas, by buddhi and even by the senses alone, Yogi's perform action, having abandoned attachment, for the purification of self."

[13] Ibid., V.12, 18-21and 24-26 "The harmonized man, having abandoned the fruit of action, attains to everlasting peace; the non-harmonized, attached by desire to fruit, is bound." "The sage looks equally on a Brahmana perfected in learning and humility, and on a cow, an elephant, and even a dog and svapaka." "They have won heaven even here on earth whose manas is established in equilibrium. Brahman is faultless equilibrium; therefore, they establish in Brahman." "One should neither rejoice in obtaining what is pleasant, nor sorrow in obtaining what is unpleasant; with buddhi firm, unperplexed, the Brahman knower is established in Brahman." " He whose self is unattached to external contacts finds joy in the self; and he having the self harmonized with Brahman by yoga, enjoys happiness exempt from decay." "That Yogi whose happiness is within, whose enjoyment is within and whose light is within attains to the nirvana of Brahman, himself becoming Brahman." "The Risis obtain the nirvana of Brahman, their sins destroyed, their doubts removed, their selves controlled, intent upon the welfare of all beings." "Near is the nirvana of Brahman to those yatis who know themselves, who are freed from desire and passion and controlled in mind."

unchangeable morality (*sila*) in order to attain concentration within one's own self. It is in the context of attaining concentration (*samadhi*) that the unchangeable moral practice gains importance. According to the ancient Indians, it is impossible to achieve concentration, which is useful for attaining liberation, without the practice of unchangeable morality (*sila*). If one does not practice unchangeable morality then one keeps acting only on the objects to attain happiness and always fails to be happy because of the ephemeral nature of the objects. Thus man should always remember the purpose and goal of life, that is, the attainment of liberation, as declared by the ancient Indians and keep going ahead in the pursuit of the same.

Character Development

It is obvious that man has potential to do both good and bad actions. But man has the choice of performing actions, such as, doing i) only good actions, ii) only bad actions and iii) both good and bad actions. The second and third options always lead to misery and therefore, should be avoided. Man has to choose to do only good actions in order to attain the highest happiness (*moksa*). But having been caught in the natural setup of suffering, man ignores his choice of performing actions and keeps doing both good and bad actions.[14] Thus there is a need for a discipline by which man gets out of doing bad actions. The unchangeable moral practice is such a discipline, which gradually transfers man from doing bad actions and stabilizes in doing only good actions. The transition of man from doing both good and bad actions to doing only good actions involves a gradual change in one's character. The character of doing both good and bad actions should be converted into the character of doing only good actions in order to attain liberation. Thus man's character[15] develops when one begins to do only good actions and to avoid bad actions. Man in the process of character development learns to have direct vision or knowledge of the total operation of actions. The awareness of the process of actions gives freedom to man to do only good actions. Thus, in order to develop his character, one needs to know the backdrop of all his actions.

Background of Human Actions

The conflict among human beings arises out of divergent opinions on the given subject matter. It may be observed that neither do all people seem to like any given object, nor do those who appear to like a thing at the moment continue to do so in the course of time. Opinions change and likes and dislikes also keep changing. Each mind reacts distinctly on a given object.

In spite of having innumerable changing opinions among human beings, there are certain points on which there cannot be any difference of opinions. In other words, there are at least a few common points that every human being shares uniformly without any contradiction. To cite some: 1) All human beings always want to be happy; 2) Any action, either good or bad, is always aimed

[14] Brhadaranyaka Upanisad, IV.iv.5 "As it does and acts, so it becomes; by doing good it becomes good, and by doing evil it becomes evil – it becomes virtuous through good acts and vicious through evil acts. Others, however, say, 'the self is identified with desire alone. What it desires, it resolves; what it resolves, it works out; and what it works out, it attains'."

[15] The Mahabharata, Anusasanaparva, civ "The mark of dharma is acara (good conduct), acara is the mark of the good. Higher than all teachings is acara. From acara is dharma born, and dharma enhances life. By acara man attains life. By acara he attains fair fame, here and hereafter."

Also see Manusmrti, I.110 "Thus beholding the path of dharma issue from acara, the sages embraced acara as the root of all tapas."

at attaining personal happiness, and 3) All people enjoy bliss in dreamless sleep and no one claims that one suffers while one is in dreamless sleep.

The common points mentioned above reveal that all men are naturally happy while mind does not function on the objects in dreamless sleep, but there is no sufficient and consistent happiness when the mind functions on objects in waking and dream. The natural situation for man is that he cannot be aware of his happiness while consistent happiness is available in dreamless sleep, yet when he is able to be aware of his happiness in waking and dream that happiness cannot be consistent and stable. Thus, man's life is said to be full of *duhkha*. However, man always wants to be happy and works for his happiness by doing both good and bad actions in waking state, though the chances of expected happiness are bleak. How does man settle this problem? The only remedy is to stabilize his happiness so that he becomes contented with unchanging happiness.

Process of Achieving Stable Happiness. The necessity of practice of unchangeable morality stands on the dissatisfaction of man with the happiness attained through objects for object-based happiness is instable and changeable. When one attains liberation, he enjoys the highest happiness without a trace of misery; this call stable happiness. But, instead of aspiring for liberation, man seeks happiness through the objects of his likes. He adopts different means to achieve the objects of his desires and to get rid of the objects of dislikes. The following natural devices inside man instigate him to do both good and bad actions.

The factors influencing agents of bad actions[16] inside man are: 1) Lust (*kama*), 2) Anger (*krodha*), 3) Greed (*lobha*), 4) Passion (*moha*), 5) Arrogance (*mada*) and 6) Jealousy (*mascarya*),[17] 7) selfishness, 8) hypocrisy, 9) conceit, 10) harshness, 11) non-wisdom, 12) craving, 13) non-discrimination, 14) error, 15) indolence and 16) sleepiness.

The following factors influencing agents of good actions[18] inside man are: 1) fearlessness, 2) cleanness of life, 3) steadfastness in attaining wisdom, 4) alms-giving, 5) self-restraint, 6) sacrifice, 7) knowledge of the *sastras*, 8) austerity, 9) straightforwardness, 10) harmlessness, 11) truthfulness, 12) absence of wrath, 13) renunciation, 14) peacefulness, 15) absence of crookedness, 16) compassion to living beings, 17) un-covetousness, 18) mildness, 19) modesty, 20) absence of fickleness, 21) vigor, 22) forgiveness, 23) fortitude, 24) purity, 25) absence of envy and pride.

The influencing factors for good or bad actions mentioned above are sometimes present naturally, sometimes attained or subjugated by effort. When good factors dominate, one tends to do good actions and when bad factors influence one does bad actions.[19] Doing good or bad actions

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[16] Ibid., Santiparva, xxxiii "Anger, lust, dejection, delusion, cynicism, wrongful activity, greed, emulations, envy, jealousy, irritated worry, sullen hate or malice, scorn and fear – these thirteen (vices and forms of untruth) O king, are the powerful enemies of living creatures." Also see The Bhagavadgita, 14.1-18 Please read Sankara's commentary for the details of each.

[17] These six are technically called arisadvarga.

[18] The Mahabharata, Anusasanaparva, clxii

"Truthfulness, equality (impartiality), self-control, absence of envious emulation, forgiveness, modesty, endurance, absence of jealousy, charity, thoughtfulness, disinterested philanthropy, self-possession, and unceasing and compassionate harmlessness — these are the thirteen forms of Truth." Also see The Bhagavadgita, 14.1-18 Please read Sankara's commentary for the details of each.

[19] The Bhagavadgita, 14.17 and 18; 9-13 "From Sattva wisdom is born, and greed from Rajas; negligence and delusion are of Tamas, and also unwisdom." "They rise upwards who settle in sattva; the rajasic dwell in the midmost place. The tamasic go downwards, enveloped in the vilest qualities." "Sattva attaches to bliss, rajas to action, O Bharata. Tamas, verily, having shrouded wisdom, attaches on the contrary, to negligence." "(Now) Sattva arises, overcoming rajas and tamas, O Bharata; (now) Tamas, (overcoming) rajas and sattva; and (again) rajas (prevailing over) tamas and sattva." "When the wisdom-light streams forth from all the gates of the body, then it may be known

depends upon what factor is affecting man at the given moment of action. As either of these factors dominates in all volitional actions, all willful actions would be either good or bad. Bad actions always lead to disturbance, while good actions eventually help in achieving stable happiness. Therefore, man ought to start doing only good actions and always avoid bad actions in order to achieve peace and happiness. But this is problematic because man does not know how to get rid of the influence of bad factors. The ancient Indians have discovered certain methods of moral practice to get command over the influence of bad factors.

Classification of Methods of Moral Practice

At the surface level, methods of moral practice can be divided into two, namely, 1) for society at large and 2) for an individual. The former exists in the name of social laws which always must have as their direction harmony and universal happiness. Since social laws are changeable and alterable in the course of time, they may not be useful in complete eradication of the influence of the bad factors. But this could be helpful for an individual who attempts to attain complete control over the bad. Law is something does not give a choice to individuals. Whether one likes or not, he ought to follow the law for otherwise, he would lose what little freedom he enjoys as a punishment. Thus law works as a controller of the bad at the national level. While man is somehow compelled to be good by law, he requires some understanding of his life, quest and struggle in this world in order to attain liberation. The latter method of moral practice for an individual completes the task of training individuals for the attainment of the complete control over bad factors. This paper does not discuss the social laws, but only the methods of moral practice for individuals.[20]

Method of Moral Practice for Individuals

Purpose of Methods of Moral Practice. The training for individuals to attain *moksa* consists of two stages, namely, i) cleansing the three instruments of action (*trikaranasuddhi*) and ii) silencing the three instruments (*trikaranamouna*). The former forms the core result of the unchangeable moral practice and the latter is the outcome of advanced training for an individual to attain liberation. The first requisite of man who aspires for the highest happiness is to learn to keep his instruments of moral actions, namely, body, mind and speech, clean. Secondly, man needs to adopt the methods of keeping his three instruments of action in silence after attaining the cleanness of the same in order to achieve liberation. Man should remember that he cannot attain liberation without *trikaranasuddhi* and therefore, the same is a necessary requirement for attaining *moksa*.

Purity of the three instruments means maintenance of uniformity among the three instruments. In other words, *trikaranasuddhi* is nothing but performing any action by either physical body or mind or speech in accordance with the other instruments; for instance, doing physical action as one thinks and speaks; speaking as one physically does and thinks, and thinking as one actually

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that sattva is increasing." "Greed, outgoing energy, undertaking of actions, restlessness, desire – these are born of the increase of rajas, O best of the Bharatas." "Darkness, stagnation and negligence, and also delusion – these are born of the increase of tamas, O joy of the Kurus."

[20] We will try to present some salient features of the moral practice in ancient India in a generalized way. This presentation includes our own observations of practical aspects of moral practice in the ancient Indian tradition. Though this paper refers only to the ancient Vedic tradition, we have also attempted here to explain the moral practices of the Theravada Buddhism wherever necessary for we do not see much difference between the two systems with regard to the moral practice.

speaks and physically acts. Purity of the three instruments involves austerity (*tapas*).[21] The body attains cleanliness by doing *tapas* of the body, that is, by honoring the teacher, the wise, etc., by maintaining celibacy and harmlessness. Upholding the speech that does not cause disturbance, that is true, sweet, wholesome, and diligent, refines the speech. The mind is purified by keeping up peace of mind, gentleness, silence, self-suppression and purity of purpose. The control of the three instruments of action, namely, body, speech and mind, results in righteousness, in right character expressing itself in right conduct. After cleansing one's three instruments one must learn the methods of keeping the same in silence in order to stabilize his happiness. The ancient Indians have recommended the following moral practices (*sila*) in order to achieve *trikaranasuddhi*. *Sila* comprises speaking truth, non-violence, non-expectation of other's properties or material things, non-steeling, non-adultery or complete restraint from sex with other women and refraining from consumption of liquors. Man requires a strict practice of *sila* in whatever circumstances the man lives for according to the ancient Indians the practice of *sila* is a necessary condition for the attainment of *moksa*. We will try to show certain practical difficulties and solutions while man practices *sila* in the following presentation.

Practice of Speaking Truth. It is very difficult to speak only truth in real life because we are already tuned to the flexibility of speaking both truth and falsehood. Sometimes speaking pure truth also causes problems. The ancient Indian tradition has given some clues on how to maintain strict practice of speaking truth. One should always speak only truth and nothing else. If one speaks all truth then he would land up in practical difficulties. It is said, in order to avoid problems that man should speak the truth that interests the other man with whom he is speaking. In other words, one should speak the truth that is liked by the person in conversation. It is also said that just because the other person in conversation likes falsity, one should not speak lies; one should never speak lies. To put it in a simple way: If one speaks then one should speak only truth that is liked by the other person in the conversation; otherwise, never speak anything and maintain silence. Thus the practice of speaking truth helps one to maintain silence of the instrument of speech. The silence of speech and speaking truth gives man a tremendous will power and great confidence.

Practice of Non-Violence. Practice of non-violence is also troublesome and there are many extreme understandings and practices of non-violence. A practical approach to non-violence is the following. The safety of human life is a basic need for any moral practice. It cannot be said in any method of moral practice that one should kill himself by starvation in order to maintain non-violence. It is a fact that since man is a dependent animal, needs to eat some organic life forms in order to sustain his basic life and growth for, man cannot survive on inorganic materials. Eating life forms involves killing of other life, which amounts to violence. It sounds like a contradiction to say that man ought to practice non-violence in order to attain the highest happiness when eating life forms for survival is violence. Thus there is a need for deeper understanding of the practice of non-violence.

Since man is capable of digesting both vegetarian (herbal food) and non-vegetarian[22] (meat) food he does not have natural limitations as regards food. This does not mean that one can eat

[21] The Bhagavadgita, xvii. 14, 15 and 16 "The honoring of the Deity, of the twice-born, the preceptor, the wise, and the Devas, celibacy and harmlessness – this is the austerity of the body." "The speech that causes not disturbance, and that is true and sweet and wholesome, diligent and study – this is the austerity of speech."

"Peace of mind and gentleness and silence, self-suppression and purity of purpose – this is the austerity of the mind."

[22] The words vegetarian and non-vegetarian are used in a general Indian sense and they are not used in a technical and scientific sense.

anything as he likes, but only a natural choice in eating food for one's survival. Without the practice of non-violence one eats anything as he likes. It is out of compassion and understanding the value of another's life that man chooses to eat the vegetarian foods. When man begins to practice non-violence he needs to choose the food from plants because: i) plants have quick propagation, ii) plants are relatively more primitive life forms than the animals and occupy most of the earth, iii) in many cases eating fruits, etc., helps the propagation of the same plant, iv) man can do agriculture and reproduce plants sufficiently for his survival. This means that the destruction of life forms of plants caused by eating can be remedied by reproducing the same. But the same logic does not apply in the case of eating animals.

Choice of vegetarian food helps man to restrain his desire for different tastes and longing for non-vegetarian food. However, one is allowed to eat non-vegetarian food in the following cases. a) one can eat non-vegetarian food only when sufficient vegetarian food is not available. b) When a doctor asks one to take meat as a medicine. c) In health emergencies, that is, in such cases that one will die if he does not eat meat, etc. Protection from the life forms, such as, bacteria, viruses, other microorganisms and disease-propagating animals like mosquitoes, etc., should be allowed when they threaten one's life. This does not mean that one can kill anything for his comfort and fantasies.

One should eat only vegetarian food. He is allowed to take food from any other primitive life forms in health emergencies. He should never cause pain or problem to other life forms. Since one kills plants for his food it becomes a binding obligation to protect and reproduce all the plants and also be thankful to them. Man may survive on non-vegetarian food in health emergencies and it does not mean that he has right to cause pain to other plants or animal life forms.

Non-violence is basically a change of tendency in man to avoid of causing pain in others for his enjoyment. The practice of non-violence helps man in attaining self-restraint and takes him away from the unwanted troubles from others. Non-violence also means tolerance of pain caused by others. A man of non-violence will not react against others who cause him pain. This restraint is followed till life is threatened, and should be abandoned when one's life is in danger caused by others. But one may volunteer to sacrifice his life for the benefit of others[23]

Practice of Non-Expectation of Other's Property. Practicing non-expectation of other's property or material things one should never imagine the ownership of anybody's property under any circumstances. This helps man to get rid of attachment to material things, greed and jealousy.

Practice of Non-Stealing. Under no circumstances man should steel another's belongings. Stealing causes pain in the loser and amounts to violence; therefore it should be avoided.

Practice of Non-Adultery or Complete Restraint from Sex With Other Women. One should never attempt to cheat others. Cheating implies greed and other bad elements in man. Restraint from adultery helps one to control domination by bad elements.

One is expected to be faithful to spouse and family. One needs to restrict oneself from the desire of sex with other's because it eventually causes all varieties of troubles, social, economical, health, etc. The practice of non-adultery helps one escape a lifetime of suffering, which will be caused by sex with others then one's spouse.

[23] The Mahabharata, Vanaparva, c.

Practice of Refraining from Consuming Liquors. One needs to abandon the consumption of liquors strictly for one cannot be conscious of him and his surroundings while under the influence of intoxication. The liberation is awareness but consumption of liquor is against this; therefore, one should avoid taking liquor in order to attain liberation.

Methods of Moral Practice

The unchangeable moral practice controls human actions and direct the same towards the attainment of liberation. The main task of the methods of moral practice is to avoid bad actions and promote good actions. The methods of moral practice cannot be applied universally in the society, for society consists of divergent people of different ages and sex. In other words, different methods of moral practice need to be used for various people in the society depending upon their qualifications. People of any society can be classified into two, namely, 1) people seeking liberation and 2) people aspiring for only the mundane. According to the ancient Indians, all people, whether they seek liberation or physical and psychological objects, need to practice morality. People of the first kind do practice of morality by themselves, while the latter require a direction.

People who require direction in moral practice can be classified into two, namely, i) individuals getting educated and ii) elderly or uneducated individuals. The people of first category are given a method of moral practice, which is taught through schools. The second type of people who could not get the method of moral practice in the schools or those who are uneducated are given a different method of moral practice.

Any moral practice will be futile unless it has a goal to reach. The goal should be understandable and worth aspiring for the individual. The ancient Indians, in order to demarcate the target of life, have classified human life on the basis of growth (*asrama*) into four, namely, 1) students (*brahmacharya*), 2) householders (*grhastha*), 3) the retired (*vanaprastha*) and 4) ascetics (*sanyasa*). These are the four quarters of life span of human being.[24] Similarly, all human aspirations (*purusartha*) are divided into four, namely, 1) righteousness (*dharma*), 2) wealth (*artha*), 3) sensuous desire (*kama*) and 4) liberation (*moksa*). The second and third aspirations are natural to man; righteousness and liberation need to be acquired by man through education or self-inquiry.

It is natural for any man to desire mundane wealth in the form of knowledge or education, properties, wife, children, name and fame, etc. In the same way he also desires the gratification of his psychological needs. *Artha* and *kama* comprise these natural desires. The problem is that, though all human beings universally desire *artha* and *kama*, the struggle begins in the achievement of the same for, the process of achievement causes pain in others. Pain is caused because of the influence of the *arisadvarga*[25] and aspiration for frequently changeable petty goals. It instigates the factors of bad influence and eventually the six enemies within (*arisadvarga*) rule the society so that there will be no peace and happiness in the society. The ancient Indians have discovered the direction of human actions and the ultimate goal of human life in order to avoid this disastrous dominance of bad influences. The direction of human actions towards the purpose of life, that is,

[24] The four quarters of life need not be exactly twenty-five years each. They vary depending on the birth and talents of the person. Therefore, this statement about four quarters of life may be understood in approximation.

[25]) Lust (kama), 2) Anger (krodha), 3) Greed (lobha), 4) Passion (moha), 5) Arrogance (mada) and 6) Jealousy (mascarya) are called arisadvarga, which means set of six enemies.

attaining liberation, is righteousness (*dharma*). The highest human goal is liberation (*moksa*). The following is the way the ancient Indians taught righteousness and liberation.

The First Quarter of Life. According to the ancient Indian tradition, one needs to spend the first quarter of life in education. The target of studentship is the achievement of knowledge in a good way to stand in higher ranks. All good potentialities should be exploited at maximum level. One is encouraged to be the best in whatever one is doing.[26] This may sound like competition among people, but it was taught not as competition but as self-exploration. If one is affected by any of the bad influences, he cannot achieve real progress in understanding the subjects that are taught. Therefore, in order to achieve the goal of education, one begins to learn self-exploration to destroy the impediments of his progress (*arisadvarga*) within himself. Thus one attains self-control while dealing with internal enemies. *Artha* and *Kama* in the first quarter represent the achievement of the best knowledge. *Dharma* is the training for getting the knowledge towards the goal of life in a good and harmless way. Everybody achieves *artha* and *kama* someway or the other, but learning to achieve the same in a harmless way is the method of moral practice. Thus, in the first quarter of life, *moksa* becomes the main target and '*artha* and *kama*' are subsidiary goals.

Practical Applications. According to ancient Indian tradition, the students stay with the teacher in his residence. The teacher educates the students basically free of cost and he is supported by his earnings[27] or by kings or by alms collected by the students. The students, whether they hail from royal house or a poor hut are sent everyday for alms collection to the nearby town as a part of the course.[28] Also they are sent every day to collect firewood to support kitchen and sacrificial activities. This simple practice of alms collection and helping in getting firewood for kitchen and fire sacrifice allows one to get the following: 1) Exposure to the different paths of life, styles of life and to the pleasure and pains in the adulthood. 2) Development of humility and self-restraint, which can destroy arrogance when people scold or insult the student when asked for alms. 3) Understanding the difficulties of making food and fire sacrifice, which helps nature. 4) Knowledge of the real use and value of food, money and other material things. 5) A sense of the seriousness of human life, its goal and the achievement of the highest happiness because students live as dependents on the teacher and without luxuries.

All students participate in the fire sacrifice everyday in the school. The same helps students to achieve self-discipline, because the teacher strictly maintains the time of waking, taking bath in the early morning, and fire sacrifice. In every aspect the teacher stands first to demonstrate and practice the same discipline. Since the teacher does not expect any monitory benefits from the students and he himself is the supporter of the students, the students can taste the quality of sacrifice and the utmost love of the teacher in only giving without any expectations.

Most of the subjects useful not only for future livelihood but also for the attainment of liberation are taught in the classes. The other forms of arts are also taught to make every human

[26] This statement is true only with regard to the earlier ancient Indians. For in course of time most of the people were exploited and abstained from education and development by misinterpreting the same tradition. There were a number of revolts against exploitation and we ignore all these issues here and consider only the ideas of early Vedic ancient Indian tradition.

[27] See Taittiriya Upanisad, Siksavalli and the story of Yajnavalkya's discourse in the court of king Janaka in Brhadaranyaka Upanisad. Both imply the self-earnings of the teacher to support students.

[28] The practice of going to alms is not clear from the tradition for certain schools having strong financial support may not send certain students for alms collection. However, we are trying to project the purpose of alms collection in the earlier ancient Indian tradition.

being happy. It is in this quarter of life that man learns most of the virtues, such as, speaking truth, modesty, meditations, memorizing, celibacy, concentration, sharing, non-stealing, absence of 'wrath, jealously and violence,' etc., in the school. Similarly one may understand how other virtues are taught practically in the school itself. It is in the school that the student's character is molded; therefore, parents take care of children's education by putting them in a promising school where one is taught righteousness (*dharma*), the direction of life towards liberation and necessary knowledge for sustenance of life.

The students after completing their education with the teacher are asked to travel around the country. Equipped with the necessary knowledge to live in this world, students prepare in the travel to encounter any practical situation in life in a righteous manner. Man comes to know the practical difficulties in maintaining righteousness in life. The teacher is always ready to guide his students even after the completion of education. Life becomes a celebration and a chance to enjoy oneself by demonstrating one's skills and knowledge, and taking steps toward liberation. After acquiring practical knowledge of the world and gaining confidence to commence one's social life, the student rejoins the parents.

The Second Quarter of Life. The second quarter begins when one returns to the family after successfully completing one's education. Since in this quarter one physically ready for marital life he gets married in a righteous way. The *Dharmic* way of marriage is nothing but taking practical responsibility of a woman, to satisfy, maintain and help her in continuation of the lineage of family. Similarly woman also has same responsibility to help her husband in food, material progress, and sexual gratification. Of all the *asramas* the second quarter is the most important, for it supports all the others.[29] The welfare alike of the family and of the nation depends on the householder, and their happiness and prosperity are in his hand. A good husband, a good father, a good master, a good citizen, is the noblest of men. The home is the school of unselfishness, compassion, tenderness, temperance, purity, helpfulness, prudence, industry, right judgment and charity. The qualities that make the good householder when exercised in his own circle in house and State are the qualities that make the sage or the saint when shown to all.

The goal of the second quarter is the attainment of *artha* and *kama* in the highest order in a righteous way as taught in the school. The strength of the human character is tested in this quarter of life. Man stabilizes his main goal of life as liberation and strongly prepare for directing all his actions towards achieving the same without violating the morality.

Practical Applications. One gets married in this quarter and breaks the celibacy maintained through the first quarter. Desires for sex with others than one's spouse are restrained. He controls the bad influences, such as, cheating, harshness, and other internal enemies (*arisadvarga*). In this quarter one learns to live with anti-sexual stranger. Every event of life in this quarter is a strong war between the bad elements and the good elements in oneself. Here that man learns to develop virtues such as alms giving, etc. Man using this world as platform tries to win the bad elements; for to lose the fight is to lose the whole of life's effort. One tries to earn money, property, spouse, children, fame, name, and knowledge of renunciation and liberation in a righteous way. If one fails to be righteous in this quarter of life then one's life is surely most miserable.

[29] Manusmrti, iii.77, 89 and 90 "As all creatures live supported by the air, so the other orders exist supported by the householder." "Of all these (asramas), by the declaration of the Veda-scripture, the householder is the highest; he verily supports the other three." "As all streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the asramas flow to rest in the householder."

The Third Quarter of Life. One begets children in the second quarter and are given proper education. The parents get them married after they complete their education and the third quarter of life begins when the children are married. Wife and husband leave their children and grand children in this quarter by handing over all their material possessions earned through second quarter to their children. People of third quarter of life, retire to forests or go away from their family and give up complete responsibility of family. It is in this quarter that human beings completely give up selfish *artha* and *kama* and turn themselves altruistically towards renunciation and liberation. All efforts are fully directed to achieve liberation, that is, the highest happiness within oneself.

Practical Applications. In this quarter one stabilizes one's knowledge of the ephemeral nature of the objects by discrimination. After attaining this discriminatory knowledge one gives up his desire for enjoyment of happiness both in this world and in the other worlds. One develops six spiritual virtues, namely, control of mind (*sama*), control of the senses (*dama*), complete internalization of the mind (*uparati*), tolerance to all sufferings (*titiksa*), faith in the words of texts and the teacher (*sraddha*), and stabilization of the intellect on the truth (*samadhana*). One develops also strong and consistent desire for liberation; achieves the quality of renunciation and conquers all his bad elements. Once he achieves the above he enters his fourth quarter of life.

The Fourth Quarter of Life. Man even leaves his wife and leads a mendicant life in this quarter of life. His wife is taken care of by his son if she wants to do so. In case she acquires maturity of knowledge to attain liberation then she would also lead a separate life. In this quarter of life that man does not have any responsibility, bad elements, desires, doubts in life and knowledge. Man becomes compassionate, and can choose either to remain in deep concentration or to come out to share his knowledge and happiness of liberation with others. One discovers the secret of life, death and rebirth and is thereby liberated. This is the goal that one should achieve in this life.

Method of Moral Practice

If one fails to learn the foregoing method of moral practice through education then we advance the following method of moral practice, which gives the same result, namely, the attainment of the highest happiness and freedom from suffering (*duhkha*). The prerequisite to this method is self-awareness. Life of man is divided into two parts, namely, 1) life till retirement and 2) life after retirement.

Method of Moral Practice Before Retirement. To strictly practices *sila* one needs to understand the nature of mental functions, which drive him to do bad actions. The most dangerous functions of mind are to think by way of comparison, contrast or equality. These three ways of thinking generally cause bad effects and pain for they are limited thinking. There is nothing in this world, which can be compared, contrasted or equated with the other. These evaluate something with partial knowledge and prejudice, ignoring the complete facts about the thing. Man's life is experience or knowledge which is unique to the same person and can never be compared or contrasted or equated with any other. To think in this way depends mainly on the mental tendency of superiority or inferiority complex based on the social values attributed to the fragments of

experience. Such acts of comparison etc., leads to disharmony among people and cause pain at large. This is the main cause of suffering.

Thus man needs to learn to live without such thinking to live happily. But it is not so easy to practice such thinking. One should stop evaluating the knowledge or material possessions of others in any manner. One may observe and know what is happening with others and help them, but should never remember or recognize the good that he has done to others for that might cause expectation of the same, which causes suffering. One should always remember the bad that he has done to the others, for this helps him not to repeat the same. Though the words good and bad appear to be words of comparison ancient Indians defined them by taking the occurrence of pain as a standard; therefore, comparison is not involved in defining good and bad.

Often one tries to hide his real nature, for instance, hiding his knowledge and material possessions and projecting what he really is not. This is but an act of self-deceit and fraudulence to others. One pretends because: i) he tries to mind other's business or frequently attempts to know what the other is doing or possesses, or ii) of thinking with comparison, etc. Therefore, man has to stop pretending and making prejudicial evaluations of other's material possessions and knowledge for pretending is falsehood.

Thinking without comparison, etc., requires awareness of mental activity, which can be achieved by practicing concentration. The practice of *sila* helps attain concentration. By learning to concentrate on one's mental activity one gains freedom of thinking and can choose not to think by the way of comparison. To conquer way of thinking without comparison, pretension, etc., is to attain almost complete control over bad influences (*arisadvarga*). This method does not require any qualifications, such as special birth, education, specific sex, age, etc.; anybody can practice it under any circumstances. It helps one control his mental patterns and habits and facilitates mental silence. Eventually it helps one attain the knowledge of the formation of *vasanas* and desires and leads to liberation.

Method of Moral Practice after Retirement. After retirement one should divert oneself from all the mundane activities that one has done till then and take up the practices of *sila* and control of mental activity as explained above. One should select any approved painless posture, close one's eyes and withdraw all his senses and mind from their respective objects. One should learn to practice *vipasyana*[30] meditation with noble silence. This requires to spending all one's time in *vipasyana* meditation. If past *vasanas* and results of actions are limited then one would be able to eradicate them all and attain liberation in this life itself. At least one's efforts in this life will help one to eradicate some amount of one's past actions and desires. Thereby one gets the benefit of the moral practice in the next birth to attain liberation.

The practicality of the moral practice stands on the silence of three instruments of action, namely, speech, mind and body. Maintaining noble silence covers the silence of speech. But man is exempted from the noble silence in the cases of health, food and clearing up doubts regarding moral practice from a teacher, etc. Selecting a physical posture for meditation helps one maintain physical silence.

Mental silence can be maintained by practicing *vipasyana* meditation, which means observation of the process of knowledge – First stage: perceiving the external objects, observing the formation of the impressions of the same and instantly categorizing them as objects of either likes or dislikes; Second stage: observing the process of creating *vasanas* and the influence of *vasanas* at every moment; Third stage: observing the formation of desires every moment. The

[30] Vipasyana meditation was practiced and perfected by the great Lord Buddha.

desires that arise at each moment of observation do not influence man as long as he is in observation. Observation of any influence means getting rid of the same in that particular moment. The practice of observation should continue till death and give a great and stable happiness.

In order to achieve mental silence one needs to control the mind to live only in the present. Man should learn to observe that the thinking process of the mind always draws support either from the past or from the future imaginations. Thinking about past and future is the main source of *duhkha.* Thus man should observe his mind every moment and prevent past and future imaginations in the thought process. Man gets rid of his fantasies, imaginations and influence of 'good and bad' impressions of the past that haunt him by keeping his mind always in the present.

One should always remember the practical foundations of the said methods of moral practice, that is, strict practice of *sila* forms the foundation for the attainment of concentration. Concentration helps the process of knowledge and the formation of desires. The observation and abstinence from the creation of desires liberates a person and keeps him and others around him in peace.