

EDUCATING THE SELF AND BEYOND.

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The fundamental question to be answered by the moral educator is, how do you “establish” your norm, your “ought,” your most fundamental value choices? I think the answer is that you select from the plethora of moral and value descriptions of which you are aware, those which you take to be “better,” or conducive to more positive value, or more “morally adequate,” or which make most sense. You try to *support* your choices, as best you can, by telling the “*whole story*,” or by providing an account of your *horizon of understanding*; and not just a small close-up photograph and, of course, you try to render them internally consistent or coherent as a system of values. Whether you are a utilitarian or a formalist, a Christian or a Buddhist, you are only able to explain the decision which you have taken when you describe to another the entire broad context which gives rise to the collection of value-positions which you hold. If pressed, you must present your outlook on the world in as much fullness as you can, including a description of your *way of life* as a valuing, feeling, acting and aspiring human being. And this is not merely to provide an intellectual account of your beliefs and your claims to knowledge, for what is demanded is a fulsome description of your way of life and its reasons. R.M. Hare’s description of this procedure is worth attending to:

if pressed to justify a decision completely, we have to give a complete specification of the way of life of which it is a part ... if the inquirer still goes on asking “But why *should* I live like that?” then there is no further answer to give him, because we have already, *ex hypothesi*, said everything that could be included in this further answer.¹

Why should you be moral?

When the late American psychologist, Lawrence Kohlberg asks, and sets about to answer why it is that you should be just, or why you should be moral in the first place, or why you ought to care about anything at all, he moves to a postulated “*stage seven*” of his schema. He does so, I think, precisely because it serves as the normative ground and standard of his entire system of developmental stages (one through six).² It is his whole story, his horizontal perspective without which none of the separate stages and moral obligations seem to have a clear point or authority. Stage seven is the *bedrock* of normativity, and this is true even of stage six justice. Stage seven constitutes the selection of an “is” cluster of values and ethical norms — more broadly, a way of living in the world — as its “ought,” its “ideal”. Stage seven thinking is the description of the broader context which serves as the grounding, the justification, and the motivation for adhering to any of the moral demands required by the earlier stages, as you passed through them. It is “faith”-like, in that it provides meaning, purpose, direction and as much of a guarantee as human beings are capable or achieving. Faith carries the meaning, “this is my understanding of the ultimate sense of things, and if this makes little or no sense to you, then you will be unable to understand why I think and set and value as I do.” On the other hand, to reveal to another your most comprehensive sense of things, is to make clear what it is that you have faith in, and explains why you think, act, and value as you do. The word “faith” has a religious association, however, which “horizontal perspective” or “whole story” can have, but need not.

Stage seven as horizon

Whereas the first six stages describe “moral” development, stage seven goes beyond all of this to provide additional metaphysical and religious assumptions necessary to help answer questions which morality itself cannot answer, and to motivate by making morality part of the meaningful whole of understanding which comprises the “whole story.” What Kohlberg calls “ethics,” includes a much broader range of problems than does the justice reasoning of the higher stages (five and six) of “morality.” The term “ethics,” for Kohlberg, refers to a faith-like perspective,

a way of life, an entire horizon of knowing, feeling and willing, the broadest whole story of which we are capable, whereas "morality" refers only to specific ways of reasoning about perceived moral obligation alone. Whatever whole story or worldview is chosen, whether theistic, pantheistic, or humanistic, what is necessarily included is an intuitive or direct grasping of the meaningfulness of your life and of the worthwhileness of the whole of things, of the cosmos.³ Once you have found "support in reality, in nature taken as a whole or in the ground of nature, for acting according to universal moral principles,"⁴ then you are freed from the paralysis of knowing what reason requires of you, but not caring about it, or knowing what reason says, but not doing it. The assumptions of ethics give meaning to what you do and tend to provide the assurance that what you do is both worthwhile in the total scheme of things, and in accordance with the way things really are. By contrast, "the experience of despair calls into question the fundamental worth of human activity,"⁵ and the assumptions of ethics place us in harmony with the order, unity, and graspable structure of the whole of which we are a part.

It should not be assumed, however, that this distinction between ethics and morality is ubiquitous in the literature. In fact, it is quite idiosyncratic, and there may be considerable insight gained from asking why Kohlberg conceived of ethics and morality in this specialized way. Part of the answer might be found in the work of James Fowler. Fowler has applied the stage-developmental schema to *religion*, and has found stages of religious development which are more or less parallel with the stages of moral development offered by Kohlberg. It might be supposed that a stage *one* moral thinker would have as her or his religion or "whole story," a stage one of authority, based on punishment and reward. It is not the case, however, as Kohlberg emphasized, that you must be moral and religious at the *same* stage-level. Nevertheless, Fowler argues, every stage has a "stage seven" or "whole story" which supports, explains and justifies the moral stage-thinking on the basis of which you reason and act. Therefore, stage seven may not be simply a separate stage at all, but the ultimate (for Kohlberg) whole story of metaphysical/religious/valuational assumptions which forms the horizon or perspective from which the individual judgments of your stage-perspective, or way of living in the world, makes sense.⁶ But, then, each and every stage has its whole story, although only the "highest" stage is ultimately foundational and more or less complete. Some whole stories are more restricted, less

encompassing, less adequate, than later or higher ones. Otherwise, the structure of stage seven appears to be a tag-on to Kohlberg's system, rather than the limit or pinnacle of justification and explanation for and of the previous stages. It should be noted, however, that because Kohlberg limits himself to moral *reasoning* in his account of the first six stages, he does not make explicit the affective, caring, valuational, spiritual and (possibly) religious dimensions of the stages *until* he provides his account of stage seven. Yet the first six stages do at least imply a perspectival or horizontal context, that is, a system of assumptions and principles by which you select from the data of experience, and come to see the world, others and yourself the way you do.

Stage one is a philosophy of life, a metaphysical system, however ragged and simplistic it may be. Of course, the holder may not be able to articulate, or even to understand the assumptions implied by the perspective, but this can happen to greater or lesser extent at any stage. All stages have stage-seven-like components on which they rest, but these components are rarely sufficient for mature analysis; they are regularly implicit rather than explicit, and often unsystematic, inconsistent, and incomplete. In different words, if stage seven provides the context, broader justification for, and widest understanding of the place and nature of morality, then any and all other metaphysical, religious, and broadly philosophical systems that might be employed, will be measured against this broadest and most adequate stage seven perspective. Not all systems are equally sound or acceptable. Some systems are simplistic, ego-centric in focus, easily caught in contradictions, militantly irrational and closed, and sometimes even "immoral" when judged from the perspective of a higher stage morality, or of some other moral perspective. These and all other candidate-systems must be judged by the requirements of whatever moral situation has emerged, and is to be rejected if found wanting. Of course, you would only be able to discern that your moral vision was inadequate if you had already begun the move to the perspective of the next higher stage, from which it begins to be seen that the existing moral perspective is inadequate. While seeing things through the "spectacles" of the existing stage, all seems fine, and the alleged inadequacies do not appear. One of Kohlberg's strategies for encouraging the move to a higher stage of moral awareness, is to point out the inadequacies of the present stage way of thinking morally, by means of the depicting of moral dilemmas resulting from it. You cannot continue to hit the child in

the sandbox with your shovel, for the unsatisfactory result will be that you will soon discover that no one will play with you. It is necessary to think beyond the limits of your own wants, and begin to consider the needs of others, even if only far enough to get the instrumental results that you want: companionship. But if you encounter little or no difficulty with your moral perspective, then you rest satisfied with the way things are. There is no need to look beyond the present stage of moral understanding. In any case, each stage viewpoint is, at least in principle, able to justify itself as an adequate and acceptable outlook on others and the world. In this sense, every stage has its own stage seven, or comprehensive account of why you, who think and act that way, do so. It is the broader rationale for thinking and acting as you do. As Fowler writes,

Every moral perspective, at whatever level of development is anchored in a broader system of belief and loyalties. Every principle of moral action serves some centre of value. Even the appeal to autonomy, rationality, and universality as justifications for Stage 6 morality are not made *prior* to faith. Rather they are expressions of faith — expressions of trust in, and loyalty to, the valued attributes of autonomy and rationality and the valued ideal of a universal commonwealth of being. There is, I believe, always a faith framework encompassing and supporting the motive to be moral and the exercise of moral logic.⁷

Fowler assumes that “we require meaning,” and that in order to gain it “we must have some grasp on the big picture.”⁸ Tying this sense of the big picture to *imagination*, he provides a series of alternate labels and descriptions for what I have been calling one’s horizon, or the whole story. In addition to tying it to the imagination, he also further specifies that imagination, when used in this whole story sense, is imagination as faith.⁹ Thus, “faith forms a way of seeing our everyday life in relation to holistic images of what we may call the *ultimate environment*.”¹⁰ If the term “ultimate environment” is too formidable, “*comprehensive frame of meaning that both holds and grows out of the most transcendent centres of value and power to which our faith gives allegiance,*” is an alternative.¹¹ Fowler recounts that early on in his teaching career he had described “the big picture” idea in words similar to the above. It was evident that he was not getting his idea across, and after several students

succeeded at best in recounting only aspects of Fowler's conception of the "ultimate environment," a retiring woman student summarized the idea as follows:

"I think you mean, Professor, our images of that largest theatre of action in which we act out our lives. You might say that our images of the ultimate environment determine the ways we arrange the scenery and grasp the plot in our lives' plays." And then she added, "Furthermore, our images of the ultimate environment change as we move through life. They expand and grow, and the plots get blown open or have to be linked in with other plots."¹²

This simple account is a helpful description of horizontal, or whole story descriptions, and her emphatic stress on the changeability of such "ultimate" images is especially to be underscored. You hold a stage seven, in the way that you do not normally hold a horizon, I suppose — horizons we just have ; they are like lenses that we look through, and it is difficult, and takes the utmost effort to turn our glance inward in such a way as to be able to see the otherwise transparent and unseen lenses — namely as an "ideal" whole story, a story which we find to be more adequate than any other to date. Knowing that it, too, will undergo change, however, will likely cause us to hold it with less obstinacy, less unwillingness to change it for a better, although it will be held none the less firmly and passionately in the meantime. Stage seven is, therefore, stage-like in this regard, and yet it does not function in nearly the same way as do Kohlberg's other six stages. Rather, it is foundational in that it serves as the ground, not only of stage six, but of all valuation whatsoever. On the other hand, there is nothing to preclude a future development of a stage eight, or a stage nine. Nevertheless, for right now, at least for Kohlberg, stage seven is as comprehensive a perspective as is available, and so serves as *the* normative, most encompassing, and ultimate source of all moral motivation.

The "more" in ethics

That there is more to ethics than justice reasoning is particularly evident in Kohlberg's stage seven conception. But there is more to ethics than

reasoning even at stage one, else you would not value and act as a more or less whole human person. That is to say, even at the stage three level of nice boy, good girl peer group orientation, you care about being accepted, and are highly motivated to dress and act as does everyone else within the group. At the level of stage seven, the something more might be expressed quite simply as the search for greater fulfilment, or for life's higher meaning, or for the *summum bonum*, or for wisdom, or for a holistic way of being in the world. It includes group-oriented thinking and concern, but stretches far, far beyond its confines to the cosmos as the most inclusive conceivable whole.

Examples of stage seven

The chief examples of stage seven thinking offered by Kohlberg are four in number: the Roman emperor and philosopher, Marcus Aurelius; a contemporary American woman, Andrea Simpson, who became involved as a lay person with the treatment of mentally ill patients in hospital; the seventeenth-century philosopher, Spinoza; and the twentieth-century Roman Catholic theologian, Teilhard de Chardin. All of them are described by Kohlberg as belonging to the *mystical* tradition. I think it unnecessary for Kohlberg technically to label all four in this way, however, for I suspect that he only intends the term "mystical" in a rough-and-ready way. They do all affirm "a consciousness of the Oneness of everything."¹³ The unity grasped is transformative in that the whole is now the dominant realization, against which the parts make sense for the first time. This new "cosmic" perspective of consciousness represents "a shift from figure to ground, from a centring on the self's activity and that of others to a centring on the wholeness or unity of nature or the cosmos."¹⁴ We now identify ourselves with the cosmic perspective, and "we value life from its standpoint."¹⁵ Indeed, I suspect that we now do all our valuing from its standpoint, for it is the foundation of valuation itself, its whole story and horizon. Perhaps it is well to pause long enough to point out that "mysticism" is not so simply defined, and to suggest that Kohlberg is not really calling upon a mystical perspective at all, but upon a cosmic perspective.

Mysticism

F.C. Happold, himself obviously influenced by William James' account of mysticism in the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, repeats the four criteria of mysticism which James had identified: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity. Happold adds to James' account the criterion of a consciousness of the *oneness* of things, a sense of timelessness, and the realization that the everyday self is not the real I.¹⁶ Of these additional criteria, a consciousness of the oneness of things is particularly important for the present analysis of Kohlberg's position. What has to be decided, however, is precisely in what sense this realization of "oneness" is to be taken. Paul Friedländer concluded that Plato, for example, was not a true mystic because Plato's apprehension of the Forms was not an actual merging with them, or in some traditions a submerging of the soul in/with the cosmic whole, or God. Rather, the most that could be said for Plato was that he had an intellectual awareness of the oneness of things.¹⁷ Mysticism is more than intellectual awareness, for it is a direct experience of the oneness of self and cosmos, or God, and it is likely more a matter of passionate feeling than it is intellectual awareness. Mystics do not speculate about the oneness of things, they experience it *directly*, and they report accompanying feelings of overwhelming identification with the greater whole, akin to the self-forgetting merging of human love.

Kohlberg is not proposing a detailed theory of mysticism, of course, yet it is instructive to see just how far he is willing to go in his account of stage seven consciousness. He does quote Teilhard, who admits to "an intuition that goes beyond reasoning itself",¹⁸ but he also includes Aurelius, whose "rational mysticism" does seem to be an intellectual awareness of the oneness of things, with no claims to having had an *experience* of oneness, or to needing an emotional or non-rational capacity (often termed "intuition" or the "heart" in mystical literature) with which to apprehend your merging with ultimate reality. If mysticism is a direct non-rational awareness of your merging with the greater whole, or with divinity, then Aurelius is not an obvious candidate. Certainly Teilhard and Simpson are, and likely Spinoza, although he may be a borderline case. Without going into more details about each historical figure selected by Kohlberg, let me state what difference all of this may make.

First, it is not mysticism that Kohlberg advocates, but a grasp of the

figure/ground oneness of the cosmos, i.e. both figure and ground, individual and the whole of things are perspectives on one and the same picture, but at one time with the foreground *individual* in focus, and at another with the *background* whole as the focus. Second, were Kohlberg to chain himself to a fully mystical description of stage seven, he would have a great deal more work ahead of him, for the non-rational, intuitive, emotional features of mysticism would make it just that much more difficult for him to speak of stage seven as a stage of *reasoning*. Aurelius is helpful precisely because he is not a mystic, but a rationalist who takes the cosmic perspective of things. If it is the cosmic perspective, rather than the cosmic *experience* of oneness and merging that is important, then stage seven may sometimes be mystically derived, but it is always rationally describable. Because apprehension of the oneness of things may be a rational state of awareness, it need not be mystically based.

It is the embraciveness of the perspective which is important. If you set out on the path of increasing your awareness of your relation with another, with the group, with a larger community, and then with all human beings, it is as if you would need a reason to *stop short* of considering the widest possible context — the cosmos, or God. This, however, is a stage of reasoning, albeit the apparently final stage, at least in terms of its extent and comprehensiveness.

Why be moral?

In asking yourself the question, why do I care about my neighbour, or even about the cosmos, and the only possible answer, given Kohlberg's description of the identification of yourself with the cosmic whole, is that you *are* a part of it, and actually reflect the cosmos itself — macrocosm within microcosm — and so require no additional reason to avoid what is now tantamount to your own pain and destruction, since you and the cosmos are one and the same. Your neighbour, too, is part of the "divine" whole of things. We are all perspectively separated from the cosmic whole in which we find ourselves, and at the same time, we can discern our identification with it. I am my neighbour, and s/he is me, and so again I have good reason not to harm my neighbour, as I already have good reason not to harm myself. Stage one awareness, limited as it is, makes amply plain that avoiding your own pain and destruction is our

fundamental value, or rational starting-point, and that stage seven thinking has simply substituted a comprehensive cosmic "I," where once there was only an individual phenomenal ego.

The Characteristics of stage seven

The characteristics of stage seven awareness include: (1) realization of the oneness of mind and self with the whole of nature;¹⁹ and hence (2) the taking of a cosmic perspective ("as opposed to a universal, humanistic Stage 6 perspective");²⁰(3) a shift of focus from figure (or foreground) to ground (or background, i.e. the whole is not the focus, and the individual is seen as but standing out of the whole to which it remains connected);²¹ (4) an identifying of yourself with the cosmic perspective;²² from which (5) both peace and *life-meaning* arise;²³ and hence, "to see life whole is to love and accept life because it is to see ourselves as necessarily part of life."²⁴ And this last, as I have suggested already, is why we can now answer the question, "Why be moral?" We are now not value-neutral toward the whole of things, and towards the individual things which go to make up this whole, but rather we love them in a way that is at least akin to the way we love and value ourselves (other things being equal).

Morality, ethics, and religion

The trouble with the quest for the broader (or broadest) context of awareness is that it is not easy to see how to separate it from the narrower context of *morality* itself. Kohlberg adopts a parallelist stance when describing the relationship between morality (culminating with stage six) and ethics/religion (stage seven):

moral and religious reasoning may be investigated as separable domains. However, we believe that there is a parallel development of structures of moral and religious reasoning. Reaching a given structure of moral reasoning is "necessary but not sufficient" for reaching a parallel religious structure. The ethical function of reli-

gious thinking is to support the structures of moral reasoning that develop in some autonomy from religious structures.²⁵

And he is no doubt correct that they are separable domains, for you can stand at stage six (or any other) and never move beyond to stage seven considerations, where, within Kohlberg's scheme, metaphysical and religious concerns arise. In another respect, however, morality and religion are inseparable in the same way that stage six is the norm and moral end-point of lower stage thinking. Stage seven is the "whole story" justification of stage six, and it is often, though not always, religious in form. Without something like a whole story, you are not as fully aware a human being as you might be, nor are you as fully ethical, as fully matured, etc. In what precise sense, then, is stage seven "parallel" to the other six stages? Is stage five "parallel" to stage six, or is stage six merely implicit and undeveloped in stage five? Stage seven is what is required to bring to completion the progress up the stages which ends with the seeing of the whole context out of which morality itself arises, and is for the first time justifiable. It provides the "ideal" of a unified society, and an "ideal" of a harmonious and integrated cosmos, as both Kohlberg, and the other cognitive-developmentalists whom he refers to (Baldwin, Dewey and Mead), had required.²⁶ A progression is not a parallelism, but a developmental typology which begins, progresses, and arrives. Stage seven is an embodiment of what Kant would call the quest for the unconditioned. The "ideals of reason" in Kant are posited to *complete* the story he unfolded in such detail. God, Freedom and Immortality are not parallel, but are the end points without which you could not tell in which direction the beginning stages were headed. Stage seven is the "ideal" norm which allows us to sort out moral phenomena into stages. These stages are discernable in terms of their own inner logic, of course, but the ranking of them leads us to justice and beyond, else each stage-morality would float relativistically as but one more alternative moral stance among many others. Stage seven is the normative guidepost which provides the criteria of "adequacy" found only completely in stage seven awareness.

The inadequacy of justice

Assuming that James Fowler's stage *six* of faith is comparable to Kohlberg's stage *seven* of moral development, the following description, written by Fowler in the language of the "ultimate environment," is helpful:

Stage 6 is exceedingly rare. The persons best described by it have generated faith compositions in which felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community. ... The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us. Their community is universal in extent. Particularities are cherished because they are vessels of the universal, and thereby valuable apart from any utilitarian considerations. Life is both loved and held too loosely. Such persons are ready for fellowship with persons at any of the other stages and from any other faith tradition.²⁷

With this description in mind, let me turn to Kohlberg's analysis of Andrea Simpson's vision of the world.

If Marcus Aurelius "represents a version of natural law thinking," then Andrea Simpson represents a version of natural being, or loving, or cosmic "flowing."²⁸ The ethics of stage seven is more than mere reasoning. It is clearly existential in that the whole person is involved, and the result is an expression of the integrated personality. As a mystic, Simpson would undoubtedly agree with Evelyn Underhill that it is not merely the integration of the ordinary self that is at play here, for, in fact, "the self is remade, transformed, has at last unified itself."²⁹ What has been added and integrated into the self is your own deep self, or "divine spark," the realization of which brings peace, and meaning to your life, and the integrated capacity for selfless love. In any case, it is evident that Andrea Simpson's cosmic consciousness was not arrived at through a process of reasoning and intellectual insight alone, but through direct experience achieved through contemplation and meditation:

In meditation, her experience was that you stop using your mind, deliberately, like a flower that opens itself to the sun, and let this dimension in. Whatever dimension you call it, that is not just overhead in the sky but in the heart and the whole surrounding world, it's in everyone. You open yourself to that which surrounds totally and is totally within.³⁰

In a way, there are whispers of this ultimate integration of self, and the arising of the deep self, all along the path of the stages of development. The blossoming occurs only at stage seven, however, and if the mystics are correct, only when the old self, including the rigid control of the intellect, "dies," and gives way to love.³¹ Perhaps Kohlberg has created an integrative, rationally cosmic stage seven, and hints at a further more than rational cosmic-annihilation-of-self stage *eight*, which he has unwittingly rolled into one. Whatever you think about this, it is clear that the post-stage six stage or stages move us beyond reasoning, to agapistic loving, to selfless empathy, and to acts of supererogation.

Reconstruction

Perhaps the most curious aspect of the foregoing is that the elements of personal integration do not appear to be clearly visible at the early stages of moral reasoning. No doubt Carol Gilligan's critique of Kohlberg's seemingly exclusive emphasis on justice reasoning may be explained, in part, by the noticeable absence of any sustained emphasis on love and caring in his first six stages.³² He contends that it is there, and elaborates his position in detail,³³ but you still come away with the suspicion that it is not easy to derive feeling, or even willing, from an account of knowing per se. Kohlberg views himself as within the Platonic tradition, and yet Plato was adamant that the foundations of morality were: (1) the three parts of the soul (roughly corresponding to the rational, the emotive of feeling side, including will, and the appetitive or sensorial) in integrated harmony, and (2) the assumption that the form of goodness is already within. The form of goodness is at least akin to the mystical spark of divinity, and it is not available until justice, the soul as integrated, has already been achieved. It should follow from this, I think, that part of moral education is to train the will and to sensitize or "edu-

cate” the emotions (feelings), as well as to develop the powers of reason. And over and above all of this, you would care mightily about the *integration* of these “parts of the soul,” all along the educative way. Perhaps, as Plato says, you do this by giving each part its proper sphere of influence, yet you can do this only by vaguely sensing — recollecting — what its proper place and function is. The norm of justice is the good itself, or the system of the forms, which is *innate* in us. Plato’s recollection may be somewhat akin to Kohlberg’s stage seven, which is also system-like and normatively ideal, but preparation for Plato’s recognition of truth would include far more than “justice reasoning.” The goal of the moral educator is to develop the three fundamental characteristics of human conscious activity — knowing, feeling, and willing — and to render these harmoniously integrated into a self that is morally responsive. The norm of such moral goodness is stage seven — not stage six — as the ideal towards which we “ought” to strive, and by means of which we measure our development.

Why adopt the stage seven perspective?

Why ought we to adopt stage seven? Two sorts of answers need to be given to this query. First, we ought to strive for a stage seven state of consciousness because it is the/our whole story of morality, ethics, meaning in life, metaphysics (religion), and epistemology. It is the limit of reason (and perhaps, of imagination as well), i.e. it is the whole story rendered as completely, as integratively, and as fully aware of the human depths of capacity (including mystical experience) as is possible. Every comprehensive account of human nature, the world, and the cosmos has been a stage seven account. And what makes Kohlberg’s stage seven “better” than another stage seven must be its explanatory and justificatory power, and its fruitfulness in the living of one’s life with moral integrity and rich meaning. But it is only one among several “highest human achievement” normative ideals, and it may be that most people who even care about such matters borrow something from several “highest” perspectives.

For our own day and age, when we are trying to dislodge Descartes’ (and many others, of course) mechanistic and atomistic approach to us and to nature, and when we are striving to reintegrate with nature, each

other, and with the mystery of existence itself, it may be well to imagine what a hypothetical "beyond stage seven" vision might include. It would be less strictly rational and more unabashedly caring, less aggressive and manipulative and more receptive and meditative, less egoic and more selfless, less rigid and more spontaneous and exploratory, less legalistic and more empathetically compassionate. It would unceasingly "deconstruct" assumptions, even saintly ones, in an effort to continue to put even its own assumptions at risk in order to flow with the unceasing change which is life, and to ever plumb the inexhaustible. Having climbed to the sky by means of stage-like constructions, it would leave all such structural generalizations behind, and courageously and enthusiastically step out into the flux, again and again. Could it be that what attracted Kohlberg to the mystical traditions was just this constellation of ingredients which inexorably pulled him beyond the more strictly rational aspects of stage seven thinking. Perhaps he was attracted by stage seven *living*, stage seven *self-transformation*, rather than justice reasoning alone. I make no claim that such was the case with Kohlberg, but only that one way of disentangling numerous strands within his stage seven analysis is to divide the stage into two: a rationally articulate account of cosmic identification, and its role in justice thinking ; and a more meditative, mystical, self-dissolving whereby one experiences one's connectedness with the cosmos itself. This latter hypothetical "stage eight" would take us beyond the egoic, and even the expanded self, to the selflessness of mystical awareness.

Dogen and the self

Dogen, a thirteenth century Japanese Zen master, taught that nothing was more important in our education than to learn about the self. In the typical fashion of the Japanese Zen Buddhist, he then warned that the only way to study the self was by forgetting it ! Then, and only then, would one leave behind the shallow, everyday self, and move to the self which is ever present to consciousness, but never as an object. When we reflect upon our consciousness, we do so from a small point of awareness which itself is not the object of reflection, but which is doing the reflecting. And if we try to "catch" this "observing self" observing itself

observing, it forever eludes our gaze, slipping beneath our *object* of consciousness, forever veiled. When we leave the objectified self behind, then and only then are we aware of this uncatchable self, for it is presupposed in all of our conscious awareness. We know it in our knowing, but not directly, just as we know that a garment is well-tailored not by seeing the lining, but by noting the proper “hang” of the garment which tells us that the lining is present. We see the lining in the hang of the garment, but without seeing the lining. We “see” the self in our acts of consciousness, although the self as pure subjectivity is itself never seen. At this precise point, our ego self dissolves, and we are open to experience as it presents itself to us. We are able to be “enlightened by all things,” for our object-self has disappeared. Our subjective-self is now more fully able to experience. It is now clear as glass, wonderfully receptive to what is around, rather than actively selecting what fits in with the preconceptions and habits of the ordinary ego.

Recently, I was teaching Descartes to a small class of first year philosophy students, and in the midst of an explanation of the mind-body problem I asked them to point to that part of the body which best indicated the location of the *mind*, notwithstanding Descartes’s insistence that mind and body were utterly — or should I say clearly and distinctly — different. Past experience has inevitably revealed that most students hesitantly point to their heads in response. But this time, the men raised fingers to their foreheads, while a few of the women pointed to their *hearts*. My empirical sample of one class, and a handful of students is not meant to serve as statistical proof of a significant alteration in consciousness — the ground swell of a paradigm shift in the making. Yet it does serve to symbolize, at the very least, that women and men do often view themselves and the world from distinctive positions which may well constitute two remarkably different “horizons of understanding.” It also needs to be observed that to men and women of the Far East, for example, the “seat of the self,” or the centre of gravity of one’s consciousness is not in the head, but just below the navel. Furthermore, the Japanese experience suggests that the mind-body problem was never a major issue there, simply because the mind and body were never imagined to be two distinct things, or substances, but aspects of one body-mind. Like poor old Humpty Dumpty, we and Descartes have struggled to put ourselves back together again, while the Japanese have never felt radically separated in the first place. Descartes’s “discovery” was that mental substance

was essentially characterized by *thinking*, and physical substance was essentially characterized as that which is *extended* in space. Extension is never thinking, and thinking is never extension: mind is never body, and body is never mind. But in Japan, mind is both operative in space, and a function of the body, and the body is a manifestation of the mind? Following Descartes, we train the body by means of a mind, which controls it, restrains it, and urges it on. In Japan, you get to the mind through the body. The Japanese cultural tradition trains the mind through the body, through practice or cultivation as in the martial arts and the tea ceremony, whose goal it is to free the mind from its obstructions and obsessions, and to still it sufficiently for body and mind to operate harmoniously, integratively as one.

Yuasa Yasuo

The remarkably insightful contemporary Japanese philosopher, Yuasa Yasuo, suggests that a unique perspective of Eastern (particularly Buddhist, Hindu, and Taoist) thought is “that personal ‘cultivation’ (*shugyo*) is presupposed in the philosophical foundation of the Eastern theories. To put it simply, true knowledge cannot be obtained simply by means of theoretical thinking, but only through ‘bodily recognition or realization’ (*tainin* or *taitoku*), that is, through the utilization of one’s total mind and body.”³⁴ In other words, learning which is self-transformative occurs by means of the body, and not merely through the mind alone.

Mind and body learning is a physical practice, such as the learning of the martial arts, or the tea ceremony, or the practice of meditation which begins with posture, wakefulness and controlled breathing, each of which effects a transformation of the self, body and mind, emotions and attitudes. This is not just getting into condition for a single marathon or exam, which can occur without altering the self in any significant way. What opens through body-mind practice is a deeper, or more profound awareness of “self,” which itself transforms the world and others into centres of worth and significance. This “higher” consciousness is compassionate. Compassion is felt towards all life, and particularly in the Japanese Buddhist instance, towards all existence. An artist or thinker who has achieved such awareness “sees through this world’s human afflictions and delusions, and yet, for that very reason, ... (she or he) is

the mind of Great Compassion in the face of this world's delusory forms. This is a free mind that can empathize and share in the pain found in the various profiles of human life."³⁵ The body-mind awakening leads us out, beyond the thinking self, to the greater whole with which it merges, while still remaining a unique aperture of awareness.

Arthur J. Deikman, writing at the interface of "mysticism and psychotherapy," has compared ordinary consciousness, both eastern and western as akin to being in a *trance-like* state, contrasting it with a more oceanic consciousness of enlightenment which leaves behind the narrow confines of the ego-prison, the presuppositions (conscious and unconscious) of societal expectations, and the blinders of habit and ritualistic anticipation.³⁶ Deikman maintains that life may be experienced as meaningless "because it is self-centred," whereas meaning is inextricably associated with one's sense of "transcendence," achieved by a releasing of the ego-boundaries which allows us to experience our interconnection with the greater whole of things. Deikman provides us with the analogy of a pond, on whose surface the ripples and temporary currents of the moment play, as do the interests of our egoic awareness. These are transient, merely ruffling the surface. Then he expands his image:

In terms of the pond analogy, when the local agitation (object self) subsides sufficiently, the pond responds to the currents that link it to the ocean. When people are able to reduce the demands of the object self they can respond to a larger flow. By aligning themselves with that flow, they not only act to further the current, but they can experience themselves as continuous with the ocean rather than restricted to the pond. With the experience of the larger identity, fear subsides and meaning is perceived.³⁷

When we awaken from the trance-like state of ordinary consciousness, we become aware of the heretofore unnoticed osmotic qualities of our ego-shells, and encounter "*a much larger reality orientation*, a frame of reference that extends beyond the dimensions with which we are familiar."³⁸

In going beyond stage six thinking, Kohlberg was aware that he was stretching his empirical findings, and speculating about what sort of ultimate foundation might lay behind, or ground his developmental vision of moral maturation. In raising the spectre of a stage eight, I both go

beyond Kohlberg, and speculate more wildly still, and perhaps even distort this expansion beyond the ego-self by trying to squeeze it into a tightly organized hierarchical structure at all. Rather than being a stage, a strictly accountable set of characteristics and a single vision-perspective of some sort, it is a way of being in the world, a state of awareness, an openness to that which is, beneath and beyond all structures, categories and hierarchies. It is beyond words, while at the same time words can be bent back on themselves to point towards such experiences of selftransformation that move one transformatively beyond the self itself. As Deikman writes, even though we cannot say exactly what the self which is beyond the thinking, feeling, acting and observing self is, we are nonetheless pointed "to an unknown region whose exploration requires a radically different model of the self, one in which 'simple locality' is no longer assumed and the world view of mystics becomes a useful guide."³⁹

Whatever elusive name we may affix to this increasingly selfless encounter, unless we can somehow rekindle our sense of connection with each other, and with our universe — unless we can once more learn to *dwell* in the neighbourhood of our fellows and of nature — we will destroy it and ourselves. My story is but one story which might help in this rediscovery of our connectedness — our interconnectedness — with this mysterious and grand event called existence. It is a way to rekindle our sense of transcendence, and to open us to each other, and to the richness of the cosmos. But it is only a story...

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NOTES

1. R.M. Hare, *The Language of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), 69.
2. Kohlberg's six stages of moral development are well known. Beginning with the punishment and obedience orientation of stage one, to the individualistic instrumentalism of stage two, to mutual expectations and conformity of the peer group orientation of stage three, to the authority of the social system, to stage five individual rights

and social contract orientation, to the sixth stage of universal ethical principles, they represent a path towards moral maturity which all must take, although few move much beyond the early and middle stages.

3. Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), 345.
4. *Ibid.*, 368.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Robert E. Carter, *Dimensions of Moral Education* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 101-105.
7. James W. Fowler, "Stages in faith: the structural developmental approach," in T. Hennessey, ed., *Values and Moral Development* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 209.
8. James W. Fowler, "Stages in faith: the structural developmental approach," in T. Hennessey, ed., *Values and Moral Development* (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), 209.
9. *Ibid.*, 24.
10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*, 28. Italics mine.
12. *Ibid.*, 29.
13. F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), 46.
14. Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, 371.
15. *Ibid.*, 345.
16. F.C. Happold, *Mysticism: A Study and an Anthology* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), 43-50.
17. Paul Friedländer, *Plato: an Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1958), 80. Evelyn Underhill, in *The Essentials of Mysticism and Other Essays* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1960), p. 6, observes that "the one essential of mysticism" is "union between God and the soul." For a fuller discussion of this theme with particular reference to Plato, see my "Plato and Mysticism," *Idealistic Studies* 5, 3 (September 1975), 255-68.
18. Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, 366.
19. *Ibid.*, 343.
20. *Ibid.*, 345.
21. *Ibid.*

22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., 362.
25. Ibid., 343.
26. Ibid., 337.
27. Fowler, *Stages of Faith*, 200-01.
28. Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, 348.
29. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), 416.
30. Kohlberg, *The Philosophy of Moral Development*, 348.
31. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* (New York: Meridian Books, 1955), 93.
32. Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), especially ch. 1.
33. Lawrence Kohlberg, *The Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages*, *Essays on Moral Development*, Vol. II (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1984), 224-38.
34. Yuasa Yasuo, *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, ed. T.P. Kasulis, tr. Nagatomo Shigenori and T.P. Kasulis (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 25.
35. Ibid., 104.
36. Arthur J. Deikman, *The Observing Self: Mysticism and Psychotherapy* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1982), 119-131.
37. Ibid., 103-15.
38. Ibid., 103-15.
39. Ibid. 176.