MORAL DEVELOPMENT, RELIGIOUS THINKING, AND THE QUESTION OF A SEVENTH STAGE

by Lawrence Kohlberg and Clark Power

This essay focuses on philosophic and psychological theories of the relation between moral judgment and religious thinking. Philosophic analysis and construction of the concept of moral development must precede empirical inquiry. The same is true for the study of religious development, so we start with a consideration of philosophic issues. Then, because the results of empirical inquiry can confirm, revise, or enrich its initial philosophic assumptions, we report some empirical findings and consider their implications for the philosophic issues raised.[1]

The best way to clarify philosophic issues and theories is to begin by considering their implications for education. In this article, we thus will consider the educational implications of two extreme philosophic theories of the relation between morality and religion. The first is the fundamentalist theory that morality is ultimately defined by, or rests on, divine command as revealed by the Bible or other documents of revelation. The second is Sigmund Freud's atheistic theory, stating that morality in part, and religion altogether, are "illusions," the products of irrational human fantasies and conflicts.

Divine Command Theory

Although moral development has a larger context that includes faith, it is possible to have a public moral education that has a foundation independent of religion. We believe that the public school should engage in moral education and that the basis of such education should be universal principles of justice, not particular religious and personal values. The American tradition of the separation of church and state is a doctrine of justice, or of the rights of all individuals to liberty of

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belief. Some have argued that children's rights prohibit any form of teaching moral values in the school. To say this is to forget that respect for children's rights is an expression of principles of justice to which our schools and government are committed. If the school is to have regard for the principles of justice, it must also take some responsibility for seeing that a sense of justice develops in children. To respect the rights of children is to be involved in developing their recognition of the rights of others. In summary, one can argue for the independence of moral education from religion on legal and constitutional grounds, the principles of Stage 5, which underlie the U.S. democracy.[2]

The constitutional argument for the independence of public moral education from religion made by myself (Kohlberg) and others is, as far as I know, uncontested by those familiar with the legal and philosophic issues involved. Although uncontested by scholarly argument, my assertion of the need for a secular Socratic and developmental approach to moral education in the public schools, has been intensely contested by a vocal minority among teachers, parents, and school board members. This has occurred in public school systems in which my colleagues and I have given consultation and teacher training toward establishing deliberate programs of moral education in the cities of Cambridge and Brookline in Massachusetts, Scarsdale, New York; Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and Tacoma, Washington.

The vocal minority who have opposed deliberate but nonindoctrinative public moral education have usually been literate, sane, and sincere morally concerned people. Their opposition has arisen because they strongly held a particular theory about the relation between morality and religion, the theory of divine command. As an example, at the end of a workshop I was holding for Cambridge teachers, one teacher said to me, "Professor Kohlberg, what you are purporting to do is very dangerous. You plan to engage in moral education. Before you engage in moral education, answer these questions: 'Is there a heaven? Is there a hell?' You should not dare to engage in moral education unless you are prepared to answer these questions." For this teacher, the very idea of separating morality and religion threatened to undermine the foundations of both. Accordingly, he went to the bishop of the city to engage the bishop's support in halting our effort at a secular program of moral education.

In a conversation I then had with the bishop, I found him rather uninterested in my summary of the legal and constitutional reasons for an autonomous moral education in the public schools. In contrast, he was very interested and supportive when I drew on a theory of moral theology other than the teacher's divine command theory. This theory was the natural law theory, which holds that there are univer-

sal or natural principles of justice that should guide all societies and that are known to us by reason independent of specific religious revelation or faith. It is such "natural law" morality, I said, that is the fit focus of moral education in the public schools. For the bishop and many other theologians, natural law morality is not the whole of morality. There are, in addition, moral attitudes and duties based on religious revelation, faith, or creed. From my point of view, I said, teaching this religious portion of morality may legitimately be undertaken by the family, the church, and by private parochial schools. It may not, on constitutional grounds, take place in the public schools.

Unlike the bishop, opponents of public moral education such as the concerned teacher often fail to distinguish the sector of morality called natural law from the sector based on religious creed or revelation. Failing to make the distinction, they feel that the teaching of natural law morality in the schools by rational inquiry will undermine the faith that they see as required for understanding and accepting the sector of morality based on religion. More correctly, they fail to distinguish different areas of morality, believing that all morality is based on divine command, and so will be undermined by Socratic teaching.

Divine command theorists are not opposed to public moral education as such. In Salt Lake City, Utah, where the majority of the population is Mormon, there is a public moral education closely linked to the tenets or creed of the Mormon Church and ultimately based on a form of divine command theory. In other cities and areas of the country, proponents of divine command theory are more likely to oppose any form of public moral education as a violation of the right to liberty of conscience of a given sect as a minority group. In discussions about public moral education, sophisticated divine command theorists often shift from moral-religious absolutism to moral-religious relativism with bewildering speed. Morality is in one context, such as the home, an absolute commanded by the God of their sect, and in another context, such as the public school, something totally relative to one's religious affiliation and hence an area without universals that might ground a public education. As one parent, a sophisticated, religiously orthodox, university professor, said to me after a school committee debate about moral education, "I have the right to indoctrinate my children until they are eighteen and the school should keep its cotton-picking hands off their values until that age."

This opposition of proponents of divine command theory to rational and Socratic moral education is as old as Socrates. The assembly of Athens voted to give Socrates the hemlock poison for corrupting the youth of Athens because the assembly was convinced to do so by proponents of divine command theory. Today, as in the days of Socrates, many proponents of divine command theory oppose the Socrat-

ic view that principles of justice must be forged in questioning and must be able to rationally withstand it, because they believe such questioning weakens a morality based on divine command and respect for divine authority.

In fact, divine command theorists are wrong in thinking that the Socratic approach weakens moral development. That they are wrong is indicated by two bodies of research evidence.[3] The first body of evidence showed that religious affiliation and religion-related indoctrinative "character education" failed to strengthen morality either in the area of moral conduct, as studied by H. Hartshorne and M. A. May, or in the area of development of moral judgment as studied by myself and my colleagues.[4] The second body of evidence shows that a Socratic and developmental moral education did strengthen morality, clearly in the sense of development of moral judgment, less clearly in actual moral conduct.[5]

In fact, divine command theorists are correct in viewing Socratic education as a danger, not to morality, but to their own views or theory: divine command theory is not a theory that can withstand Socratic questioning in a logical and consistent manner. In the *Euthyphro*, Plato records a dialogue between Socrates and Euthyphro, a believer in divine command theory. Euthyphro has denounced his father for what Euthyphro believes is an act of impiety. Euthyphro believes his own denunciation of his father is an act of piety. Socrates asks Euthyphro to define piety, and Euthyphro defines it as "acting in a way the gods approve (or that the gods command)." Socrates attempts to get Euthyphro to clarify whether an act is virtuous or pious because the gods command or approve the action or whether the gods approve the action because it is virtuous or pious in light of some standard or quality of the action independent of the gods' approval. Euthyphro is totally unable to address the question and gets lost in confusion as a result.

The logical confusion in Euthyphro's mind, as well as in the minds of modern proponents of divine command theory, is the confusion that can be identified as a form of the "naturalistic fallacy." The naturalistic fallacy is the general fallacy that "ought" statements can be derived directly from, or reduced to, "is" statements. The particular form of the fallacy involved in divine command theory is the fallacy that "*X* ought to be done" or "*X* is just" can be derived from the statement "*X* is a command of God," "*X* is in the Bible," "*X* is one of the Ten Commandments," "*X* will be rewarded by God," and so on. Such statements are similar in form to statements that *X* is right because "*X* is approved by the majority on the Gallup Poll."[6]

The starting point of rational discourse about the relation of morality and religion, then, is the recognition in some degree of the au-

tonomy of morality and moral discourse from any other form of discourse, whether religious, scientific, or political. Our own approach to the study of morality started with the assumption of the autonomy of morality and moral principles rather than deriving moral development from, or reducing it to, something else, such as religious attitudes or principles.

Emotivistic Theories of Morality and Religion: The Freudian View

Emotivism is an offshoot in ethics of the general philosophy called "positivism" or "logical positivism."[7] Emotivists say that moral judgments have no meanings as statements of truth or falsity, in contrast to scientific judgments or statements that have meaning as predictors of sense data. Denying kinds of meaning and validity other than scientific truth meaning, emotivists say that the only meaning of moral judgments is as expressions of emotional states of approval and disapproval. In the religious domain, emotivists deny that "God-talk" has meaning other than as expressions of emotions such as adoration, penitence, and the need for security. Emotivists may think of themselves as either agnostics or atheists, because they deny that religion has any cognitive content.

Probably the most important and knowledge-producing emotivist theory of morality and religion is that of Freud. According to Freud, moral judgments are primarily expressions of the constellation of emotional structures termed the *superego*. The superego is conceived of partly as culturally universal in its direction against incest and aggression in the family, partly as arbitrary and relative in incorporating the arbitrary norms of the culture and the parents. In any case, the foundations of moral judgment are irrational and relative.[8] Although the superego and the moral judgments and sense of guilt that arise from it, have no direct rational basis, the superego serves a necessary function, the control of antisocial impulses and desires. The superego and its guilt are according to Freud the origin of both *Civilization and Its Discontents*.[9]

An even stronger emotivism is at the center of the Freudian account of religious judgment. Although morality has a necessary function of maintaining social order and survival, religion is an illusion analogous to a collective neurosis, according to Freud. One side of religion is mystical emotion, the "oceanic feeling" that derives from the primal sense of the union of infant and mother. A more important side is a mixed fear of, and love for, the father, which is the source of reverence for God, the heavenly father, and of religious rituals of appeasement.

A generation of neo-Freudian development has softened the impact of Freud's own courageous and harsh atheistic view of religion and morality. In the hands of Erik Erikson, neo-Freudian interpretation gives rise to a sensitive psychology of the adult moral and religious development and attitudes of Martin Luther and Mohandas Gandhi. (Later in this essay we draw on Erikson's concepts of adult stages of generativity and integrity in relation to adult ethical and religious development.) Philosophically, however, Erikson does not really provide a way out from Freud's reduction of religious judgments and meanings to emotive states rooted in childhood illusions and conflicts.

From an educational point of view, the implications of a Freudian theory of morality and religion become rather similar to those of divine command theory. Both agree that psychologically morality is the product of, and rests upon, "divine command"; that is, morality consists of a set of arbitrary rules grounded in attitudes of respect for an ultimate authority figure. Both agree that rational inquiry weakens, rather than strengthens, a religiously colored morality. For Freud, the ideal is "Where id and superego were, there shall ego be." If the Freudian program were successfully carried out, the results would be a person who shares Freud's philosophy. The person would have an ego morality, an honest and consistent morality recognized as the necessary price of social order, and a view of religion as a set of universal myths perhaps necessary to support the morality of the unenlightened but not necessary for those able to think rationally and scientifically.

In summary, the Freudian theory and divine command theory agree in the view that religious thinking and scientific thinking are opposed to one another and that a rational and Socratic approach to moral and religious education is not viable. John Dewey brings out the similarity of viewpoint between fundamentalism and militant atheism as follows:

> Religions have traditionally been allied with ideas of the supernatural.... There are many who hold that nothing worthy of being called religious is possible apart from the supernatural....
>
> The opposed group think that the advance of culture and science has completely discredited the supernatural and with it all religions that were allied with belief in it. But they go beyond this point. The extremists in the group believe that with elimination of the supernatural not only must historic religions be dismissed but with them everything of a religious nature. When anthropological and psychological knowledge has developed the all-too-human source from which religious beliefs and practices have sprung, everything religious must, they say, also go.
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> There is one idea held in common by these two opposed groups: identification of religion with the supernatural.[10]

Natural Law Theories of Morality and Religion

We have rejected two theories of the relation between morality and religion: divine command theory and atheistic emotive theory (in its Freudian form). We have suggested that there is a class of theories about the relations between morality and religion that we do accept: theories of natural law. We will try to be more exact about the meaning of natural law theory and the reasons we support it after we discuss the relation of religious thinking to the broader area of ethical reasoning and report some empirical data on the development of religious thinking. In a sense, however, an empirical investigation of the relations between moral and religious development might not even be undertaken without some prior commitment to natural law theory.

Investigation in this area was not initiated by ourselves but by James Fowler, a Protestant theologian as well as a developmental psychologist.[11] Although Fowler himself does not explicitly link his investigations to a prior natural law framework, the greatest understanding and acceptance of his work has come from Catholic theologians familiar with a natural law framework, from Protestant theologians familiar with Paul Tillich's version of natural law theory, and from Jewish theologians (familiar with a natural law framework that goes back to Moses Maimonides).[12]

We introduce our idea of natural law theory by noting that it has been the theory held by our exemplars of education for justice. Two great moral educators who willingly sacrificed their lives to their mission as educators for justice are Socrates and Martin Luther King, Jr.[13] Socrates, like King, was a profoundly religious man who held a natural law theory of the relations between morality and religion. Indeed, it is doubtful that either King or Socrates would have calmly faced his own death or sacrificed his life for principles of justice if his principles did not have some religious support. Their willingness to die for moral principles was partly based on their faith in moral principles as an expression of human reason and partly on their faith in justice, which had religious support. This support was not the support offered by divine command theory, which equates "higher law" with God's commandments. Rather, the support comes from seeing principles of justice as not only a social contract to resolve conflicts in a civil society but as the reflection of an order inherent in both human nature and in the natural or cosmic order.

Socrates and King recognized that their own questioning of society's laws must occur in a context in which civil disobedience was civil, public, and informed by respect for law. Both recognized, however, a natural higher law grounded in human reason and prescribing respect for human personality. In his "Letter from a Birmingham Jail",

King explained his conception of the relation of civil law to natural law principles of justice.

> One may well ask, "How can you advocate breaking some laws and obeying others?" The answer lies in the fact that . . . one has not only a legal but a moral responsibility to obey just laws. Conversely, one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws, . . . [though] one . . . must do so openly, lovingly and with a willingness to accept the penalty. . . . An individual who breaks a law that conscience tells him is unjust, and . . . accept[s] the penalty . . . to arouse the conscience of the community, . . . is expressing in reality the highest respect for law. . . .
>
> An unjust law is a human law that is not rooted in eternal law and natural law. Any law that uplifts human personality is just. Any law that degrades human personality is unjust.[14]

It should be noted that King had been a student of the "natural law" moral theology of Tillich. A first translation of King's natural law assumption into the theory developed in this essay would state that Stage 6 moral principles enjoining the uplifting of human personality are "eternal and natural law" in the sense that they are the universal outgrowth of the development of human nature. On the side of a psychology of human nature, my theory says that human conceptions of moral law are not the product of internalizing arbitrary and culturally relative societal norms. They are, rather, outcomes of universal human nature developing under universal aspects of the human condition, and in that sense they are "natural." King is assuming more than a psychology, however. He is also making an ontological or metaphysical assumption. He is assuming that our consciousness of justice or moral law is parallel to, or in harmony with, our consciousness of the ultimate power or laws governing the larger extrahuman or cosmic order.

King's natural law assumption is not specific to a particular theology or creed. We cite examples of natural law theory made by pantheists such as the Stoics and Spinoza. The pantheistic view equates ultimate power, being, or reality with the whole of nature or natural law as known by rational science. From the pantheist's perspective, human moral law is a part of the larger natural order or law embodied in the cosmos. We cite other examples of natural law theory made by more theistic thinkers, such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin.[15] Finally, we cite agnostics with a religious attitude, such as Kant, who in a broad sense hold a natural law theory. Kant found the only *knowable* objects of reverence to be the "starry sky above and the moral law within" but felt that the consciousness of moral law required a faith in a parallelism between our consciousness of moral law and the nature of ultimate reality.

Our natural law assumption is perhaps best expressed as the assumption behind a journal for which I (Kohlberg) am an editorial

advisor. According to *Zygon's* statement of perspective, contained in the front of each issue,

> The word "zygon" means the yoking of two entities or processes that must work together.... The journal provides a forum for exploring ways to unite what in modern times have become disconnected—values from knowledge, goodness from truth, religion from science....
>
> Recent scientific studies of human evolution and development have indicated how long-standing religions have evolved well-winnowed wisdom, still essential for the best life. *Zygon*'s hypothesis is that when long-evolved religious wisdom is yoked with significant, recent scientific discoveries about the world and human nature, there results credible expression of basic meaning, values and moral convictions that provides valid and effective guidance for enhancing human life.[16]

At first sight, one might think that the natural law perspective of *Zygon* represents another form of the naturalistic fallacy, like the divine command theory we have critiqued. One may argue that natural law theories commit the naturalistic fallacy insofar as they deduce moral prescriptions from facts about the natural order. The natural law assumption that we endorse, however, is not the derivation of moral principles from factual generalizations but is, rather, the assumption that there are certain shared features of the natural order as known by science or metaphysics and of the moral order as known by moral philosophy.

Morality as an autonomous domain of practical reason is distinct from science as a domain of theoretic reason, but there are parallel structures in the two. There are two levels on which our assertion of parallelism between the structure of justice as known by moral philosophy and the structure of nature as given by science may be taken. The first and most straightforward level is implied by a discussion of justice as equilibrium.[17] We argue that the natural science study of human moral development is a form of scientific knowing about morality that parallels the moral philosophic form of knowing about morality. This argument does not commit the naturalistic fallacy; it does not derive moral judgments from, or reduce them to, the judgments of psychology as a natural science. Instead, it assumes a structural parallelism between philosophic analysis and justification of moral judgment and (natural science) psychological analysis and explanation of moral judgment.

At a second, more epistemological level, the natural law assumption of parallelism suggests that our moral intuitions, or sense of moral order, have parallels in our metaphysical or religious intuitions of a natural order.

From this point of view, moral principles are autonomous; they cannot be derived from or reduced to scientific laws or metaphysical

statements. Moral principles, however, are structures that have features that parallel ontological and scientific structures.

In summary, we argue that a structural-developmental account of moral principles and their development suggests some parallelism between well-developed moral intuitions and religious intuitions about nature or ultimate reality. These religious intuitions inform a general natural law, ontological orientation and support principles of justice.

The Relationship of Religious Thinking to Stages of Moral Judgment

We have argued philosophically that in order to avoid falling into the naturalistic fallacy morality must be defined as an autonomous realm of discourse. We now wish to take up the psychological question of the relationship of religious thinking to stages of moral judgment. In order to do this, we must clarify the functions of moral thinking and of religious thinking. The function of moral thinking is to resolve competing claims among individuals on the basis of a norm or principle. The primary function of religious reasoning is to affirm life and morality as related to a transcendent or infinite ground or a sense of the whole. Although the functions of morality and religion may be differentiated, they have been seen in the world religions of Christianity and Judaism as intimately related. These religions view God's principal concern as being not for cultic worship but for love and justice. They emphasize that to be in harmony with God people must act morally, but they also stress that people must rely on God in order to live a moral life.

In seeking to understand this reciprocal relationship of religion to morality, Stephen Toulmin points out that the domain of moral reasoning is not fully self-enclosed but that moral questions can point beyond themselves to the religious domain.[18] He argues that if we continually ask for the reasons why a particular norm (such as keeping promises) should be upheld, we will, after a time, exhaust the possible moral reasons supporting the norm. We will find ourselves asking "Why be moral at all?"—a question that can no longer be answered strictly on moral grounds. The "Why be moral?" question appears at the limit of moral inquiry and raises a new problem for consideration—the fundamental meaningfulness of human activity. Toulmin states that the religious problem is one in which the individual, finite and uncertain, seeks for assurance in the future. Religion helps us to accept our duty to be moral even in the face of evidence that acting morally will not lead to any tangible nonmoral rewards, such as pleasure.

It is important to note that the religious response to the limit question of morality respects the integrity of the moral domain in a way in which other nonmoral responses do not. The philosopher F. H. Bradley discusses the nature of the question "Why be moral?" in a way that is helpful to our presentation. He states that the question is reasonable but "strange" because "We feel when we ask it, that we are wholly removed from the moral point of view."[19] Bradley refutes the answer of ethical egoism by showing that attempts to base morality on nonmoral ends, such as pleasure, contradict the very meaning of morality. "To do good for its own sake is virtue, to do it for some ulterior end or object not itself good, is never virtue; and never to act but for the sake of an end, other than doing well and right, is the mark of vice."[20] Thus the question makes no sense if we take it to mean "What is the payoff for being moral?" The question "Why be moral?" is a question about the meaningfulness of one's existence as a rational being—a question at the heart of religion—and in some sense requires a religious answer.

Although the "Why be moral?" question may be raised philosophically, as we have demonstrated by referring to Toulmin and Bradley, it is more commonly raised existentially when one is confronted with the tension between one's duty and one's desire for happiness or between one's ethical ideals and the reality of injustice. Not only can we not justify being moral on the basis of a nonmoral end such as pleasure or divine reward, but human experience, as epitomized in the figure of the suffering, upright Job, also reveals that virtue does, in fact, go unrewarded and the just do suffer.

Religion in its theistic and pantheistic manifestations is a response to our uncertainty when faced with moral evil, suffering, and death. Religion offers a way of accepting reality as ultimately trustworthy in spite of the ambiguity occasioned by the gap between the moral ideal and the real, by the existence of suffering, injustice, and death. Religion then addresses questions that arise at the boundary of moral reasoning. These questions are peculiar, because they pertain to the moral domain and yet are not answerable in terms of moral discourse. These questions, as we have discussed them, ask in one form or another "Why be moral?" Thus religious structures presuppose moral structures but go beyond them in the search for answers.

Empirical Investigations of the Relationship of Moral Development to the Development of Faith and Religion

Now we will consider empirical efforts to study religion and its relationship to morality from a structural-developmental perspective. Over a number of years, Fowler has been engaged in interviewing about 400 people aged four to eighty with the expectation of defining

stages of faith that would broadly parallel the moral stages.[21] Fowler defines faith as people's orientation to the ultimate environment in terms of what they value as being most relevant and important to their entire lives. In Judeo-Christian thought, the ultimate environment is defined as a personal God and his kingdom, which is the end point of human history. However, the ultimate environment need not be linked to a personal deity—it is also reflected on in pantheistic and atheistic thought. Fowler distinguishes faith from religion. Faith is largely tacit, a universal quality of knowing and relating. Religion, however, is a particular expression of faith in which concerns about the ultimate environment are made explicit.

Fowler's stages are summarized in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FOWLER'S STAGES OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT

STAGE ONE: INTUITIVE-PROJECTIVE FAITH (average ages: 4-7)
A. Locus of Authority
Fundamental dispositions and their expression depend principally on relations to "primal" other (parents, family, or surrogates). These persons represent power, nurturance, and security. The child's dependence on and affectional ties with them makes them prime authorities or references in his or her construction of a meaningful world. They convey both consciously and subliminally their own basic outlooks and commitment toward the ultimate conditions of life.
Where the faith of primal others is expressed congruently in the language, symbol, and ritual of a religious tradition, those media may take on a character of authority for the child, though the child's reliance on them is derivative and secondhand.
B. Criteria and Modes of Appropriation
Manifest interest in a child and the possession of visible (surface) qualities that attract the child's imagination and interest are required to qualify adults as faith models at this stage. Children attend to and imitate the moods, gestures, and visible practices of such primal persons. The "forms" so observed stimulate and give channels for the children's own projections of numinous intuitions and fantasies with which they try to come to terms with a world as yet unlawful, magical, and unpredictable. Cognitive understanding of the language and actions of commitment of significant others is limited, but affective investment in such often give them formative power in the child's normative awareness of ideal responsibility or adulthood.

SOURCE: This table was reprinted from J. W. Fowler, "Stages in Faith: The Structural-Developmental Approach," in *Values and Moral Development*, ed. T. C. Hennessey (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), pp. 191-203.

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

C. Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning

Thinking is *preoperational* (Piaget), marked by egocentrism and by the use of symbols and concepts (or preconcepts—Vygotsky) in labile and fluid fashion. Typically there is little concern to separate fantasy from fact. Narrative ability is limited. Causal relations are vague to the child and notions of effectance in the world tend toward magical explanations.

Symbols of deity, where used, are frequently preanthropomorphic with an effort to use such ideas as invisibleness, soul, and air to depict a God who nonetheless acts physically and substantially on the world.

D. Role Taking and Extensiveness of Identification

There is little ability as yet to take the role of others. The child is not yet able to construct and interpret the inner feelings, intentions or reasoning of other persons. Interaction with others therefore is largely a matter of moment-to-moment parallel behavior, as in playing.

Prime identity and attachment are to family or caring group. While there is little consistent awareness of one's differences from other persons or groups, a sense of sexual, racial, and perhaps ethnic identity *is* already forming.

E. Prototypical Challenges with Which Faith Must Deal

A self-system is forming that begins to have both a conscious present and a vague futurity. With growing clarity about the self as separate from others comes a new kind of anxiety rooted in the awareness of death. Now the child knows that death threatens. Those on whom one is so vulnerably dependent can be removed by death. Faith, largely a matter of reliance on these others, needs to find a ground of hope and sustenance beyond them in order to "contain" the anxiety of possible abandonment through their death.

This is not to claim that the child is obsessed with these concerns. There are moments, of course, when they are obsessive and, for some children, actual. But they constitute an unavoidable shadow, an underside of life, which has to be dealt with in some fashion.

There must be some dim but potent locus for authority and forces beyond the immediate, tangible presence of parents or other significant adults. Death, sickness, bad luck as well as their opposites are not totally under control of those who "control" the child. Parents or their substitutes often give evidence of acknowledging power(s) and authority(s) beyond themselves. Some sort of deference must be paid to these powers that transcend and hold even parents in their grip and sway.

Stage Two: Mythic-Literal Faith
(average ages: 6½-11)

A. Locus of Authority

The realm of worthy authority now extends beyond primal and others to include teachers, religious leaders, customs, traditions, the media, books, and the ideas of peers. The mythic lore, the ritual, the music and symbolism of a religious tradition can make powerful impressions on persons at this stage. As regards matters of perceptual experience the child's own logic and judgment are coming to be relied upon in a kind of empiricism.

Unless they have disqualified themselves, the primal familial group, now extended to take in others "like us" (in religious, ethnic, social class, and/or

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

racial terms), typically still provides the most important models and validating sanctions for the form and content of faith.

B. Criteria and Modes of Appropriation

New role-taking ability enables one now to evaluate and respond to qualities in authorities that are no longer merely surface (as in Stage One). Potentially authoritative persons or sources for faith insights tend to be weighted by criteria like the following: (1) "fit" with the values, style, tastes, and commitments of those with whom one feels greatest emotional affinity and identification, (2) consistency in expressing real regard for the person, (3) appearance of competence and/or interesting qualities that promise access to a vaguely aspired-to futurity, and (4) "orthodoxy" (the way "we" do it) as regards the style of religious action. The operation of such criteria is not self-conscious or self-aware at Stage Two, but is an implicit function of the person's belonging to a familial or extended familial group.

C. Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning

Concrete operational thinking has developed. Fluidity of concepts and symbolism has diminished. The child is concerned to understand lawfulness and predictability in relations between persons and in conditions affecting one's life. There is strong empirical bent fostering an experimental approach as regards the tangible world.

Symbols for deity, where used, are typically anthropomorphic. They have power to cause and make; but they also have feelings and will and are attentive to the intentions of humans.

Narrative ability is now well developed. There is interest in myths and heroic images. One-dimensionality and literalism mark efforts to "explain" that which myth and symbols try to convey.

D. Role Taking and Extensiveness of Identification

The ability to take the perspective of the other has developed, though mutual role taking (that is, "seeing myself as others are seeing me as we interact") is not yet possible. The person can take the role of the group, but does not see self through the eyes of the group. Interaction with others is now *cooperative* (H. S. Sullivan) in contrast to Stage One's parallelism.

The person's identity and faith still derive their parameters largely from ascriptive membership in the primal group and its ethnic, racial, social class, and religious extensions, which now have considerable clarity for the person. Those who are "different" are characterized in Stage Two thinking by fairly undifferentiated stereotypical images.

E. Prototypical Challenges with Which Faith Must Deal

The person's world now has a kind of order and dependability about it which results from the experience of continuities and from new cognitive abilities (inductive and deductive logic, capacities for classifying and seriating, understanding of causal relations, and a sense of time as linear). No longer does the person experience the world as potentially so capricious, arbitrary, or mysterious as before. The person operates with a more dependable understanding of the dispositions, intentions, motives and expectations of others—and of oneself. The orderliness or dependability of the (cognitively available) world makes possible a projection of order and intentionality onto a more

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

cosmic theater. Reciprocity and fairness, lawfulness, and respect for intentions characterize ideas of God at this stage.

There are still, however, arbitrary elements and forces impinging on life beyond the ordering capacities of the child. Death, illness, accidents, and the unfolding of the person's own physical characteristics and capacities come as contingent elements of experience.

Faith helps sustain a sense of worth and competence by investing in ideal self-images which, though largely private, do include identification and affiliation with ideal persons and groups. Religious symbols, myths, ritual, music, and heroic figures can provide (where accessible) important vehicles of identification and affiliation. Where effectively offered, they can become means of evoking and expressing the child's or person's faith in a transmundane order or meaning, as well as being guarantors of present and future promise.

STAGE THREE: SYNTHETIC-CONVENTIONAL FAITH
(average ages: 12-adulthood)

A. Locus of Authority

Conventionally or consensually sanctioned authorities are relied upon in the various different spheres of one's life. Criteria for valid authority continue to be a blend of requirements of interpersonal virtues and competence, but now add credentialing by institutions, by custom, or through the ascription of authority by consensus. Authority tends to be external to self, though personal responsibility is accepted for determining the choice and weighing available sources of guidance or insight. Dissonances between valued authorities are solved either by compartmentalization or hierarchical subordination. Feeling tends to dominate conceptual reasoning.

B. Criteria and Modes of Appropriation

Criteria for truth are generated from what one feels or thinks on the basis of conventionally validated values, beliefs, and norms. The examples and expectations of "collective others" constitute important sources of criteria. Stage Three differs from Stage Two in that there is now a "collective other" which includes institutional and civil doctrines and law (as well as significant persons) which constitute an implicit value system against which authorities and insights can be evaluated. But there is no ground for other criteria by which one's own most deeply felt and held commitments can be critically evaluated. There is implicitly a continuing reliance on a community (or communities) which sponsor or nurture one's beliefs, attitudes, and values.

C. Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning

Early formal operational thinking is characteristic. Symbols are employed as having multiple levels of meaning, though there is little self-consciousness about this. There is a limited use of abstractions.

There is a tacit system to one's world view, but this system is legitimated by external authorities and inner feelings and is not a matter of critical reflection *qua* system. The person's beliefs and concepts that are expressive of faith function not as theoretical ideas but as existentially valued orientations.

The person is prepared to make do with rather global and undifferentiated ideas and symbols. A penumbra of mystery and deference to qualified authority compensate for the lack of conscious internal linkages and integration.

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

D. Role Taking and Extensiveness of Identification

Mutual role taking has developed in interpersonal relations. One can now see him- or herself through the eyes of a group or groups. Interaction with others now can be collaborative (H. S. Sullivan), involving full mutuality of role taking with each other and with groups to which there are common loyalties (though such loyalties as yet are not matters of critically self-conscious choice).

Role taking or identification with individuals beyond one's group(s) shows a limited development, but the inability to take the role of *groups* different than one's own is marked. Their world views are likely to be assimilated to one's own. Identity derives from *belonging* (family, ethnic groups, sex role, work unit) and/or *possessing* (respectability, competence, children, and so on).

E. Prototypical Challenges with Which Faith Must Deal

The existential challenges dominating Stage Three derive primarily from new cognitive capacities underlying mutual interpersonal role taking. The person, now able to see him- or herself *as being seen by a variety of significant others* who occupy a variety of disparate standpoints in his or her world, has the problem of synthesizing those mirror images. Moreover, congruence must be found between his or her own feelings and images of self and the world and those held by others.

An amalgam of conventional images, values, beliefs, and attitudes is fashioned to orient and provide boundaries for an as yet incompletely differentiated faith. In theistic expressions of faith at this stage, God is often the bearer of the role of the "collective other" who sums up the legitimate expectations and the individual loyalties of the significant others and groups in one's life. Faith is *derivative* at this stage, as is identity—a more or less promising variant of a larger group style. (*Group* may here be defined by any or all of the following: ethnic-familial ties, social class norms, regional perspectives and loyalties, a religious system, a technoscientific ethos, peer values and pressures, and sex role stereotypes.)

Faith, so expressed and buttressed, serves to provide a kind of coherence and comprehensive unity to one's experience of a now much more complex and ambiguous world. It also functions to sustain ideal self-images and bonds of affiliation with those significant others or sources of values and insights whose expectations, examples, and teachings provide orientation in a potentially overwhelming and chaotic world. By appropriating mainly *vicarious* solutions to life's besetting tensions and by screening out a fair amount of dissonant data, this stage of faith can provide powerful sustenance and a basis for decisive initiatives and action in life. But it has little way, other than denial or oversimplifying assimilation to meet and take account of world views and lifestyles different than its own.

STAGE FOUR: INDIVIDUATIVE-REFLECTIVE FAITH
(average ages: 18-adulthood)

A. Locus of Authority

Charismatic representatives of ideological options, intensive (if selective) attention to the personal experience of oneself and peers, and/or the ideological consensus of intentional (as opposed to ascriptive) groups, are typical loci

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

of authority for this stage. Authority has begun to be internalized, and criteria for its acceptance are no longer matters of convention. Loyalties are committed on the basis of the self's felt and ratified affinities of valuing, beliefs, style, and need fulfillment.

B. Criteria and Modes of Appropriation

Appropriation of truth or insight is guided by criteria of existential resonance and congruity with what one is becoming or has become. While previously one's world view was part of a matrix of experiencing, authority and an implicit and assumed coherence, now there is awareness that one holds (as do others) a point of view. The reference point for validating explanations has shifted from assimilating them to a nurturing ethos (Stage Three) to measuring them and that ethos against one's own experience, values, and critical judgments.

C. Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning

Full formal operations are employed. The ability to reflect critically on one's faith has appeared. There is awareness that one's outlook is vulnerable and can shift, and also of the relativity of one's way of experiencing to that of others whose outlook and loyalties are different.

There is an awareness of one's world view as an explicit system. There is a concern for inner consistency, integration, and comprehensiveness. Stage Four typically has an ideological quality. There is an excess of assimilation over accommodation, of subjective over objective content. Differences with other world views are sharply recognized and often dichotomized.

D. Role Taking and Extensiveness of Identification

Subject has the ability to treat other groups or classes as objects of mutual role taking. The continued existence and integrity of one's own group becomes as issue of concern, and conscious commitment is possible not only to other individuals (as in Stage Three) but also to norms, rules, and ideological perspectives that underlie groups or institutions.

Concern with group boundaries, exclusion, and inclusion is typical. Purity and consistency are matters of both personal and group concern. Ideal patterns of relation, interpersonal and social institutional, frequently are used to criticize existing patterns, with contrasts being sharply drawn. Derivative identity (Stage Three) has been supplanted by *awareness* identity.

E. Prototypical Challenges with Which Faith Must Deal

The existential challenges or crises activating Stage Four faith center around the issue of individuation. Telegraphically put, Stage Four develops in the effort to find or create identifications and affiliations with ideologically defined groups whose outlook is expressive of the self one is becoming and has become, and of the truth or truths which have come to provide one's fundamental orientation.

The transition to Stage Four involves becoming self-consciously aware of the boundaries of one's conventionally held outlook. This may arise either from confrontation with persons or groups who hold different coherent systems of belief and action, or it may come from experiencing the threatening of one's conventional synthesis under the impact of prolonged experiences of crises that expose its limits. Or it may come from a combination of both these.

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

The hope and need is for affiliation with a group and its ideology that provides a style of living and seeing which both express and hold up models for further development of one's own individuating faith. Where this cannot be found or where a dominant ethos negates recognition of the need, many persons move into a potentially long-lasting transitional posture, dissatisfied with former Stage Three conventionalities but without materials or models for construction of a Stage Four faith.

Stage Four faith provides channels and guidelines for religious or ideological orientation and for ethical and political responsibility in a world where the reality of relativism is threateningly real.

STAGE FIVE: PARADOXICAL-CONSOLIDATIVE FAITH
(average ages: minimum about 30)

A. Locus of Authority

Authority has now been fully internalized. Insights are derived through a dialectical process of evaluation and criticism between one's most profound experiences and intuitions and such mature formulations of the human-ultimate relationship as are available. Multiple communities and points of view contribute to one's complex world view, which is itself not reducible to any of these. While the normativity of tradition, scriptures, customs, ideologies, and the like is taken seriously, these no longer are solely determinative for the person. Personal methods and discipline have developed for maintaining a living relationship with, participation in, or deference to the transcendent of the ultimate conditions of life.

B. Criteria and Modes of Appropriation

Criteria for truth and adequacy of faith claims or insights now derive from a holding together of intentions for oneself and one's community (as in Stage Four) with intentions and hopes for a more inclusive community or humanity. There is tension between the claims of egocentric or "group-centric" loyalties and loyalties to a more comprehensive community; similarly between "objectivity" and "subjectivity" in the use of concepts and symbols. Stage Five embraces these tensions, accepting paradox when necessary, as essential characteristics of truth.

C. Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning

Stage Five affirms and incorporates existential or logical polarities, acting on a felt need to hold them in tension in the interest of truth. It maintains its vision of meaning, coherence, and value while being conscious of the fact that it is partial, limited and contradicted by the visions and claims of others. It is not simply relativist, affirming that one person's faith is as good as another's if equally strongly held. It holds its vision with a kind of provisional ultimacy: remembering its inadequacy and open to new truth, but also committed to the absoluteness of the truth which it inadequately comprehends and expresses.

Symbols are understood as symbols. They are seen through in a double sense: (1) their time-place relativity is acknowledged, and (2) their character as relative representations of something more nearly absolute is affirmed.

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

D. Role Taking and Extensiveness of Identification

The person has the ability not only to take the role of another person or group but also to take the role of another person's or group's world view in its full complexity.

State Five must sustain political-ethical activity that has a more complex character than at Stage Four. It has a double consciousness not required of Stage Four. With opposing groups, it must acknowledge a significant measure of identification—both in rights and wrongs—strengths and weaknesses. It has the burden of awareness of the degree to which "free will" or choice is always limited in fateful ways by a person's or group's history and situation. It must decide and act, but bears inevitable anguish due to a role taking that transcends its own group's limits. Its imperatives of love and justice must be extended to *all* persons or groups.

E. Prototypical Challenges with Which Faith Must Deal

If Stage Four had to deal with the issues arising out of the individuation process, Stage Five's characteristic existential challenges grow out of the experiences of finding the limits of one's Stage Four ideological and communal identifications.

First there is the issue of a loneliness now experienced as cosmic. One may have relationships with other persons or groups of great intimacy, yet there comes the recognition that one is never fully known nor capable of fully knowing others. Though one may work out patterns of loyalty and commitment with other person or persons, such loyalty is always limited either by will, capacity, or death. Great similarities and commonalities may be found or created with others, justifying celebrations; but even with those who are closest there may be deep-going differences which underscore the final aloneness and uniqueness of the person. One becomes aware of, and faith must deal with, the loneliness arising from the recognition of uncloseable gaps of experience, perspective, and emotional structure between the self and even those who are closest.

Faith must come to grips with the tensions of being ethically responsible but finite. Whereas Stage Four faith generally offers solutions that promise to solve the polar tensions between self-fulfillment and commitment to the welfare of others, Stage Five faith has to come to terms with the tragic character of that polar pull. Stage Five faith must sustain commitment to the worth of ethical action and its costliness even while accepting the realities of intractable ignorance, egocentricity, and limited abilities and interests—in oneself and in human beings generally.

Stage Five maintains its faith vision without the props of authority or ideological certainty that provide guarantees for Stages Three and Four respectively. Faith is a volitional act of paradoxical commitment at Stage Five. Stage Five is faith that has taken its own doubt and despair seriously.

STAGE SIX: UNIVERSALIZING FAITH
(average age: minimum about 40)

A. Locus of Authority

The matter of authority is now contained within a relationship of unmediated participation in and complementarity with the ultimate conditions

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

of existence. There is a post critical at-one-ness with the ultimate conditions of one's life and of being generally. The paradoxical quality of this in Stage Five is overcome.

The ultimate conditions are differentiated from the mundane; they are kept in creative tension and interpenetration.

Usually some disciplined means is employed to restore a sense of participation in or permeation by the transcendent.

B. Criteria and Modes of Appropriation

Criteria for truth now require incorporating the "truths" of many different standpoints into a synthesis that reconciles without negating their particular or unique contributions. In contrast to Stage Five, this reconciliation of the one and the many is no longer paradoxical, but has a quality of simplicity. For these criteria to be fulfilled the person must have an identification with being in which love of self is genuinely incorporated and fulfilled in love of being.

C. Symbolic and Conceptual Functioning

One is directly and immediately aware of the ultimate context of life. Symbols and concepts play a secondary function, making communication possible, though inevitably distorting. Stage Six draws on insights and vision from many sources, valuing them as helpful, if partial, apprehensions of truth.

Conflicts and paradox are embraced as essential to the integrity of being (similarly to Stage Five) but are unified in a no-longer-paradoxical grasp of the oneness of being.

D. Role Taking and Extensiveness of Identification

Stage Six has the ability to respond to and feel commonality with the concreteness and individuality of persons while also relating to and evoking their potential.

There is the capacity for a meaningful (that is, tested and hard-won) taking the role of a universal community. Active compassion for a commonwealth of being is expressed, including but transcending group differences and conflicts.

E. Prototypical Challenges with Which Faith Must Deal

Faith at Stage Six must meet the temptation to transcend and give way to complete absorption in the *all*. Ethical and historical irresponsibility can result from a genuinely universalizing perspective. Too complete a merging with the eternal now can result in the abdication from time and concrete responsibility.

Stage Six bears the burden and challenge of relating to persons and issues concerned at quite other stages and levels of development. It must do so with patience, compassion, and helpfulness. Faith at this stage must bear the pain and potential despair of seeing ethical causes and movements of compassion exploded or subverted by less universalizing interests.

There is a crucifixion involved in seeing and having to accept the inevitability of certain tragic denouements in history. Stage Six faith must cope with seeing and understanding more than others, and with the challenge and responsibilities of universal identifications.

Faith at [Stage] Six must resist the subtle temptations to pride and self-deception and the danger of corruption by adulation.

TABLE 1 *(Continued)*

Faith must overcome the danger of ethical and political paralysis while at the same time being a source of solutional approaches that introduce genuine novelty and transcendent possibilities into situations of conflict and bitterness and deeply contested interests.

Faith must endure the misunderstandings and slanders and violent potentials (and actualities) of those who cannot comprehend, or of those who do comprehend and are threatened to the core by the person's vision and way of being.

There is the burden of being a mediator, teacher, or semidivine model for others. Faith must maintain, generate, and renew the vision of a cosmic meaning that will help sustain others. This is the frightful burden of being a "Savior of God" (Kazantzakis).

The parallelism Fowler expects between his faith stages and the stages of moral judgment is given in Table 2.

In fact, work by Shulik and by ourselves shows high empirical correlation between the two sets of stages.[22] Shulik reports a correlation of .75 between independently made ratings of moral stage and of faith stage, a correlation almost as high as one would find between two alternative forms of the moral dilemma instrument.

Although there are both theoretical and empirical correlations between our moral stages and Fowler's faith stages, it is uncertain what this means. Fowler's conception of faith stages is holistic and includes, as components of their definitions, Piagetian logical levels and the moral stages. At the same time that Fowler's stage definitions include the moral stages, Fowler conceives of his faith stages as being necessary for the grounding of a particular pattern of moral reasoning. In order to engage in making moral judgments, he claims a person must hold a broader system of beliefs and loyalties.

> 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 center 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.[23]

Fowler then argues that his stages of faith or stages of a person's "center of value" provide a more extensive framework for understanding moral motivation and accountability than the stages of moral judgment alone. He points out that one's commitments, loyalties, and sense of meaning in life inform the way in which one acts as a moral agent. In Fowler's approach to faith, no clear distinction may be drawn between one's stage of faith and one's stage of morality, be-

TABLE 2

FAITH STAGES BY ASPECTS

ASPECT:	*Form of Logic (Piaget)*	*Role Taking (Selman)*	*Form of Moral Judgment (Kohlberg)*	*Bounds of Social Awareness*	*Locus of Authority*	*Form of World Coherence*	*Role of Symbols*
Undifferentiated combination of basic trust, organismic courage, premonitory hope with admixtures of their opposites—preconceptual, prelinguistic mutuality							
STAGE: One	Preoperational	Rudimentary empathy (egocentric)	Punishment, reward	Family, primal others	Attachment-dependence relationships; size, power, visible symbols of authority	Episodic	Magical-numinous
Two	Concrete operations	Simple perspective taking	Instrumental hedonism (reciprocal fairness)	"Those like us" (in familial, ethnic, racial, class, and religious terms)	Incumbents of authority roles, salience increased by personal relatedness	Narrative-dramatic	One-dimensional; literal
Three	Early formal operations	Mutual interpersonal	Interpersonal expectations and concordance	Composite of groups in which one has interpersonal relationships	Consensus of valued groups and in personally worthy representatives of belief-value traditions	Tacit system, felt meanings symbolically mediated, globally held	Symbols multidimensional; evocative power inherent in symbol
Four	Formal operations (dichotomizing)	Mutual with self-selected group or class (societal)	Societal perspective; reflective relativism or class-biased universalism	Ideologically compatible communities with congruence to self-chosen norms and insights	One's own judgment as informed by a self-ratified ideological perspective; authorities and norms must be congruent with this	Explicit system, conceptually mediated, clarity about boundaries and inner connections of system	Symbols separated from symbolized, translated (reduced) to ideations. Evocative power inherent in *meaning* conveyed by symbols

TABLE 2 *(Continued)*

ASPECT:	*Form of Logic (Piaget)*	*Role Taking (Selman)*	*Form of Moral Judgment (Kohlberg)*	*Bounds of Social Awareness*	*Locus of Authority*	*Form of World Coherence*	*Role of Symbols*
Five	Formal operations (dialectical)	Mutual with groups, classes, and traditions "other" than one's own	Prior to society, principled higher law (universal and critical)	Extends beyond class norms and interests; disciplined ideological vulnerability to "truths" and "claims" of outgroups and other traditions	Dialectical joining of judgment-experience processes with reflective claims of others and of various expressions of cumulative human wisdom	Multisystemic symbolic and conceptual mediation	Postcritical rejoining of irreducible symbolic power and ideational meaning; evocative power inherent in the reality in and beyond symbol *and* in the power of unconscious processes in the self
Six	Formal operations (synthetic)	Mutual with the commonwealth of being	Loyalty to being	Identification with the species; transnarcissistic love of being	Personal judgment, informed by the experiences and truths of previous stages, purified of egoistic striving, and linked by disciplined intuition to the principle of being	Unitive actuality felt and participated unity of "one beyond the many"	Evocative power of symbols actualized through unification of reality mediated by symbols and the self

SOURCE: Fowler, "Stages of Faith," in *Values and Moral Development*, ed. T. C. Hennessey, p. 205.

cause each moral stage presupposes faith even if such faith is tacit. Fowler is correct in objecting that moral stages alone cannot provide a sufficient answer to the question "Why be moral?" He is also correct in pointing to stages of faith as adding to our understanding of the person's actual moral decisions and actions. We believe, however, that Fowler's broad definition of faith, which does not distinguish it from moral judgment, leads to confusions—confusions that make the empirical study of the relationship of religion to morality difficult.

Within the broad matrix that Fowler calls *faith* or *center of value* (and J. Loevinger and Erikson call *ego development*), we would point to two separable spheres, moral judgment and reasoning and religious judgment and reasoning.[24] In separating these spheres, we do not deny a certain unity to the development of the valuing activity of the human personality. This unity might be best termed *ethical development* rather than either *moral* or *religious development*. Such an ethical unity is reflected in such classical writings as the *Ethics* of Aristotle or Benedict de Spinoza, which present general pictures of the good life based in part on moral principles, in part on a psychology of human nature, and in part on a religious or metaphysical perspective on the human condition. Accordingly, the unity of development that Fowler calls *faith development* we call *ethical development*, within which we shall distinguish partially separable domains of moral and of religious thinking.

In our view, then, moral judgment is a distinguishable area within what psychologists, following Loevinger, tend to call *ego development* and we have just called *ethical development*.[25] Just as moral judgment is a distinguishable area in the overall development of the person, so too is religious judgment or thinking. Although moral and religious thinking are distinguishable from one another, there are parallel stages in the two domains. Furthermore, there are important relationships between moral and religious thinking. Even as we logically differentiate morality from religion, we are also concerned with understanding how the two are related. This essay's central claim is that religion is a conscious response to, and an expression of, the quest for an ultimate meaning for moral judging and acting. As such, the main function of religion is not to supply moral prescriptions but to support moral judgment and action as purposeful human activities. If this is true, it implies that a given stage of solutions to moral problems is necessary, but not sufficient, for a parallel stage of solutions of religious problems.

Moral Development Is Necessary but Not Sufficient for Religious Development

The notion that moral stage development is necessary but not sufficient for development of a parallel stage of religious judgment is a

psychological hypothesis that can be empirically tested. The hypothesis, however, derives from two philosophic assumptions we make. The first assumption is the autonomy of the moral.

The "necessary but not sufficient" hypothesis is consistent with our view that morality should be a logically independent realm rather than the application of religious thinking to moral issues. A small percentage of individuals explicitly appeal to religious concerns in order to justify their moral judgments, but the vast majority do not. It is also apparent that moral development occurs whether individuals have particular religious beliefs or not and that individuals at the highest moral stages differ widely in their religious views. Our hypothesis, then, is almost the direct opposite of divine command theory, which derives moral judgment or consciousness from religious judgment and consciousness.

Our second philosophic assumption is that the development of metaphysical reasoning presupposes the development of more certain moral or practical reasoning. In our view, religious structures are in large part metaethical or metaphysical structures that presuppose the normative or moral structures that they interpret and justify.[26] The question "Why be moral?" is metaethical. It presupposes the existence of a normative structure (or stage) of morality that is being called into question. The existence or development of moral judgment, then, is presupposed by, or is necessary for, the development of metaethical judgment and theories. It is not sufficient, however, because metaethical theories or answers to the questions "What is morality?" and "Why be moral?" do not follow from moral principles themselves—they require additional social-scientific, metaphysical, or religious assumptions.

Put in slightly different terms, the idea that the development of moral principles is necessary but not sufficient for a metaphysics of morals (to use Immanuel Kant's terminology) represents the idea that one moves from the better known or more certain to the more unknown and speculative. Kant held that what was well known or clearly grounded in reason was the (Stage 6) principle of the categorical imperative: "Treat each person as an end, not as a means." Analysis of, and speculation about, the grounding of this principle led him to develop the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* and *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*.[27]

A similar position is developed in a more psychologically profound manner by the major cognitive-developmental theories of religious development of J. M. Baldwin, Dewey, and G. H. Mead.[28] These theories hold that the ultimate object of religious faith is an ideal, unified self; an ideal, harmonious, or unified society (or kingdom of heaven); or an ideal, harmonious cosmos. These ideals of harmony are primarily expressions of moral structures or principles: an ideal

self is a moral self, and an ideal deity or society is just. As moral structures or principles change and develop, so do the images of the ideal self, society, and deity. These ideal images are speculative and imaginative; they go beyond the certainties of our moral structures themselves. As stated by Dewey,

> The connection between imagination and the harmonizing of the self is closer than is usually thought. The idea of a whole, whether of the whole personal being or of the world, is an imaginative, not a literal, idea. The limited world of our observation and reflection becomes the Universe only through imaginative extension. . . . The *whole* self is an ideal, an imaginative projection. Hence the ideal of a thoroughgoing and deepseated harmonizing of the self with the Universe . . . operates only through imagination. . . .
>
> The intimate connection of imagination with ideal elements in experience is generally recognized. Such is not the case with respect to its connection with faith. The latter has been regarded as a substitute for knowledge. . . .
>
> [But] the authority of an ideal over conduct is the authority of an ideal, not of a fact, of a truth guaranteed to intellect. . . .
>
> Such moral faith is not easy. . . . Moral faith has been bolstered by all sorts of arguments intended to prove that its object is not ideal and that its claim upon us is not primarily moral and practical, since the ideal in question is already embedded in the existent frame of things. . . . Starting . . . from such an idea as that justice is more than a moral ideal because it is embedded in the very make-up of the actually existent world, men have gone on to build up vast . . . philosophies, and theologies, to prove that ideals are real not as ideals but as antecedently existing actualities. They have failed to see that in converting moral realities into matters of intellectual assent they have evinced lack of *moral* faith. Faith that something should be in existence as far as lies in our power is changed into the intellectual belief that it is already in existence. When physical existence does not bear out the assertion, the physical is subtly changed into the metaphysical. In this way, moral faith has been inextricably tied up with intellectual beliefs about the supernatural.[29]

Dewey's position on the relation of morality to religion is close to Kant's. Morality is a normative rational structure, but its "grounding" in speculative metaphysics or religion is uncertain and imaginative. Dewey's conception of *A Common Faith*, consistent with agnosticism, is that of the sharing of moral ideals about the truths of speculative metaphysics and religion.[30] After exploring religious development and its relation to a necessary but not sufficient development of moral stages, we take up the extent to which it is possible to go beyond the agnosticism of Dewey and Kant to the natural law perspective.

Empirical Findings on Moral Stage as Necessary but Not Sufficient for Religious Stage

Having explored some of the theoretical issues concerning the relationship of religion to morality, we now turn to an empirical investigation of the hypothesis that a stage of moral judgment is a necessary but not sufficient condition for a given stage of religious reasoning.

In order to compare moral with religious stages, we adapted Fowler's scoring scheme to focus more exclusively on "religious reasoning."[31] The stages of religious thinking were constructed to parallel, as closely as possible, the moral stages, so that they would reflect the logic of the moral stages but represent something more. This is similar to the approach taken toward the relation between logical and moral stages.[32] We contend that logical and moral stages have parallel structural features and that the moral structure presupposes the logical structure, although the logical structure does not presuppose the moral structure. This assertion is based on an empirical trend we found for a given logical stage to be necessary but not sufficient for the parallel moral stage. Individuals can be at a higher logical state than the parallel moral stage but the reverse cannot be true. Although this relationship was partly an empirical finding, it eventually became a matter of the prior definition of the moral stage itself. As an example, individuals at the fourth, society-maintaining stage generally showed Piagetian formal operational or "systems" reasoning. Finding this trend, we sharpened the definition of Stage 4 reasoning to include more explicitly this form of thinking as necessary for assignment to Stage 4.

In considering the relation of moral to religious judgment, we followed a similar course. We developed a definition of religious stages that is independent in content of moral judgment but includes structural features of the moral stages. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, in which religious thinking centers on a personal God, it is easy to see how the religious relationship between God and people could be based on the same structure as the moral relationship of people to each other. Beginning with a definition of religious stages as paralleling but going beyond moral stages, we compared the scores of twenty-one individuals who had been interviewed on morality and faith. We found an 81 percent overall agreement. The only cases in which there were differences were in the higher stages (Stages 4 and 5). In all these cases, the moral stage was higher.

Now let us turn to a summary description, based on an analysis of the data, of the parallel structures of religious and moral conceptions at each stage. Our description of the parallel relationship of religious and moral conceptions stresses theistic versions of each stage of religious thinking. This is because it is easiest to draw these parallels of moral relationships between people and of relationships between a person and a personal God. We also sketch pantheistic versions of religious stages from Stage 4 onward. In the case of pantheism, there is a parallel between conceptions of (1) the moral order in human relationships and (2) a cosmic order. We do not yet have data that can deal with thinking about religious issues by atheistic subjects, so we

cannot yet trace such thought through stages of reasoning about religious issues. In discussing the stages of religious reasoning, we refer to the work of F. Oser, who has formulated stages of religious judgment based on administering religious dilemmas to a cross-sectional sample of children, adolescents, and adults in Switzerland.[33]

STAGE DESCRIPTIONS

Stage 1. At this stage of moral judgment, children's thinking is rooted in a sense of obedience to adults, whose authority is based in their superior physical characteristics. God is depicted at the parallel religious stage as also having superior physical characteristics, greatly exaggerated. Thus God is pictured as larger in size, older, and more powerful than the adult figures in the child's experience. For example, one child described God as having the unique ability to "spread himself out" or "split himself up." Oser and his colleagues note that children think that God caused everything to happen, without ascribing purposes to God's actions.[34] Children are more interested in *how* God creates than in *why*. For instance, one child explained that God created objects by magically saying their names or putting his thumb on them. This failure to ascribe intentionality to the actions of another is a characteristic of both moral and religious thinking at this stage.

Stage 2. At Stage 2, children base their moral reasoning on a sense of fairness in concrete exchanges. At the corresponding religious stage, they appreciate that the relationship with God also involves an exchange. If God is to act in ways that benefit an individual, then that individual must do what God wants. One child put it this way: "You be good to God, and he'll be good to you." Oser and his colleagues term this a *Do ut des* ("Give so that you receive") orientation.[35] God is depicted as acting purposefully for his own good and the good of individuals. Individuals can influence God to act on their behalf through personal prayer and religious practice. We found that religious crises frequently occur at this stage when an individual perceives his or her prayers to be inconsistently answered. God is seen in such cases as being arbitrary and unfair. This moral judgment of God is an illustration of how moral reasoning can shape a religious expectation.

Stage 3. At this stage, one's moral judgments are based on a desire to meet the expectations of one's community and to do what is necessary to maintain relationships of affection and trust. At this stage of religious reasoning, God is conceived as, in Fowler's words, "a personal deity"; for example as a "friend" or a "caring shepherd."[36] In relationships with humans, God's love surpasses the love of any human being. God is infinitely loyal, kind, and trusting. God's author-

ity is supreme but tempered by understanding and mercy and guided by a concern for what is truly best for individual people. For individuals at this stage, God is interested not only in making people happy but also in helping them to become virtuous. Breaking moral norms hurts God and brings about shame in God's eyes: "He sees everything. If you don't do what he wants, you are offending him."

Stage 4. At the fourth stage of moral judgment, there is a concern for maintaining the social system. At the parallel religious stage, God is viewed as a lawgiver not only for the social order but also for the natural order. Thus God is conceptualized in abstract philosophical terms such as a "supreme being" or "a cosmic force," which refine the personalistic notions of Stage 3. For example, one young man said, "I don't have an understanding of God in the sense that God intervenes personally in my life. I think the metaphor that I like best is (that my life is like) a compass that is sensitive to the lines of force (God)." In moral reasoning at this stage, subjects conceive of the self as orienting toward internalized moral rules—a conscience. They see the practice of religion as an expression of reverence for both God's order and moral law. There is some sense of what Kant described as a "reverence for the starry skies above and the moral law within." God is viewed as an inner source of order, not solely as a partner in dialogue, as at Stage 3.

Stage 5. This stage of moral judgment is based on a concern for resolving moral conflicts through an appeal to the social contract recognizing universal human rights. What is crucial at this stage is the recognition that a "just" society must respect the rights of individuals. At this stage of religious reasoning, God is seen as an "energizer," supporting and encouraging autonomous moral action. In contrast to what we found at Stage 4, in which human activity was directed toward the fulfillment of a preordained plan, Stage 5 presents God and human beings as mutually involved in a "creative" activity that consists of establishing a community in which the dignity and freedom of each person may flourish.

An interesting religious metaphysic was used by one subject to ground the value of personhood as the basis of ethics. He argued that God, understood as the Trinity, is an "interpersonal being in relationship." If God is the source of values, then it follows that all ethical judgments must be based on this value. He advanced similar arguments in support of human autonomy ("Man is made in the image of God") and human dignity ("Man is becoming God"). The impact of these religious concepts is that they enhance the meaning of moral principles by providing them with ultimacy.

Stage 6. As Table 1 indicates, Fowler defines a sixth stage of faith partially designed to parallel a sixth moral stage of judgments of justice and love. His definition of this sixth stage is largely made in terms of charismatic examplars, including Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Abraham Lincoln, and Dag Hammarskjöld. Before Fowler had started his research on faith stages, I (Kohlberg) had speculated about a "Stage 7" that would "answer" the unsolved questions left unanswered by Stage 6 moral principles.[37] Its essence involved, I speculated, the adoption of a cosmic as distinct from a (moral Stage 6) universal human perspective. Exemplars held a natural law view of the relation between moral principles of justice and the ultimate. This could be either a theistic or a pantheistic orientation. Spinoza was a pantheistic exemplar.

Spinoza held a Stage 5 or Stage 6 social contract, human rights conception of a social order but articulated a pantheistic conception of the ultimate order. In Spinoza's vision, ultimate happiness or self-realization depended not only on accepting one's place in nature but also on "the active union of the mind with the whole of nature." Experiences of union are cultivated through moral and scientific as well as metaphysical reasoning about the natural order. Spinoza had a Stage 5 or Stage 6 sense of justice and law as being a purely human, rational construction, rather than being created through divine law-giving. In spite of his notion of morality as a human construction, he still is what we consider a believer in a natural law view as the ultimate support for morality. Thus both pantheistic and theistic reasoning reflect the parallelism between moral and religious reasoning.

These stage descriptions of conceptions of God and the God-humankind relationship illustrate how elements of moral reasoning are taken up in religious considerations. Our data support the hypothesis that it takes additional time after the attainment of a moral stage to construct an organized pattern of religious belief and feeling at a parallel religious stage. Religious thinking involves a reflection on moral reasoning such that one's moral understanding is given religious significance. In this process, ordinary moral language is qualified and transformed to refer to the extraordinary. For example, at Stage 3 the ordinary moral language of interpersonal caring is transformed to indicate the unrestricted nature of God's love. In order for these extraordinary, religious conceptions to develop, it appears necessary that first the ordinary moral conception must develop. Furthermore, given the "limit" nature of religious reasoning and its function as providing a transcendent or infinite ground for rational human activity, religious reasoning must comprehend moral conceptions and go beyond them.

In summary, 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 religious thinking is to support the structures of moral reasoning that develop in some autonomy from religious structures. The parallelism between moral structures and metaphysical or religious structures is so pervasive as to give rise to various expressions of natural law thinking. The acknowledgment of this relationship between morality and the nature of ultimate reality does not depend on specific natural law theological traditions in either theistic or pantheistic ways of thinking.

The Question of a "Stage 7," a Sixth Religious Stage Going Beyond Justice Principles

We have argued that religious reasoning answers the "Why be moral?" question as it is raised at each stage. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which at the lower stages this question could also be answered with nonreligious reasoning. For example, at Stage 1 an appeal can be made to human as opposed to divine authority and punishment, at Stage 2 to one's self-interested needs, at Stage 3 to the approval of others, at Stage 4 to one's self-respect or to one's role within society, and at Stage 5 to the protection of one's right to pursue one's own happiness socially or individually with due regard for the rights and welfare of others. At Stage 6, however, universal ethical principles cannot be as immediately justified by the realities of the human social order. Such a morality uniquely requires an ultimate stage of religious orientation and moves people toward it. As we noted, the religious orientation required by universal moral principles I have in the past called "Stage 7," although the term is only a metaphor—used because it presupposes the conflicts and questions that arise at moral Stage 6.[38] It is roughly equivalent to what Fowler calls a sixth stage of faith and what we call a sixth stage of religious reasoning. This religious orientation does not basically change the definition of universal principles of human justice found at moral Stage 6, but it integrates these principles with a perspective on life's ultimate meaning. One part of the notion of a "Stage 7" comes from Erikson's discussion of an ultimate stage in the life cycle in which integrity is found and despair ultimately confronted. Even awareness of universal principles of justice, typically attained in young adulthood, does not remove the possibility of despair; indeed, it may enhance the sense of the difficulty of finding justice in the world. As we would phrase the problem, after attaining a clear awareness of universal ethical principles valid against the usual skeptical doubts there still remains the loudest skeptical doubt of all: "Why be moral? Why be just, in a universe that is largely

unjust?" At this level, the answer to the question "Why be moral?" entails the question "Why live?" and the parallel question, "How face death?" Thus, ultimate moral maturity requires a mature solution to the question of the meaning of life. This, in turn, we argue, is hardly a moral question *per se*; it is an ontological or a religious one. Not only is the question not a moral one, but it is also not a question resolvable on purely logical or rational grounds. Nevertheless, we use a metaphorical notion of a "Stage 7" to suggest some meaningful solutions to this question that are compatible with rational universal ethics. The characteristics of all these solutions is that they involve contemplative experience of a nondualistic variety. The logic of such experience is sometimes expressed in theistic terms of union with God, but it need not be. Its essence is the sense of being a part of the whole of life and the adoption of a cosmic, as opposed to a universal, humanistic Stage 6 perspective.

In religious writing, the movement to "Stage 7" starts with despair. Such despair involves the beginning of a cosmic perspective. It is when we begin to see our lives as finite from some more infinite perspective that we feel despair. The meaninglessness of our lives in the face of death is the meaninglessness of the finite from the perspective of the infinite. The resolution of the despair which we have called Stage 7 represents a continuation of the process of taking a cosmic perspective whose first phase is despair. It represents, in a sense, a shift from figure to ground. In despair we are the self seen from the distance of the cosmic or infinite. In the state of mind we have metaphorically termed "Stage 7" we identify ourselves with the cosmic or infinite perspective itself; we value life from its standpoint. At such a time, what is ordinarily background becomes foreground and the self is no longer figure to the ground. We sense the unity of the whole and ourselves as part of that unity. This experience of unity, often mistakenly treated as a mere rush of mystic feelings, is at "Stage 7" associated with a structure of ontological and moral conviction.

"Stage 7" and Natural Law Justice—Marcus Aurelius

Our first example of our metaphoric "Stage 7" or of a sixth religious stage is the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius. We choose him partly because he is outside the Judeo-Christian tradition, which helps define universals in religious thinking. And we choose him partly because in the world of the Roman empire, in which absolute power corrupted absolutely, this man with absolute power was the only man who was absolutely incorruptible, absolutely principled. In days that at times seem like the decline of the American empire, in which there are so many examples of power corrupting, we need to look at universal foundations of integrity.

Aurelius, by nature a philosopher who hated war and killing, felt compelled by his sense of principle to exile himself from Rome to lead the army in order to preserve what he saw as human civilization and rights against barbarian attack. He found himself surrounded by men and women who had no understanding of his principles. Those closest to him betrayed him. Nevertheless, he found his way not only to forgive but also to love his betrayers. His statement of faith is given in his personal journal, usually called the *Meditations*.

The content of the faith of Aurelius, like that of all Stoics, is simple and almost stark. It starts with the belief that the universe is lawful, knowable, and evolving. In referring to the ultimate, lawful, rational, and evolving principle of the universe, Aurelius does not attempt to separate God from nature. Sometimes he calls the principle *God*, sometimes *nature*. From this belief, he derives a natural law view of morality that gives him the strength to act in terms of universal principles of justice in an unjust world. It also gives him the peace that comes from sensing oneself as a finite part of an infinite whole.

With regard to principles of morality, he says,

> The power of thought, the potential of reason, is universal among mankind. It follows that this reason speaks no less universally to us all with its "Thou shalts." There is then world law, we are all fellow citizens and the world is a single city. Is there any other citizenship than can be claimed by all humanity?[39]

With regard to the place of the individual person in the cosmos, he has this to say:

> Mortal life cannot offer you anything better than justice and truth; that is, peace of mind in the conformity of your actions to the laws of reason. Your destiny you cannot control. Even the vagaries of chance have their place in nature's scheme. You yourself are part of that universe. Remember always what the world-nature is and what your own nature is and that your nature is such a small fraction of so vast a whole. Then you will recognize that no man can hinder you from conforming each word and deed to that nature of which you are a part.[40]

We present a different version of "Stage 7" in which the cosmic vision has a larger influx of union, love, joy, and grace as well as moral force. Marcus Aurelius, however, in stating the cosmic perspective in its starkest, simplest form, we think succeeds in illuminating how, in any culture, a person without special gifts or inner light, but with the courage and thoughtfulness to think through the human condition, can achieve moral and spiritual maturity.

"Stage 7" and *Agape*—Andrea Simpson

Marcus Aurelius represents a version of natural law thinking in which principles of justice are in harmony with or parallel to the

larger cosmic order. Another version of the striving for a cosmic perspective on morality is closer to the Christian perspective in which *agape* is the moral attitude that parallels the ultimate environment or order.

The Greek word *agape* means "love" or "charity" and is used frequently throughout the New Testament. *Agape* has two essential characteristics: first, it is nonexclusive and can be extended to all, including one's enemies; second, it is gracious and is extended without regard for merit.

In "The Aging Person as Philosopher," Kohlberg and Shulik present in detail the life and thought of Andrea Simpson, a woman of seventy-eight, as an example of "Stage 7" movement out of despair to a cosmic perspective.[41] For Simpson, this movement starts from midlife despair, moves to contemplative experiences of identification with a cosmic perspective, and generates a viewpoint that both supports ethical action and allows a sense of peace or integrity about personal disease and death associated with aging.

Brought up as a Unitarian, Simpson became associated with the Quakers in her college years because she was a pacifist in World War I and found fellow feeling about the moral issue only among Quakers. Her account of this period in her life leads us to two interpretations. First, her pacifism and activism in its behalf indicated that in early adulthood she had attained a postconventional principled (Stage 5 or possibly Stage 6) stage of moral judgment. Second, her change of religious affiliation from the Unitarians to the Quakers represented the relation of moral orientation to religious orientation that we have hypothesized. Her religious activity and development presupposed a moral or ethical orientation for which she sought religious support.

After college, her life centered directly neither on ethical concerns nor on their religious support or elaboration. She drifted away from religious affiliations and concerns, centering her life on art "and my religion became a search for beauty," partly represented by her studies and work as an art teacher.

The continuation of her religious concerns and searching came about not so much from new moral awareness or problems arising from the question "Why be moral?" as it did from her more general existential despair about the meaning of her life that arose in her early forties. The considerations and events precipitating the period of despair and "nervous breakdown" were her mother's death, her brother's psychosis, and her own failure to form a stable, intimate relationship with a man. In this period of despair, she turned to an Indian Vedanta teacher from whom she "learned the Oriental view that it doesn't matter what you call it—'God' or 'Jesus' or 'cosmic flow' or 'reality' or 'love'—and what you learn from that source will not tie your life in creeds that separate you from your fellow man."

During this time, she came to have experiences of contemplation or meditation centered on the sense of oneness with "God, cosmic flow, or reality." 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."

She elaborated this experience in terms of a metaphysic, as follows:

> We start by seeking a power that is greater than ourselves. I don't think anyone can fail to recognize that there is a power beyond themselves when they look out at the scene of their own neighborhood, to say nothing of the cosmos. I don't think it matters a bit what you call this power, but it is within every mind, and experience and makes one aware of this oneness, not only of all people but all of life.

Moving from this conception and experience of oneness, Simpson endeavored to preceive the existence of death, suffering, and injustice from a cosmic or infinite perspective by combining the Eastern metaphor of Karma and reincarnation with the scientific metaphor of evolution.

> If there ever was a pure, sinless soul, it was my brother. Why he had to have a life like this, I don't know. I said to myself, "I've got to solve this if I'm going to believe in a good God." And I came out of it this way: human life is but a brief moment in eternity. I studied astronomy, and you get a broadened vista if you study astronomy, it opens out to incredible degrees. I've also studied anthropology, and you get some idea of the development of the human being on the planet Earth. If a human being's life is his moment in eternity, William's life may be the cocoon stage, to use a figure of speech, in his evolving into a spiritual butterfly. We think of life and death as a pair of opposites—you make your entrance and you make your exit from this material place—and that's death. But life is something contained in the hand of life.

Although she attributed the resolution of her existential crisis of despair to her experience related to the Oriental philosophy, she found the Oriental philosophy only a limited support for her moral or ethical concerns. Preeminent in this ethical concern was the need to do something to help her psychotic brother. "That was one of the things that brought me back to Quaker Christianity; the Hindu way of religion wasn't enough to actively help sick people." The religious orientation she evolved helped her to devote herself not only to her brother but also to other patients in the mental hospital where her brother was, for whom she developed programs, and to long-term efforts to improve race relations between blacks and whites. Her religious orientation, then, was an effort to integrate two forms of mysticism, the Eastern contemplative form and the Western form, which identifies inward spiritual union with God with active love for, and service to, fellow human beings.

She called her mystical meditative experiences "openings." She said, "William James clarifies that people have religious experiences that are openings, that do something to their personal lives. It makes them more understanding of people, more aware of their oneness, not only with people but with all of life."

The shape that her ethical orientation took as a result of her religious experience and thinking was the orientation called *agape* in Christian theological ethics, an ethic of responsible universal love, service, or sacrifice—an ethic of supererogation. For Simpson, the ethic of *agape* represented an interpenetration between religion and ethical action.

Her actual actions she describes as follows:

The undercurrent of my whole life in California was to get back to William as soon as I was well enough to tackle work in a mental hospital. I decided the thing for me to do was to take up residence in the town of Danvers and work hard with William and see if I could get him out of there. That experience was very trying for a raw recruit, when I wasn't too far from a nervous smash-up myself. The ward was shocking to see, and they said "There's your brother." And here was a little old man all bent over sitting there, and I got down on my knees in front of him so I could look into his face, and he saw who it was, and I saw a smile right out of heaven, a smile of an angel. He'd found his old sister.

She went on to describe how her concern for her brother led to a new career in the mental health field.

This is one reason I say the path chose me. I never would have gone near a mental hospital if I hadn't had somebody I loved who got stuck in it. I worked with the patients with no background in mental health training at all; I was scared to death that somebody was going to come along and say "What do you think you're doing with these people?"

She recalled how she felt when she was first observed by the director of the facility:

I was really in a cold sweat, I didn't know if it was going to be approved or disapproved. Dr. R. it was, had brought a head nurse with him. They were both behind me, and when the thing was over he shook my hand and said, "Miss Simpson, you have done a most remarkable thing with these women." Well, it took an awful long time for me to know that the people who came to watch my group came to watch because they thought it was remarkable, not because they were going to throw me out.

She reflected on the religious significance of her acts as follows:

I think it's terribly important not only to give what help we can but not to feel we are doing it. If you give love and sustain a joyous attitude, you have probably helped a lot more than if you've preached. They will be helped because in a sense love is God, and if you give love you give something much more than yourself.

The case of Andrea Simpson illustrates "mystical" experience of identification with the eternal, or with the whole of what she says can

be called *God* or *reality*. She exemplifies the striving for a cosmic or infinite perspective to answer the problems and questions raised but left unsolved by principled (Stage 5 or 6) morality itself, the problem of undeserved injustice and suffering.

In these ways, Simpson is an example of "Stage 7" or of a sixth stage of religious thinking, as is Marcus Aurelius. However, differences between the two examples raise a number of theoretical issues not yet addressed. First, for Simpson religious thinking and experience not only support a moral orientation but inform it, unite with it, or give it new direction. Second, the moral principle to which this thinking and experience leads is *agape*, something different from, or more than, our Stage 6 principles of justice.

Agape: Not an Alternative Stage 6 Morality

The questions raised by Andrea Simpson may be phrased in two ways. First, the case suggests that there is an alternative conception of a sixth and highest moral stage other than principles of justice as reversibility, a conception of a sixth stage as an attitude or principle of *agape* or responsible love. Second, the case raises the possibility that there is a seventh moral stage, based on an ethic that goes beyond, and is higher than, an ethic of justice.

Let us consider the first phrasing, that *agape* is an alternative or competitive moral principle to that of justice, another and previously unacknowledged version of a sixth moral stage. We argue that this is not correct, because *agape* is an ethic that presupposes justice principles and maintains their integrity. Rather than replacing principles of justice, *agape* goes beyond them in the sense of defining or informing acts of supererogation (acts beyond duty or beyond justice), acts that cannot be generally demanded or required of all people, acts that freely give up claims the actor may in justice demand. The attitude of *agape* presupposes an understanding and acceptance of the logic of duty and justice for its own definition. As G. Outka and W. K. Frankena point out, the attitude of *agape* shares equal respect for human personality and dignity with the attitude of justice.[42] If *agape* minimizes the differential merit, deserts, or social utility of people, so does justice as reversibility that centers on equality and consideration of the perspective of the least advantaged.

In the second place, *agape* is not a principle of justice competing with the principle of fairness as reversibility. An attitude of responsible love still requires our sixth-stage principle of fairness as reversibility to resolve justice dilemmas. One can argue that in most dilemmas of justice (the distribution of scarce resources) the principle of fairness as reversibility (moral musical chairs or the original position) is both required by, and yielded, the same dilemma solution, whether

one coming to the dilemma started with a fundamental ethical attitude of rational egoism, an attitude of love and sacrifice, or an attitude of fairness.[43] An example is the dilemma of the captain of an overcrowded lifeboat, where the fair solution is drawing lots. One might think that the attitude of *agape* might solve the dilemma in a different way, by the loving person volunteering to sacrifice himself for the others. This might be a solution, if everyone else on the boat was completely selfish. If others on the boat were oriented either to *agape* or to fairness, simply volunteering would not solve the justice problem of who should go. In a company of saints, all would volunteer. In a company of people with an attitude of fairness, all would insist on taking a chance. In such a situation, a justice procedure such as drawing lots, which recognizes the equal value of each human life, would be not only the fair solution, but the one consistent with the attitude of *agape*.

In summary, although an ethic of *agape* goes beyond justice to supererogation, it still requires principles of fairness to resolve justice dilemmas. Furthermore, our Stage 6 principles of reversible fairness are the only principles on which the ethic of *agape* could rest, in contrast to utilitarianism or desert principles of justice. *Agape*, then, is not a principle competing with the principle of fairness in the sense in which we define the idea of principles.[44] It is an attitude inspiring acts of supererogation, rather than a principle on which there could be exact agreement or which could lead to just expectations. Acts of *agape* cannot be demanded or expected by their recipients but are, rather, acts of grace from the standpoint of the recipient.

We have stressed the consistencies between principles of fairness and the ethic of *agape* in response to problems of justice. In this way, our view is somewhat different than that of John Rawls. Rawls's account starts from the premise that justice principles arise out of a social contract among rational egoists, or rational people with conflicting views of the good. "Amongst an association of saints, if such a community could really exist, the disputes about justice could hardly occur; for they would all work selflessly together for one end, the glory of God as defined by their common religion, and reference to this end would settle every question of right. The justice of practice does not come up until there are several different parties who press their claims on one another and who do regard themselves as representatives of interests which deserve to be considered."[45]

Our discussion of the captain's dilemma suggests that even an association of saints would require some principles of justice. This becomes more apparent if we accept that an association of saints might all share the attitude of love or *agape* but might disagree in their conceptions of the good life or "in their conceptions of God or the end

of the greater glory of God." Our highest moral stage and its justice principle does not directly answer questions about the nature of the good person or the good life and does not assume that such questions have, or require, universalizable answers that they must provide. Following Rawls, we define principles of duty and justice that could be agreed on by rational agents while still holding differing conceptions of the good life (and of the good person). Social life at least ideally, requires universal agreement about judgments of justice (or about the domain of conflict between the claims of people) that we claim our sixth stage would generate. However, our sixth stage need not, and should not, suppose universal agreement on conceptions of the good life or the good person or of "God and the greater glory of God."

An association of saints in the sense of people imbued with *agape* need not agree in detail in their religious views or in their views of the good life. Accordingly, they too, require, and could agree on, universalizable principles of justice in addition to sharing an attitude of *agape*.

We have pointed to areas of agreement about principles of fairness used to resolve justice dilemmas that are common to rational people with an ethic of *agape* and to those with an ethic of fairness (or even of rational egoism). From a research point of view, there may be ethical dilemmas that elicit differing solutions for those with an ethic of *agape*, of fairness, and of rational egoism. Those dilemmas, unlike our standard hypothetical dilemmas, would not focus on issues of justice. D. J. Shawver constructed some dilemmas of this sort, although he did not actually research responses to them.[46] His purpose was to show that *agape*, fairness, and rational egoism each have differing but equal claims to defining a sixth stage of moral judgment. C. Gilligan also argues that an ethic of responsible love represents a different version of a sixth and highest moral stage from that defined by principles of justice.[47] We do not deny the possibility that research on the resolution of dilemmas differing from our own might validly lead to different stage definitions from those suggested by our research on justice dilemmas. Such stages, however, we would construe as stages in the development of a broader ethic or valuing process such as Fowler has attempted to describe. Such an ethic or valuing process would include religious thinking about human nature and the human condition as well as moral judgment and reasoning. As our discussion of an ethic of *agape* as at least a part of a highest stage of religious thinking argued, such an ethic still must rely on Stage 6 fairness principles to resolve justice problems. In our view, then, Shawver and Gilligan have not worked out an alternative account of a highest moral stage but have, rather, pointed to alternative attitudes in the development of higher stages of ethical orientation. Thus there may

be alternative ethics of justice and of *agape*, either of which might be stressed at a higher ethical and religious stage.

Agape and Natural Law Justice as Alternative Forms of a Highest Stage of Ethical and Religious Thinking

From our point of view, the case of Andrea Simpson suggests that there may be a somewhat different end point of ethical development from that described in our successive stages of justice. This end point or "Stage 7" is not a reconstruction of a Stage 6 justice structure that better resolves the problems also faced by Stage 6, as Stage 6 is a more adequate reconstruction of Stage 5. Our metaphoric "Stage 7" is a religious or ontological stage, not a purely moral one. It elaborates an ethic of supererogation, leaving justice problems to be resolved by Stage 6 principles. Although it does not reconstruct Stage 6, its center lies elsewhere than in justice. "Stage 7" may be content to "render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," namely, societal justice, and center rather on the ethical problems of "rendering unto God that which is God's," namely, acts of sacrificial love and human brotherhood. Such a "Stage 7" would be an ethical orientation arising from development in existential or religious experience and thinking rather than from moral experience alone. In this way, "Stage 7" *agape* would differ from our example of Marcus Aurelius, for whom the development of a "Stage 7" contemplation of natural law paralleled and supported rational moral principles of justice, rather than providing a new ethical focus.

In partial contrast to Aurelius, Andrea Simpson showed a development of religious insight and experience resolving her mid-life existential despair, insight that changed as well as supported her previous moral orientation. We suggested earlier that the development of religious thinking helps resolve the gap between "is" and "ought," the gap between a person's construction of moral principles or ideals and the person's construction of social and cosmic reality, in ways that must consider the existence of suffering, injustice, and death. This gap is faced anew with each new stage of moral ideals or principles, new stages arising primarily through the effort to resolve moral conflicts of duty and justice. This interpretation is consistent with the example of Aurelius. In the example of Simpson, her religious development resolved her existential despair through a sense of union with God or the whole of life, promoting a sense of union with all other human beings. This sense of ideal union promoted the development of an ethical orientation of *agape* to resolve the gap between is and ought in addition to supporting her sense of moral principles of justice.

From the standpoint of psychology, it may be that our hypothetical "Stage 7" or a sixth and highest stage of religious thinking does not fit our psychological claim that moral and religious stages are parallel in structure and that attainment of a moral stage is necessary but not sufficient for attainment of the parallel religious stage. This relationship seems to fit easily the example of Aurelius as a hypothetical "Stage 7" but does not as easily fit the example of Simpson.

From the viewpoint of philosophy, the two cases present two pictures of "ultimate religion," alike and different in equally important ways. The religion and ethic of *agape* held by Simpson is often portrayed as resting on, or arising from, a faith in the God of revelation as expressed in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Simpson's religion, however, is as universalistic as is that of Aurelius. Neither has a religion directly dependent on revelation or an ethic resting directly on divine command. Instead, the religious orientation of each rests on a sense of connectedness between the individual human mind and heart and the larger cosmic whole or order, which they call almost equally readily *God, Nature, Life*, or *Ultimate Reality*. This sense of connectedness supports and inspires in both ethical action toward other human beings.

Equally evident are the differences between the two cases. The religion and ethic of Aurelius is a natural law perspective of the kind we argued for earlier. His God or Nature is the pantheistic God "known" or intuited by rational science finding law in natural events. His ethical laws or principles are the principles of justice "known" or intuited by rational moral philosophy.

The religion and ethics of Simpson does not rest as directly on rational science and rational moral philosophy as does that of Aurelius. It is inspired much more by the Judeo-Christian assumption that God or Ultimate Reality is a loving God than by the assumption that God is an impersonal order of natural law. It assumes that the attitude of love is the source of intuition both about ultimate ethical principles and about the nature of the cosmos.

"Stage 7" and Philosophic Theory

The religious experience at the heart of our highest stage of ethical and religious philosophy are the experiences called "openings" by Andrea Simpson and "the union of the mind with all of nature" by Spinoza. Both ethical and metaphysical intellectual convictions seem to spring from these experiences. To attempt to intellectually justify these convictions is to move into a region that agnostics with a religious attitude, such as Kant and Dewey, claim is beyond the limits of rational thought.

Dewey himself seems not to have had, nor to have cultivated, mystical attitudes or experiences. He defines religious experience as anything that introduces perspective: "All religions have dwelt upon the power of religion to introduce perspective into the piecemeal and shifting episodes of experience. We need to reverse the ordinary statement and say that whatever introduces genuine perspective is religious, not that religion is something that introduces it."

He goes on to say,

> Those who hold . . . that there is a definite kind of experience which is itself religious [mark it] off from experience as esthetic, scientific, moral, political; from experience as companionship and friendship. But "religious" as a quality of experience signifies something that may belong to all these experiences. . . .
>
> [Religious experience] takes place in different persons in a multitude of ways. It is sometimes brought about by devotion to a cause; sometimes by a passage of poetry that opens a new perspective; sometimes as was the case with Spinoza . . . through philosophic reflection.[48]

With regard to mystical experience, Dewey says,

> A clear and intense conception of a union of ideal ends with actual conditions is capable of arousing steady emotion. . . .
>
> The *function* of a working union of the ideal and the real seems to me identical with the force that has in fact been attached to the conception of God in all the religions that have a spiritual content. . . .
>
> The sense of this union may, with some persons, be furthered by mystical experiences using the term "mystical" in its broadest sense. That result depends upon temperament. But there is a marked difference between the union associated with mysticism and the union which I have in mind. There is nothing mystical about the latter, it is natural and moral. Nor is there anything mystical about the perception or consciousness of such union. There is, indeed, even danger that resort to mystical experience will be an escape, and its result will be the passive feeling that the union of actual and ideal is already accomplished. But in fact this union is active and practical; it is a *uniting*, not something given.[49]

Dewey's position differs in two ways from our conceptualization or hypothesis of a "Stage 7," of a highest stage of ethical and religious thought and experience. First, Dewey denies any special or unique religious characteristics to mystical experience as distinct from other positive and perspective-giving experiences, all of which may be "religious" in Dewey's view. Second, he denies that there is any form of philosophic reflection that is either necessary for religious experience or is the result of such experiences. According to Dewey, for Spinoza religious experience comes from philosophic reflection; for someone else, it may come from a passage of poetry or a devotion to a cause.

In contrast to Dewey, our hypothesis of a "Stage 7" is that mystical experience does have a unique religious meaning and that it both depends on, and leads to, philosophic reflections or theories that

agree in several fundamental ways. Our position also differs from that of Kant, whose viewpoint in many ways is similar to Dewey's. The major distinction between Dewey and Kant is that Dewey views moral structures as natural, whereas Kant views morality as resulting from a free or nonnatural principle of practical moral reason. Kant views religion "within the limits of reason alone" as (1) the imaginative construction of an ideal of a morally perfect person, embodied in the image of Christ, and (2) the idea of an ethical commonwealth or of a people of God under ethical laws. With regard to the first, Kant says,

> Mankind or rational earthly existence in its complete moral perfection is that which alone can render the world the object of a divine decree and the end of creation....
>
> It is our common duty as men to elevate ourselves to the ideal of moral perfection; that is, to the archetype of the moral disposition in all its purity....
>
> The ideal of a humanity pleasing to God and hence of such moral perfection as is possible to an earthly being... we can imagine only as the idea of a person willing not merely to discharge all human duties himself and to spread about his goodness as widely as possible by precept and example... but to take upon himself every affliction... for the good of the world and even for his enemies....
>
> We need no empirical example to make the idea of a person well pleasing to God our pattern; this idea as a pattern is already present in our moral reason. Moreover, if anyone, in order to acknowledge, for his imitation, a particular individual as such an example which conforms to that idea, and therefore demands more than what he sees, more, that is, than a course of life entirely blameless and as meritorious as one could wish; and if he goes on to require, as credentials requisite to belief, that this individual should have performed miracles or had them performed for him—he who demands this thereby confesses to his own moral unbelief, that is, to his lack of faith in virtue.[50]

With regard to the second point, Kant says,

> A *juridico-civil* (political) state is the relation of men to each other in which they stand alike under public laws (which are laws of coercion). An *ethico-civil* state is that in which they are united under noncoercive laws; that is, *laws of virtue* alone....
>
> Because the duties of virtue apply to the entire human race, the concept of an ethical commonwealth is extended ideally to whole of mankind and thereby distinguishes itself from the concept of a political community....
>
> It involves working toward a union of which we do not know whether, as such, it lies in our power.... We can foresee that this duty will presuppose another idea, that of a higher moral Being through whose universal dispositions, the forces of separate individuals are united for a common end....
>
> This idea of a people of God can be realized through human organization only in the form of a church.[51]

Kant, then, like Dewey, holds that religious ideas are the extension of moral structures to the idea of a perfect person and a perfect community or ethical commonwealth. Such an extension requires neither revelation and miracles nor mystical experiences of union but

only requires faith in morality and moral reason. Kant gives us a version of "Stage 7" based on a metaphysics of morality and without further metaphysical or mystical insight. He starts with a Stage 6 principle of moral reason, the principle of treating each person as an end, not as a means. The imaginative extension of this idea, he claims, leads to the idea of a perfectly loving and virtuous person (imagined as the Son of God) and of an ideal community of virtuous people (imagined as the Kingdom of God). Thus Kant moves from a moral Stage 6 conception of justice to a religious imaginative ideal or "Stage 7" of a perfect person with an attitude of *agape* and a religious community based on this idea.

Both Dewey and Kant's metaphysically agnostic views are compatible with our hypothesis of moral structures as necessary but not sufficient for stages of religious judgment. Their "Stage 7, however, is independent of mystical experiences and of speculative metaphysics, grounded rather on faith in moral reason and ideals. Our examples of "Stage 7" lead us rather in a "natural law" direction. We shall present two types of philosophic theory, more metaphysical than the theories of Kant and Dewey, which seem to us more faithful to the experience of our examples of development to a "Stage 7."

The first philosophy is the natural law pantheism of Spinoza, the most complete statement of the ethical and religious philosophy of which Marcus Aurelius was an example. The second speculative philosophy is the evolutionary process philosophy expressed in different ways by Alfred North Whitehead, by Henri Bergson, and by Teilhard de Chardin.[52] These are comprehensive statements of the ethical and religious philosophy exemplified by Andrea Simpson.

Our brief review is not directed to any intellectual "proof" of any of these theories as metaphysical or theological systems. Rather, it suggests some notion of their adequacy to address the questions or tasks faced by speculative philosophies. As stated by Whitehead, "Philosophy attains its chief importance by fusing religion and science into one rational scheme of thought. Religion is the translation of general ideas into particular thoughts, particular emotions, and particular purposes; it is directed to the end of stretching individual interest beyond its self-defeating particularity. Religion is an ultimate craving to infuse into the insistent particularity of emotions that non-temporal generality which primarily belongs to conceptual thought alone."[53]

Spinoza's Theory

We discuss Spinoza's theory both as an ethical system and as a metaphysic. Spinoza's *Ethics* was firmly grounded on a natural science psychology that was the great ancestor of Freud's rigorously deter-

ministic theory.[54] It was also grounded on a rational moral and political philosophy of a "natural rights" social contract variety. Spinoza's system logically combined these elements of an ethic with a metaphysical or religious view of rational mysticism. His ethical system had no less a purpose than salvation; that is, the development of a coherent scheme that if followed would make people free or happy.

Spinoza's voyage into salvation starts with the familiar despair, a despair based on the relativity of values and on the unavoidable truth of death and separation. Spinoza tells us that experience has convinced him that none of the objects that people usually set before themselves can yield complete satisfaction of desire. Pleasure, power, and wealth—all fail to serve as a source of permanent, unbroken enjoyment. And they fail because of their nature. It is their nature to be perishable and finite. Hedonism is no solution for Spinoza because we need not only a life of pleasure but also a real life. This is what the vague word *self-realization* ultimately means. According to Spinoza, self-realization is the fundamental striving of our nature, and to achieve self-realization is to *become real.* Pleasures in activities sensed as unreal are not abiding. If hedonism (taking our own pleasures as a central object of concern) does not solve the central problems of life and its meaning, neither does morality or altruism (taking the pleasures and pains of others as central concerns) fully solve these problems. Put differently, if we are to love others in a way satisfactory to themselves and others, it must be without possessiveness, domination, jealousy, or fear of loss. And how are we to do that? Says Spinoza, "When I became convinced that things are good and evil, not in themselves, but only as our affections are aroused by them, I finally decided to ask whether there is a true good, one that gives its goodness of itself and by which alone our affections might be aroused; nay, rather, whether there were something which when found and possessed, could be kept forever with perfect and unbroken joy."[55]

Spinoza is convinced that we cannot escape the dominion of our affections. We are the slaves of the love of something. The loves that enslave can be overcome only if there is and can be found an object that inspires a love that frees. If pleasure and power are not intrinsic ends, only some sort of love can be an intrinsic end. We only attain a stronger and more stable state of the self if we attain a stronger and more stable love of something. This love, Spinoza says, involves the love of something eternal and infinite. Can such an object be found? Spinoza thinks that we ought rather to ask, "What is the way to find it? What does trying to find it involve?" His answer is "It involves the discovery of the union of the mind with the whole of nature." In other words, the ideal state of human nature is "that in which we know the union of man's mind with the whole of nature." What does Spinoza

mean by "the union of the mind with Nature?" It is self-evident that our bodies are a part of nature. It is not so clear to us that our minds are also a part of nature. But, Spinoza says, "Our mind is also a part of Nature; that is, Nature has an infinite power of thinking which contains subjectively the whole of Nature. The human mind is this power, not as infinite and perceiving the whole of nature, but as finite and perceiving only the human body."[56]

Spinoza believed that the mind's capacity for true ideas implies an innate fit between the mind and nature. In contrast, the modern positivistic tradition equates the mind with error and nonreality. The positivist invokes mentality to account for distortion and error in the perception of truth, just as children develop their concept of mind to account for dream or illusion experiences, which are not considered real. This error concept of the mind leads to the notion that only matter is real and leaves unexplained the reality of the order of events, an order that is neither material nor mental.

The reality of order or structure as prior to either mind or matter is held by many philosophers, scientists, and poets who are to some extent Platonists by nature. They are Platonists in recognizing that the *a priori* mathematical ideas of the scientist are not simply inventions which fit nature because the ideas that did not fit nature were weeded out. They recognize also that the mathematicians' ideas did not fit nature because nature was fitted to them as a set of arbitrary *a priori* schemata. The geometry of Georg F. B. Riemann and Nikolai I. Lobachevski seemed inconceivable to the apriorist Kantians, and should not have worked for the positivist, because they were developed antecedent to any empirical problem. But every mathematical construction that makes mathematical sense seems to have some correspondence to the structure of empirical reality. Furthermore, every mathematical or scientific theory that is useful is also beautiful. The fact that true ideas are beautiful attests to the fact that structures originate and are experienced in a way different from that suggested by the usual theories of scientific idea construction. If the beautiful is a preliminary intuition of the true, then there is some fit between the mind and nature that is *given*, rather than wrested from nature by the experiment. More controversially, Spinoza claims that the order of the universe is known to humans because the human mind is part of the universe and partly shares universal mental properties.

The union of the mind with nature, then, is fundamentally only a fuller knowledge of mind and nature plus a self-awareness about the meaning of those states where we are in physical or mental harmony with nature. The mystical rapture and acceptance of life, which is sometimes seen as involving the postulation of a supernatural, can be had only if we see this life whole. To see life whole is to love and

accept life because it is to see ourselves as necessarily part of life. Thus Spinoza's attitude toward nature as a whole is like that of a mystic toward a supernatural God. In Spinoza's metaphysics, the word *Nature* is taken to be the same as two other words: *God* and *substance.*

Spinoza is willing to admit that there is something over and above and beyond the aggregate of things that constitutes our physical universe. He is even willing to call that something by the name of *God.* But—and here his first "but" comes in—he is unwilling to admit that the something, unlike the constituent parts of the universe, is separate from the universe. Within the universe itself and inseparable from it, he maintains there is something unlike its parts. He proceeds to explain that by that something he means the wholeness of the universe, which, he contends, is not the mere aggregate of its parts. To support this contention, he uses two propositions. First, the universe is a system or organism. Second, in a system the whole is something different from the mere sum of its parts.

Spinoza draws some distinction between God and all the phenomena involved. God is substance, while phenomena are mere modes. By *substance,* he means the order of the universe, considered as an eternal system of natural laws that have a mental side (because laws entail knowability), as E. M. Curley points out, as well as a side of physical regularity or fact. Spinoza's concept of God as substance is the sort of concept that a modern scientist could still propose if he or she moved from using natural laws to explain events to asking, "What kind of ultimate reality is implied by the existence of scientific laws?"[57]

How can this metaphysic or vision of reality be used to save us from despair? Our normal joys are the results of our self-actualization, of activities in which our competence, power, and knowledge are enhanced, especially when our self-actualization is linked to the self-actualization of others. But ultimately our joy in self-actualization is crushed by our awareness that ourselves and the selves of others are only limited, dying parts of a larger reality. As we first become aware of the larger reality that is the background of our activities, we are likely to be oppressed by a sense of the futility of all that we do and have and are. The "once-born" reaction to this sense of futility is to refocus on our own activities and the present in which they exist. Spinoza recommends, rather, that we stop acting and that we shift figure and ground, that we focus our experience on the larger reality that is usually the background of our activities.

The most concrete example is physical nature, which we are usually more aware of as a background to our activities than as an experience of reality. The experience of nature's beauty is the experience of the beauty of something that is permanent in spite of our transience. The beauty of nature is the beauty of one eternal system, not of this or that

specific view. The experience of beauty is the experience of perceived eternal objects, which in turn are to be responded to in terms of the unity they manifest and in which we are included. This beauty is represented from the mountaintop, in which we have that sense of distance where we seem to share Nature's eternal and inclusive perspective. Now, if we use this experience at the mountaintop as a visual analogy to focusing on the reality which is the background to our everyday life, we reach the essence of Spinoza's religious attitude. We are bound to be miserable and unhappy, Spinoza thinks, as long as we are ignorant of what our place in nature is.

The understanding of our place in nature is the way to the active acceptance and love of life. In part, Spinoza says, this acceptance depends on our own acceptance of events and our own actions as causally determined, of the limits of our power in the face of Nature or God. In part, he says, it depends on the more active love of God or Nature and sense of union with it which comes with awareness of ourselves as part of nature.

Spinoza, then, has applied to his own God the common utterances of theology about the God of tradition. He is arguing, in effect, that his own God has as much personality as the God of tradition, if by personality is meant a personal relation on the part of human beings toward God as it expresses itself in the attitude of love. Spinoza is saying that if we understand Life or Nature we cannot help but love it and all things in it. And if we love Life or Nature or God, we become capable of overcoming all the pains of life. The pains of life are caused by the disappointments or losses in our loves of particular people or aims. But if we are aware of the relationship of all people and things to the whole of Nature or to God, then we continue to love the whole in spite of the disappointments or losses. And if we love life or nature, we are even able to face our own death with equanimity, because we love life more than our own particular and finite life. The demand for our survival can be met only by identification or union with something more eternal. The knowledge of, and love of, Nature or God are a form of union. In a sense, half-poetic, half-logical, but never supernatural, our mind is part of a whole, Spinoza claims, and if we know and love the eternal we ourselves are in some sense eternal.

Teilhard de Chardin's Theory

An alternative position to Spinoza's that also seeks to develop a religion of natural law with the aid of science is that of Teilhard de Chardin, a paleontologist and Catholic priest. Like the philosopher Bergson, whose work made a profound and lasting impression on his

own, Teilhard emphasizes the creative process of evolution as the "key" to understanding the universe and the presence of God.

He has constructed a metaphysics of evolution, or a "hyperphysics," as he calls it, that views the world not as developing by chance but as guided by a personal center. Teilhard thinks of the *telos* of evolution as universal convergence into God, whom he calls the Omega Point of evolution. He argues that evolution had two facets to it that cannot be separated—a psychic "within" aspect and a physical "without." He proposes a central law of evolution linking the within and without of things—the law of complexity-consciousness. This law stipulates that every better organized structure will correspond to a more developed consciousness. Thus Teilhard's metaphysics addresses the dualism of mind and matter and offers a unitary understanding of both.

Teilhard describes the tendency of the evolutionary process, when taken as a whole, as directed toward the human person with the capability of reflective thought. The achievement of evolution is *Homo Sapiens*—and, retrospectively, the "aim" of evolution from its beginnings. Teilhard stresses that his main purpose in presenting his evolutionary metaphysics is that others might see the cosmic dimensions of this development and accept their responsibility for its continuation. In the preface to his most systematic presentation of his theory, *The Phenomenon of Man*, he writes,

> *Seeing*—we might say the whole of life lies in that verb—if not ultimately, at least essentially. Fuller being in closer union: such is the kernel and conclusion of this book. But let us emphasize the point: union increases only through an increase in consciousness; that is to say, in vision. And that, doubtless, is why the history of the living world can be summarized as the elaboration of ever more perfect eyes within a cosmos in which there is always something more to be seen. To try to see more and better is not a whim or curiosity or self-indulgence. To see or to perish is the very condition laid upon everything that makes up the universe, by reason of the mysterious gift of existence. And this in superior measure is man's condition.[58]

Teilhard's urgency that we try to "see more and better" or "perish" is rooted in his own struggle with the problem of death. A commentator, H. DeLubac, says, "There would be no exaggeration in presenting the whole body of his work as one long meditation on death."[59] Teilhard's personal reactions to death are perhaps most poignantly expressed after his loss of a close friend and colleague, Davidson Black:

> But what an absurd thing life is, looked at superficially: so absurd that you feel yourself forced back on a stubborn, desperate faith in the reality and survival of the spirit. Otherwise—were there no such thing as the spirit, I mean— we should have to be idiots not to call off the whole human effort. . . .
>
> In my distress following Black's death, and in the stifling atmosphere of "agnostic" condolences that surrounded it, I swore to myself on the body of

my dead friend to fight more vigorously than ever to give hope to man's work and inquiry.[60]

This anguish over the prospect of a cosmic dead-end is a constant theme throughout his life. In response to it, he searches for an *issue*, an opening, or a "way out" that could promote the élan of humanity.

For Teilhard, the only belief capable of promoting this élan and sustaining the tide of human evolution is a belief in a personal Omega, a center capable of bringing human beings into unity without destroying their centered selves. Belief in the Omega is not an assent to the presence of a being removed from the self or the world. Rather, that belief is the recognition of the attractive presence of the Omega in the evolutionary process drawing evolution to greater complexity and consciousness and finally to mystical union. Teilhard conceives of the active force or energy exerted by the Omega as love. Love is a general principle of unity; it is "the affinity of being in the being." At its most rudimentary level love is present in the unity of people with each other and Omega or God.

Teilhard's vision of the relationship of the person to nature and God is, in his own words, a form of mysticism. He often states that his life work is an attempt to bring about "the conjunction of reason and mysticism" or the simultaneous attainment of the universal and the spiritual. Teilhard elaborates his mysticism in his major treatise on religion, *The Divine Milieu*. He noted that the perception of the divine in the world is a "seeing" or "taste," an intuition that goes beyond reasoning itself. He describes the mystical apprehension of the divine milieu as a conscious state affecting all dimensions of the psyche. In this state, there grows a sense of the unity common to all things and an awareness of a new dimension of reality. He describes this state in terms of a transformation in the way one relates to the world: "deeper still: a transformation had taken place for me *in the very perception of being*. Thenceforward being had become, in some way, tangible and savorous to me; and as it came to dominate all the forms which it assumed, being itself began to draw me and intoxicate me."[61] Teilhard grants that such an experience is accessible to the "pagan and Christian alike" and that even the Christian must "admit that this inward reversal seems to him to have occurred within the profane and 'natural parts' of his soul."[62]

For Teilhard, Christian mysticism demands both a love of the earth and a surrender to God. He writes that to reach the upper layers of the divine milieu

is to experience with equal truth that one has need of everything, and that one has need of nothing. Everything is needed because the world will never be large enough to provide our taste for action with the means of grasping God, or our thirst for undergoing the possibility of being invaded by him. And yet

nothing is needed; for as the only reality which can satisfy us lies beyond the transparencies in which it is mirrored, everything that fades away and dies between us will only seem to give reality back to us with greater purity, everything means both everything and nothing to me; everything is God to me and everything is dust to me.[63]

As we have seen, Teilhard's approach to religion as expressed in his mysticism draws on two sources: a scientific theory of evolution and Christian theology. Rather than perceiving these sources to be in opposition, as has often been the case in theological circles, Teilhard perceives them as different expressions of the same truth. He argues that his scientific theory of evolution leads to the hypothesis of a God, conceived as the Omega. This hypothesis does not require "supernatural knowledge" or "revelation," but only requires a natural or "psychological faith." The decision to accept or reject the hypothesis is rationally based on a determination of how well it accounts for the totality of experience. For Teilhard, rejection of the hypothesis of God is incompatible with the phenomenon of human reflectivity:

Hence this remarkable situation—that our mind, by the very fact of being able to discern infinite horizons ahead, is only able to move by the hope of achieving through something of itself, a supreme consummation—without which it could rightly feel itself to be stunted, frustrated, and cheated. By the nature of the work, and correlatively by the requirement [experience] of the worker, a total death, an unscalable wall, on which consciousness would crash and then forever disappear, are thus "incompossible" with the mechanism of conscious activity (since it would immediately break its mainspring).[64]

Thus Teilhard concludes that the affirmation of Omega is the only choice that satisfies the demands of intelligence for meaning.

Although Teilhard develops a natural theology and a mysticism without relying on revelation, he sees the revelation of Christ as central to his theology. For Teilhard, as for contemporary theologians and philosophers working within an evolutionary metaphysical framework, revelation presupposes a theology of nature or creation.

Teilhard's evolutionary metaphysics provides the necessary framework for interpreting the Christian revelation. In addition, he finds that Christianity is the best historical expression of the mystery present within and at the culmination of the evolving cosmos. Teilhard's natural theology brings him to the notion of an Omega that must be both immanent and transcendent—the focus of evolutionary convergence and yet outside of evolution as a center of personal attraction. However, once he establishes the personality of God, he has found revelation not only possible but "in conformity with things." Although Teilhard does not believe he could deduce Christian faith from his evolutionary scheme, he finds them in profound harmony. Christian faith serves to complete his system and to make explicit and clear what has been suggested but vague. The Christian revelation

confirms his psychological faith and provides it with new depth and inspiration.

Commonalities in the Theories of Spinoza and Teilhard

In our description of Spinoza and Teilhard's theories, the following common characteristics emerge as features that we describe as "Stage 7." First, "Stage 7" presupposes Stage 5 or 6 principled morality. Spinoza articulated morality in terms of justice, social contract, and natural rights, while Teilhard developed a morality of *agape* that presupposes a basic concern for personality. These moral positions are rationally constructed and do not depend on revelation or divine command. Although they represent ideals of the moral order, they also represent structures of reality or nature as well. In this sense, reality or nature is interpreted in terms of what we have called *natural law*. The claim that reality is lawful and in some harmony with humanity's most highly developed notions of love and justice rests on a set of further assumptions that we have described as metaphysical, ontological, or religious. These assumptions are made most explicit when questions such as "Why be moral?" and "Why live?" arise. Properly understood, these questions are not moral but religious. They ask whether there is any support in reality, in nature taken as a whole or in the ground of Nature, for acting according to universal moral principles. The personal history and thought of our examples suggests that the transition to "Stage 7" begins with despair; that is, with the consideration that human life and action is in the final analysis meaningless and doomed to extinction. The experience of despair calls into question the fundamental worth of human activity. The only response to the radical questioning inherent in despair is the construction of a metaphysics capable of reaffirming what has been denied.

Religious assertions imply a metaphysics because they refer to the common structure of all reality. This position, as we stated, leads us to disagree with advocates of emotive theories of religion and with fundamentalists who discount any natural knowledge of God. As opposed to emotivists, we share with Teilhard and Spinoza the assumption that religious views have a cognitive basis concerning a basic structure of being. As opposed to fundamentalists, we assume with Spinoza and Teilhard the view that revelation can only be accepted and judged as "true" on the basis of some prior understanding of the meaning of God or some prior metaphysics.

Such a metaphysics starts with experiences of the world as exhibiting a rational order, as we have seen in Spinoza and Teilhard's appeals to science as the beginning of metaphysical reflection. Although Spinoza and Teilhard develop a metaphysics that is in harmony with

rational scientific knowledge about the world, their metaphysics is not based on a simple extrapolation from the knowledge. Rather, it assumes an underlying "substance" or ground of being and of nature. Intuition of this ground of being transcends the duality of subject and object; it involves a sense of union between the knower and the known.

At "Stage 7," then, individuals construct a "natural theology" that is based on reason. Although rationally derived, one's metaphysical system at "Stage 7" is also supported by mystical experiences of union with the whole of reality. This mystical component is present in the theories and examples we have cited. Mystical experience is present as an element of "Stage 7" spirituality, but it is necessary to see this experience in the context of the other features of this stage. Mystical experiences may perhaps be induced in a variety of ways, such as through drugs or disciplined meditation. Mystical experiences that are religiously significant are those in which the oneness of being is disclosed and the subject-object duality is overcome. These experiences then represent an emotionally powerful intuitive grasp of a reality that a metaphysics can only in a limited way express conceptually.

Summary and Conclusions

At this stage of inquiry, we can only draw tentative conclusions. Psychologically, there are clear parallels between our moral stages and a stagelike development of religious thinking. We have interpreted these parallels as consistent with the hypothesis that structures of religious thinking depend on moral structures for their formation; that is, moral judgment development is necessary but not sufficient for development of religious thinking. This relationship is consistent with the postulation of the autonomy of morality or moral judgment, of the nonreducibility of moral "ought" judgments to descriptive "is" judgments of natural or supernatural facts. It is also consistent with the notion that religious judgments and orientations function to support moral judgment in the face of such questions as "Why be moral?" as well as of problems arising from the gap between moral structures and judgments of the world as it is and from the gap between just conduct and the existence of injustice, suffering, and death in the world.

The necessary but not sufficient relationship is readily derivable from the cognitive-developmental theories of Dewey, Mead, and Baldwin.[65] These theories, although broadly compatible with our "natural law" view, differ in their seeing religious judgment as essentially imaginative constructions of the ideal moral self and the ideal society. In a certain sense, their theories are agnostic in that they

imply that there is no source of religious "knowledge" and experience independent of moral "knowledge" and experience. These theories, of course, take into account the bodies of religious belief and creed to which children are exposed, but assume that children will assimilate this body of knowledge and values to their own developing moral structures. Religious experience leads to new moral and religious structures only insofar as such religious experience is translatable into moral experience with other people in a religious community.

The observed relationships between moral and religious development are consistent with the philosophies and psychologies of Dewey, Mead, and Baldwin, which assume that religious reasoning ultimately derives either from moral reason or from reasoning about the world of society and nature. These relationships also fit our own "natural law" approach, which diverges from these theories in attributing more autonomy to religious experience and reasoning. In our view, there are problems, experiences, and thinking that are centrally religious and metaphysical, although the problems depend in part on moral structures for their formulation.

This view we are able to elaborate most clearly in terms of the experience and judgments of people at what we think to be "Stage 7," a sixth or highest stage of religious judgment. The center of the highest stage is experiences that are most distinctively religious experiences of union with deity, whether pantheistic or theistic. These experiences we do not interpret in a reductionistic psychological manner, as does the Freudian theory of mystic experience as a survival of an early feeling of union with the mother. We treat it instead as both arising from, and contributing to, a new perspective. We term this new perspective "cosmic" and "infinite," although of course the attainment of such a perspective is only an aspiration rather than a complete possibility. The attainment of this perspective results from a new insight. Using Gestalt psychology language for describing insight, we term it a shift from figure to ground, from a centering on the self's activity and that of others to a centering on the wholeness or unity of nature or the cosmos. In Spinoza's view, the experience of "the union of the mind with the whole of nature" results from the cognitive ability to see nature as an organized system of natural laws and to see every part of nature, including oneself, as parts of that whole.

This act of insight is, however, not purely cognitive. One cannot see the whole or the infinite ground of being unless one loves it and aspires to love it. Such love, Spinoza tells us, arises first out of despair about more limited, finite, and perishable loves. Knowing and loving God or Nature as the ground of a system of laws knowable by reason is a support to our acceptance of human rational moral laws of justice, which are part of the whole. Furthermore, our love of the whole or

the ultimate supports us through experiences of suffering, injustice, and death.

Spinoza centers on the love of God or nature; Teilhard, however, sees God not only as the ultimate object of love but also as ultimately loving. Central to his view is the idea of the cosmos as evolving to higher levels of consciousness and organization. The principle or end of this evolution is love.

In our view, then, a psychological theory of religious stages, particularly a highest stage, rests on a philosophic theory, a set of metaphysical and religious assumptions consistent with, but not reducible to, rational science and morality. This view parallels the claims we make about moral reasoning, which requires an autonomous moral philosophy for its definition. In the case of morality, we claim that there is a single definable structure defining a sixth or highest stage and that this structure can be interpreted and justified by various rigorous theories, of which Rawls's theory is the best example.

In the case of "Stage 7," a highest level of ethical and religious thinking, the structure is much less unitary and definable. Correspondingly, speculative theories such as those of Spinoza and Teilhard de Chardin arising from and justifying this structure are more diverse and less rigorous than moral theories.

These theories, however, derive from a qualitatively new insight and perspective we call "Stage 7." The speculative philosophies that formulate this insight are not meaningless metaphysics, then, as positivism holds, but constructions essential for understanding human development.

NOTES

1. For a discussion of the relationship between philosophic analysis, construction of the concept of moral development, and empirical inquiry, see Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development*, vol. 1, *The Philosophy of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981), pp. 101-89.

2. See ibid., pp. 294-306 for this argument.

3. See ibid. for a review of this evidence.

4. H. Hartshorne and M. A. May, *Studies in the Nature of Character*, vol. 1, *Studies in Deceit*; vol. 2, *Studies in Self-Control*; vol. 3, *Studies in the Organization of Character* (New York: Macmillan, 1928-1930).

5. Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development*, vol. 3, *Education and Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, forthcoming).

6. This is critiqued in an extensive discussion of the naturalistic fallacy in Kohlberg (n. 1 above), pp. 101-89.

7. For reasons for philosophically rejecting emotivistic theories of moral judgment, see ibid.

8. J. Gilligan, "Psychoanalytic Theory and Morality," in *Moral Development and Behavior*, ed. T. Lickona (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1976).

9. Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (London: Hogarth Press, 1930).

10. Joseph Ratner, ed., *Intelligence in the Modern World: John Dewey's Philosophy* (New York: Random House, 1939), pp. 1000-4. While the meaning of this and other quotations is true to that of the author quoted, occasionally material is condensed and syntax is shifted for the sake of brevity.

11. James Fowler, "Stages in Faith: The Structural Developmental Approach," in *Values and Moral Development*, ed. T. Hennessey (New York: Paulist Press, 1976); idem, "Mapping Faith's Structures: A Developmental View," in *Life Maps: Conversations on the Journey of Faith*, ed. J. Fowler and S. Keen (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978).

12. Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1952).

13. These exemplars are cited in Kohlberg (n. 1 above), pp. 29-38.

14. Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *Great Documents in Black American History*, ed. George Ducas (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), pp. 282-83.

15. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

16. *Zygon* 14- (March, 1979-): 2.

17. The concept of justice as equilibrium is discussed in Kohlberg (n. 1 above), pp. 101-226.

18. Stephen Toulmin, *An Examination of the Place of Reason in Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1950).

19. F. H. Bradley, *Ethical Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 60.

20. Ibid., p. 62.

21. Fowler (n. 11 above); J. Fowler and A. Vergote, eds., *Toward Moral and Religious Maturity* (Morristown, N. J.: Silver-Burdett, 1980).

22. R. Shulik, "Faith Development, Moral Development, and Old Age: An Assessment of Fowler's Faith Development Paradigm" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1979); Clark Power and Lawrence Kohlberg, "Religion, Morality, and Ego Development," in Fowler and Vergote (n. 21 above).

23. Fowler, "Stages in Faith" (n. 11 above), p. 209.

24. J. Loevinger, *Ego Development* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976); E. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: Norton, 1950).

25. Our distinction between moral judgment and ethical development will be elaborated in Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development*, vol. 2, *The Psychology of Moral Development* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, forthcoming).

26. The distinction made by modern moral philosophers between normative moral judgments, principles, or theories, and metaethical theories is clarified by Kohlberg (n. 1 above), pp. 101-226.

27. Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. L. Beck (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1959); idem, *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*, in *The Philosophy of Kant*, ed. C. J. Friedrich (New York: Random House, 1949).

28. J. M. Baldwin, *Thoughts and Things*, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1906); Ratner (n. 10 above); G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934).

29. Ratner (n. 10 above), pp. 1016-18.

30. John Dewey, *A Common Faith* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1934).

31. Power and Kohlberg (n. 22 above).

32. Kohlberg (n. 1 above), pp. 101-89.

33. F. Oser, "Stages of Religious Judgment," in Fowler and Vergote (n. 21 above).

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

36. Fowler, "Stages in Faith" (n. 11 above).

37. Lawrence Kohlberg, "Continuities in Childhood and Adult Moral Development Revisited," in *Life-Span Developmental Psychology: Personality and Socialization*, ed. P. B. Baltes and K. W. Schaie (New York: Academic Press, 1973); idem, "Stages and Aging in Moral Development: Some Speculations," *Gerontologist* 13 (1973): 497-502.

38. Ibid.

39. Marcus Aurelius *Meditations* 4.4.

40. Ibid.

41. Lawrence Kohlberg and R. Shulik, "The Aging Person as Philosopher," in Kohlberg (n. 25 above).

42. G. Outka, *Agape: An Ethical Analysis* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1972); W. K. Frankena, *Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963).

43. Kohlberg (n. 1 above), pp. 190-226.

44. Ibid.
45. Quoted in Outka, p. 75.
46. D. J. Shawver, "Character and Ethics: An Epistemological Inquiry of Lawrence Kohlberg's Cognitive Theory of Moral Development" (Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 1979).
47. C. Gilligan, "In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and Morality," *Harvard Educational Review* 47 (1977): 481-517.
48. Ratner (n. 10 above), pp. 396-98.
49. Ibid., pp. 1025-26.
50. Kant, *Religion* (n. 27 above), pp. 396-98.
51. Ibid., pp. 405-9.
52. Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Humanities Press, 1938); Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, Anchor, 1958); Teilhard (n. 15 above).
53. Whitehead, p. 4.
54. Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, in *Spinoza Selections*, ed. J. Wild (New York: Scribners, 1930).
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. E. M. Curley, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).
58. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968), p. 31.
59. Henri de Lubac, *The Religion of Teilhard de Chardin* (New York: Image Books, 1968), p. 56.
60. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters from a Traveller* (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), pp. 155-56.
61. Teilhard, *Divine Milieu* (n. 15 above), p. 129.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., p. 120.
64. Teilhard, *Phenomenon of Man*, p. 231.
65. Ratner (n. 10 above); Mead (n. 28 above); Baldwin (n. 28 above).