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DIALOGUE, DEVELOPMENT, AND LIBERATION

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In ancient Hebraic tradition human beings were not distinguished from all other living creatures by virtue of their capacity for reason but by virtue of their engagement in three kinds of dialogues: dialogues with themselves, with neighbors, and with God (Niebuhr, 1955). From this vantage point the unfolding of truly human development has to do with the development of our capacity for dialogue. The capacity for dialogue is a necessary precondition for human liberation: for nonviolent, respectful relations between people and groups, and for the liberation of thought itself from rigid, stereotypic, and unidimensional narrowness.

Such a focus redirects our attention from the attainment of the logical, abstract thought that science has lauded, to the dramatic and dialogical thought that has largely been discouraged by developmental theorists (see Watkins, 1986). While the former depends on a single heroic ego engaged in highly elliptical, monological thinking, the latter opens to the polyphony of thought, comprised of multiple voices and perspectives, best mediated by dialogue.

Characteristics of Dialogical Thinking

Buber (1958) describes true dialogue as one where the integrity and autonomy of both self and other are preserved, where one neither identifies with nor incorporates the other. As in Bakhtin's (1981) description of dialogue, neither person loses his or her own standpoint, nor transforms the other into an image to serve

one's own purposes. Each can address and be addressed. Such dialogue between an I and a Thou can be evidenced in speech or in silence. Buber likens such dialogue to the holy converse described in Hasidism, where a "divine spark lives in every thing and being, but each spark is enclosed by an isolating shell. Only man can liberate it and re-join it with the Origin: by holding holy converse with the thing and using it in a holy manner" (1970, pp. 5-6).

Development and Liberation

I am indebted to Bernard Kaplan (1983a,b) of Clark University for his approach to developmental issues. He asks us to be explicit about the telos of human development we are working for; to then, with this telos in mind, inquire what an ideal sequence of development would look like, and then to analyze the conditions that would mitigate against this development and those that would encourage it. It is from him that I first heard and understood the possible link between human liberation and the study of human development.

The writings of liberation theologians (Goizueta, 1988), socially engaged Buddhists (Sivaraksa, 1992), and liberation psychologists (Martin-Baro, 1994; Sampson, 1993) have proposed that the term development should be replaced by liberation. With regard to economic and cultural progress, "development" of one group seems often to require an oppression of the other. Further, a dominant culture's idea of development is too often imposed on a culture, depriving it of undertaking its own path of development. The term liberation is based on a paradigm

of interdependence, where the liberation of one is intimately tied to the liberation of the other. Further, as a holistic term it encourages us to consider economic, political, sociocultural, spiritual, and psychological liberation together. While the term "self" has been critical to developmental theory, liberation theory emphasizes the importance of "the other."

If we hold liberating dialogue as a telos or endpoint of human development, what mitigates against it and what helps its development? It is clear that adulthood can be reached and traveled through without the development of adequate dialogical capacities. Without such adequate capacities, "the other"--be it part of oneself, be it one's neighbor or enemy, nature--can be silenced, used, abused, destroyed. The liberation of "the other" is dependent on dialogue which allows its nature and desires to come forth, to be listened to with attention and care, to be allowed to bring forth its difference from the self. Through such dialogue, "the other" is released from objectification and projection, and becomes the center of his or her own world, rather than determined by the self's (Goizueta, 1988).

Inner Dialogical Development and Liberation

Liberation theologians have stressed the importance of seeing liberation broadly. Liberation in one domain does not necessarily lead to liberation in other domains. One must work across domains--economic, political, cultural, ecological, interpersonal, intrapsychic--to build toward more comprehensive liberation. As a depth psychologist, I was brought up in a tradition which believed that inner

development was the precondition and precursor to other forms of liberation. While this may be so in some cases, it is clear that prolonged preoccupation with inner liberation can also contribute to and/or defend one from oppression on other levels of existence--political, economic, ecological, cultural, interpersonal. Martin-Baro (1994) calls this psychology's critical error: "to change the individual while preserving the social order, or, in the best of cases, generating the illusion that, perhaps, as the individual changes, so will the social order--as if society were a summation of individuals" (p. 37).

Often interior life has become used as part of a veil of privatism, a buffer against cultural, economic, and ecological realities and sufferings. In recent Western culture and its psychology we have lauded the development of the autonomous, highly rationalistic individual, bounded from others and nature, presumably responsible for his/her own fate. The threads of interrelationship between self and other, self and community, self and nature, self and spiritual reality have increasingly been neglected by the enactment of such a paradigm of selfhood. Correspondingly, the "inner" world has been more and more looked to for meaning, relationship, ritual, and spirituality. It is imagined by some as though an untouched wilderness, a rich preserve to which one can turn for entertainment, mystery, and nurture.

Yet in the most private of the dialogues in our dreams and fantasies, in the most intimate portions of our conversations with ourselves, we come upon the metabolization of culture, economics, and politics. In the structure of power between ourselves and the other voices of thought, we can see the bounty of democratic form, the imbalances issuing from such things as racism and sexism, the struggle

between the single voice of monotheism and the multiple voices of a more ancient polytheism, the efforts of a heroic ego attempting to assert control. While the dialogues of dreams and thought seem able to transcend culture in moments, their dramatis personae and the relations between them, more frequently conserve it, reflect it. Is it likely for one to be able to achieve inner liberation while part of an oppressive cultural system? Does not liberation in one's daily context support liberation of thought? Correspondingly, does not the capacity for complex, dialogical thinking support the unfolding of social contexts that open such dialogue into public conversation?

As we listen in our thought to the critiques of ourselves and of others, we hear not only the voice of the mother or the father, but the teacher, the style of pedagogy we were schooled in, the structure and values of the workplaces we have given to. The intrapsychic or the interior or the imaginal is not an isolated preserve. It is a distillation of history, culture, religion, and nature. If we can hear how the intimate, so-called interior, dialogues of thought and dream body forth the public, the cultural and the economic, then can we continue to believe that these dialogues can deeply transform without attention to interpersonal, cultural, ecological, and economic life? For instance, if racism in the culture effects the intrapsychic dialogue of a black child, causing one voice within her or him to derogate the color of her or his skin, should we attend to this through a psychotherapy that elicits and modifies self-talk? Or should there also be opportunities for dialogue at home, in the classroom, in the neighborhood, and in the larger culture which invite the voices that inhabit this child to speak, and which contribute toward an inner alternate voice of valuing, respecting,

and cherishing the differences amongst us? Such an alternate voice could engage the voice of derision, question it, see through to its origins, insight its functions for the dominant culture, as well its functions for the child him- or herself--trying as he or she is to assume a popular position, even to his or her own detriment.

In my work Invisible Guests: The Development of Imaginal Dialogues (Watkins, 1986), I have described the dialogical nature of thought, how thought is a mosaic of voices in conversation. The complexity of thought can begin to be grasped as we discern the nature of the various voices that are speaking and become aware of the manner of relation between them and between our "observing ego" and each of them. I argued there that the promoting of dialogue amongst this "inner" multiplicity was crucial to psychological awareness and well-being. Here I would like to add that sustained attention to the nurturing of dialogical capacities across domains promises movement toward more comprehensive liberation.

Dialogical Capacities

Let me be more specific about the kind of dialogical capacities I am referring to: the allowing of the other and the self to freely arise and to be given a chance for expression, to allow the other to exist autonomously from myself, to patiently wait for relation to occur in this open horizon, to move toward difference not with denial or rejection but with tolerance, curiosity, and a clear sense that it is in the encounter with otherness and multiplicity that deeper meanings can emerge. Such dialogue presupposes the capacity to grant the other an interiority different from our own--one

that is not diminished or dehumanized in any way. Such dialogue assumes the capacity to de-center and to attempt to take the perspective of the other, to attempt to feel the feelings of the other. It presupposes a capacity to take a third person perspective on the self, so that one can reflect on how one's actions and attitudes have effected the other and the situation.

As these capacities develop, the self moves from being an unreflective center that finds the other to be either like oneself or as the self needs it to be to serve the self's ends, to a self who is able to step to the side, who is aware of the co-creating nature of the interaction with the other, who knows that the other's experience departs from the self's, often in radical ways. In this chasm, where such departures differentiate self and other, there is a choice available to penetrate it through attempts at dialogue and understanding. This penetration is never only an opening toward the other's experience and reality. It signals a willingness to see and question as assumptions one's most cherished attitudes, the core of our own beliefs, approaches, and commitments. To be able to deeply entertain the difference that the other poses we must, as well, be able to disidentify from our passionately held beliefs and be able to see what ideologies they are based on and to be able to interrogate the function and effects of these beliefs (Bohm, 1996). Through the grasping of the other's difference from us--be it intrapsychic other or interpersonal other--we come to see more clearly who we are. Jung puts clearly the interpenetration of inner dialogue and outer objectivity:

The present day shows with appalling clarity how little able people are to let the other man's argument count, although this capacity is a fundamental and indispensable condition for any human community. Everyone who proposes to come to terms with himself must reckon with this basic problem. For, to the degree that he does not admit the validity of the other person, he denies the "other" within himself the right to exist--and vice versa. The capacity for inner dialogue is a touchstone for outer objectivity. (Jung, 1969, p. 187)

It is through such dialogue with the other, the stranger, that the liberation and re-joining that Buber speaks of can occur.

This manner of holy converse can describe equally as well relations with others, as it does our relations with ourselves, imaginal others, the beings of nature and earth, and that which we take to be divine. As such dialogue occurs there is a shift from the ego as a monolithic, heroic center, one which struggles to maintain power, to an "ego" which seeks to mediate the multiplicity of any given situation. Elsewhere I have contrasted the individualistic self of modern Western cultures with the paradigm of the interdependent self (Watkins, 1992) or what Sampson (1988) has called the ensembled self. The ensembled self is aware of multiplicity at all levels. It locates power and control in a field of forces that includes but goes beyond the person (Sampson, 1988). Dialogue is a way of working amidst this field, this multiplicity.

Dialogicality and Contemporary Psychology

In our Cartesian psychologies we have carefully sorted self from other, body from mind, the imaginal from the perceptual, the spiritual from the material, the so-called "inner" from the so-called "outer." Experientially these separations are not as neat as our modern categories would suggest. Once made discrete, theoreticians approach how they are related in opposing, often lopsided ways. For instance, either imaginal dialogues are seen to subserve interpersonal dialogues allowing us to rehearse for more of the "real" thing, or interpersonal dialogue is viewed as a diversion from the "more important" unfolding of subjective experience. Which side of the Cartesian see-saw is seen as more valuable, more originaive of the other? Do experiences with imaginary playmates harm children--as claimed in the 1950's--because they defend children from "actual" friendship, or does social interaction obscure our listening to the "springs of the self"? Here my hope is to hold these domains together in a more interdependent web. I will do this through a close look at dialogue, as I see I-Thou dialogue as a necessary capacity when we understand the multiplicity we are homed in--on the levels of both psyche and culture.

Dialogue is both a fact of our givenness and a deep potentiality of our being. We are thrown from our beginning into a multiplicity--ancestors, family, trees, rivers, earth, animals, neighbors. As Jung said (1947), "The self comprises infinitely more than the mere ego, as symbols have shown since time immemorial. It is just as much another or others as it is the ego. Individuation does not exclude the world but includes it" (p. 477). We are always selves-in-relation or selves-in-dialogue. What is

at stake is the kind of relationship we are in, and the paths from it to a manner of dialogical relationship that liberates being.

When we emphasize this frame, there are a number of developmental theorists whose work speaks to the interpenetration of imaginal, social, cultural, natural, and spiritual domains in terms of the development of dialogical capacity: for example, my own work on the development of imaginal dialogues; the research on the coordination of interpersonal perspectives and resulting peer therapy of Selman and Schultz; the work on adolescent girls' loss of voice of Carol Gilligan and her colleagues; the work with women's ways of knowing that effect both their internal dialogue and their relations to others of Mary Belenky and her colleagues; the large group dialogue work of David Bohm and Patrick de Mare; and, finally, the liberational pedagogy of Paulo Freire. I will turn to these as exemplars to help us see some of the developmental threads that criss-cross between dialogical domains, and to establish signposts beyond this text for those who wish to pursue the cultivation of dialogue.

The Development of Imaginal Dialogues

I would like to begin by addressing "dialogues with ourselves," what I have called elsewhere, "imaginal dialogues" (Watkins, 1986): conversations between aspects of the self, such as "me" and "I"; or between self and an "imaginal other"; or between two imaginal others with the self as audience. In short, imaginal dialogues are present in a child's play and private speech, in adult and child thought, in spiritual experiences, in the experience of dramatists, novelists, poets. While widely

acknowledged in popular culture and in expressive psychotherapy techniques, such imaginal dialogues have had an odd fate within the mainstream of developmental psychology. Often the presence of such dialogue has been seen as a sign of childhood or psychopathology, and the absence of such dialogue as a sign of adulthood and mental health (see Watkins, 1986, for detailed treatment of these themes in the work of Piaget, Vygotsky, and Mead).

Piaget vs. Vygotsky on Imaginal Dialogues

This curious degrading of imaginal dialogues is largely due to developmental psychology's high valuation of the development of abstract thought and logic, and of its priority given to our increasing capacity to adapt to consensual views of reality. Rather than Piaget following the course of imaginal dialogues from their appearance in what he called the "egocentric speech" of young children to the highly elaborate play scenarios of older children, to the artistic creation of drama, and the sustaining of complex, multiperspectival thought, he sees them as being subsumed either by the development of communicative speech or of abstract thought. For him their appearance is indicative of the child's incapacity to take the other's point of view sufficiently to make him- or herself understood. The imaginal dialogues of play he sees as distorting of reality, deforming and subordinating reality to the desires of the self (1971, p. 339). For him this kind of pretend play gives way to the "more mature" play of games with consensual rules. In object relations we see a similar priority

given to "objective" reality, by judging self- and object-representations as more highly developed if they closely approximate figures in the external world.

If we look with a different eye--one that values dramatic thought and the capacity to create and transform reality--the early imaginal dialogues found in pretend play are extraordinary practice in beginning to widen the repertoire of the self, in making leaps to other points of view, and in refusing to confine oneself to the dictates of consensual reality. The complex play of older children shows an increasing shift away from replicating reality to creating new worlds of characters, where symbolic power appears to increase as the effort to replicate the given is dropped.

Indeed, Vygotsky speaks to how play is used by the child to satisfy needs that reality cannot. In the imaginary situations which a child creates, unrealizable desires can be fulfilled (1978, p. 93). The ability to play is the power which the child has to make another reality. This power is made possible by the ability of the child to subordinate action to meaning. Play releases the child from the dictatorship of the visual realm and the "incentive supplied by external things" and allows the child, freed from these situational constraints, to act with meanings, to rely on internal tendencies and motives (p. 96). Rather than stressing play's egocentrism, as Piaget does, Vygotsky is impressed with the fruits of such a liberation for a child's continued action in the social domain. In claiming that play is the highest level of preschool development, he attributes to play and its dialogues the propensity for creating voluntary intentions, to form real life plans and volitional motives (p. 103).

Despite this high evaluation of play, when he looked at children's private speech he did not allow his observation of imaginal dialogues in solitary play to

influence decisively his theory of the functions of private speech. According to Vygotsky, private speech is a stage in the development of inner speech. It is speech on its way inward. He sees it as having neither the economy of speech intended for self-guidance, nor the communicative value of speech intended for a differentiated other (Kohlberg, Yaeger, & Hjertholm, 1968). Once inward, inner speech begins to drop its dialogical nature acquired from social interaction and becomes increasingly monological and elliptical--as internally speaker and listener are now presumed to be the same.

By defining inner speech for oneself and external speech as for others, Vygotsky leaves no room for imaginal others--be they aspects of self, representations of known others, or wholly imaginary others. He assumes that the internal speaker knows what he or she is talking about and perceiving. There is no separate interlocutor or listener. But if we were to introduce a notion of the self as non-unitary, as having multiple points of view among which it alternates, dialogue would no longer be an inferior form of thought; perhaps monologue would be in many instances.

Vygotsky (1962) argues that the monologue is superior to the dialogue: "psychological investigation leaves no doubt that monologue is indeed the higher, more complicated form" (p. 144). In the imaginal dialogues of thought, self and other do not necessarily share mutual perceptions. Thus, when self and other are differentiated, one would expect internal speech to become less elliptical and be more akin to spoken and written speech (the latter being, from Vygotsky's point of view, the most elaborate form of speech). In internal speech when self and a voice, or two voices, hold different perspectives, their views must be more fully elaborated than

if one is entertaining and explicating a single view in a monologue. Through inner dialogue, a thought can be expressed by an imaginal other or by the self, questioned or furthered by another. Dialogue intensifies the way in which language carries us toward what we are going to understand, but as yet have not. "Thought germinates in speech" between others, says Merleau-Ponty (1973, p. 131), and is this not also true for the conversations of thought? Before reasoning became synonymous with logical thought, its archaic meaning was "to engage in conversation or discussion" (Morris, 1969, p. 1036), as in Isaiah (1:18): "Come (...) let us reason together." This conversation could have both actual and imaginal partners.

George Herbert Mead and Dialogicality

In George Herbert Mead's work, we find precisely this understanding of reason as deeply dialogical. Unlike Vygotsky, he sees thought as retaining its roots in the dialogues of social interaction. He believed that it is through the reflexivity of the dialogue that the self arises. For Mead, all speech and thought are implicitly dialogical. The dialogue form establishes for the child the meaning of the self and his or her actions. Awareness of the self, according to Mead, arises through adopting the perspective of others toward oneself. This is achieved first through describing one's activities to another, or as though to another, and thereby evoking the response of the other to oneself. At first the self is the reflection of others' attitudes toward it. Thus, where Piaget's example of a child describing what she sees to her doll is taken by him to be expressive of the child's pleasure in being a focus of attention, for Mead this

perpetual describing--which can strain the patience of those around children ("Now I'm putting on my hat. See me putting it on!")--marks the beginning of the child's transition to the role of the other, from which indeed one sees and becomes aware of oneself and others. As the child begins to take on all the roles of others toward oneself--policeman, parent, sibling, etc.--the child's own self is created. Indeed, for Mead, the self is an organization of perspectives. "When playing at being someone else, the self comes to realize its own nature at the same time it realizes the nature of the person whose role is being played" (Pfuetze, 1973, p. 83).

Gradually, however, the particular others in the dialogues of a child's pretend play--the postman, the mother, the younger brother, the teacher--begin to lose their specific identity as such dialogues move inward. The separate, differentiated characters begin to merge to become what Mead calls a generalized other. It is this generalized other who expresses the attitude of the group who partners our thought in adulthood. It is an amalgam of earlier multiplicity, that Mead believed moved thought toward abstract thought and objectivity.

In the nineteenth century--which Mead himself wrote about in fine detail--generalization was widely considered to be "necessary to the advancement of knowledge," but "particularity" was seen as "indispensable to the creatures of imagination" (Thomas Babington Macaulay, 1825, quoted in Abrams, 1953, p. 316). One anonymous nineteenth century writer, joining many of his contemporaries, equated science with:

(...) any collection of general propositions, expressing important facts concerning extensive classes of phenomena; and the more abstract the form of expression, the more purely it represents the general fact, to the total exclusion of such individual peculiarities as are not comprised in it -- the more perfect the scientific language becomes. Science is the effort of reason to overcome the multiplicity of impressions, with which nature overwhelms it, by distributing them into classes, and by devising forms of expression which comprehend in one view an infinite variety of objects and events. (quoted in Abrams, 1953, p. 317)

Mead's emphasis on the generalized other clearly echoes these statements, affirming what might be described as a "scientific" form of thought rather than a poetic one. The generalized other is "the most inclusive or widest community included in one's organization of attitudes" (Miller, 1973, p. 49). In its highest development, says Mead, this would be analogous to a community of logicians.

The development of the generalized other is the development of socialized thought, wherein particular thoughts have the capacity to be conveyed to the widest possible audience. Such a generalization of imaginal others--a homogenization, it often sounds like--seems indeed to be an important line of development. Its corollary, the fading out of the dramatis personae of thought, contradicts and obscures the development of particularized others who also participate in the dialogues of our thought.

Would it not make sense that these two developments--of particularized and generalized others--are not mutually contradictory but rather mutually dependent; that the generalized other does not always supplant particularized others, but that the form of the other (particularized or generalized) is dependent on the functions of the thought in a particular instance? If so, then for Mead to construct a developmental sequence from particularized to generalized other, his preferred telos must have again been scientific thought, indeed a scientific thought based on the model of nineteenth-century science.

This telos effects the preferred developmental sequence that developmental psychology, broadly speaking, proposes in childhood for imaginal dialogues: from presence to relative absence in adulthood; from dialogical play and thought to monological, abstract thought; from the multiple, often autonomous, personified presences in play dialogue to the single, unitary self. Such a sequence does not allow us to appreciate the way in which the dialogues of play and thought, dialogues between particular, often autonomous others or voices, help us practice and sustain a multiperspectival consciousness. When, as developmentalists, we affirm the value of dialogue, development can be seen as going in the opposite direction from the above-stated goals; i.e., from one to many voices, from undefined voice to particularized other, from other as puppet to the "I" to autonomous other who can voice difference. Such dialogue can reflect social experience. It can also move beyond it, bringing new possibilities into being, which may later take root in the social world.

This short history of the treatment of imaginal dialogues in developmental theory suggests how monocular our concern has been regarding how we come to

know and metabolize the complexity of any given situation. Were the nurture of dialogical capacities across the life span considered essential to such multiperspectival knowing, the imaginal dialogue of play would be listened to more closely and nurtured; attention to the self-talk of young children would be increased helping the child find ways of dialogue that support her or his exploration and action, in full knowledge that such dialogue will form the scaffolding of internal conversation for years to come. We would as well deeply attend to how conversation unfolds within friendships, families, and classrooms.

The Capacity to Play and the Capacity to be a Friend:

Differentiating and Coordinating the Perspectives of Self and Other

Our development toward genuine dialogue is gradual and unassured. It is largely dependent on our capacity to imagine the other as different from ourselves and as independent of our own needs to see him or her in certain ways. Robert Selman charts the young child's egocentric understanding of the other, where first the other is assumed to have similar feelings as the self. In the friendship of young children, the other is judged to be a friend by superficial appearance or sheer physical proximity. The other is a two-dimensional self, with no psychological characteristics of her or his own. A presumed dialogue at such a developmental moment may well be better described as a monologue, where the other is not imagined as different from the self.

Selman and Schultz, working with the interpersonal relations of emotionally disturbed children, have noted that interactive fantasy play is markedly absent in the

history of children whose interpersonal understanding is at primitive levels. These children do not understand that self and other can interpret the same event differently; i.e., the other is not understood to have an interiority different from my own. They are unable to differentiate between an unintentional act of another and an intentional one (the action is equated with the intent). Neither do they differentiate physical from psychological characteristics of the person (i.e., if the person is deemed pretty then she is a good person). In short, they are unable to "differentiate and integrate the self's and other's points of view through an understanding of the relation between the thoughts, feelings, and wishes of each person" (1990, p. 6).

This capacity to differentiate and integrate the self's and other's points of view is at the core of dialogical capacity. As Selman and Schultz point out, a deficit in this ability shows both in problematic interpersonal relating and in an absence of the dialogues of pretend play. Further, however, they describe how the seeds for interpersonal dialogue can be planted in the dialogues of play. In their pair therapy work with children who are isolated by patterns of withdrawal or aggression, they pair a submissive, withdrawn child (self-transforming style) with a child who is over-controlling, sometimes downright bullying (other-transforming style). Initially, they each cling to his or her own style, making impossible a deepening of relationship. Selman and Schultz share an image from a session with two boys where one traps the other in the up position on the see-saw. There is no movement! In pretend play these two boys initially replicate their roles on the see-saw:

Andy initiated a fantasy in which he was the television/comic book character "The Hulk," a large, powerful, fearsome mutant who is good inside, but who cannot control his feelings to let the good direct him. Paul then took a part as „Mini-Man," a being of his own creation who is smaller than anything else in the world and can hide in flowers. (...) The play was a fantasy in which one boy had the power to control the thoughts and will of the other by virtue of a psychological "force field." (p. 169-170)

With these roles personified, however, each boy is as though seduced into wanting to embody each of the available roles. Paul experiments with putting up his force-field, and then with "zapping" his partner, just as Andy relaxes his grip on power and enjoys the submissive position of "Mini-Man."

Theoretically speaking we believe that this switching of roles in play is a key therapeutic process, in effect a way to share experience. Andy was able to relax his defenses and express the message that part of him was happy to be or even had a need to be controlled, taken care of, told what to do. He could abandon for the moment the tenderly held goals for which he generally fought so fiercely. (...) And Paul, often too frightened to take the initiative in actual interactions, was able to take steps toward assuming the control that felt too risky in real life, despite its practical and emotional attractions. (...) When it is just play, children can dress rehearse for changing roles on the stage of real-life interaction. (p. 171)

Here we see the interrelation between the dialogues of play and those of peer relationship. Now, rather than "inner speech" being the internalization of actual social discourse, as in Vygotsky's theory, we see the dialogues of play as the seed that travels up into the soil of potential friendship. Indeed, in the third year of work with these boys, we see them able to withstand the storm of each other's emotions, to venture into different roles with one other, and to begin to share around the deepest areas of each boy's concern: missing their absent parents, and the fear of one boy that his mother does not miss or love him.

Andy's tone is low. "That's the problem--my mother doesn't miss me". Andy relates an incident from the past weekend, when he and his parents were going to go out together. As Andy tells it, he rode off on his bike telling his mother where he'd be, but his mother forgot to call him. "And when I came back my mom had gone to bed, and my dad had gone to sleep. And I was left alone". Paul says softly, "I'm sorry." After a brief pause, he adds, "By the way Andy, if you see any raffle tickets around, I've lost mine." Rather than being put off and hurt by this sudden change of subject on Paul's part, Andy immediately picks up on the new topic. "Let's go look for them in the after school room," he says.

Are not such moments of friendship creative of our capacity to receive and hear our own pain, to be with it, and yet capable of engaging beyond it?

Sustaining One's Voice Amongst Others

For authentic dialogue to occur it is not enough for one to be able to differentiate one's perspective from the other and to allow the other a voice. One must also be able to maintain one's own voice amidst the fray of relationship. For instance, the most disturbing auditory hallucinations are not due to a confusion of perception with image, but because the ego's point of view becomes swamped by the voice(s) of the other. The other's command often becomes the self's action without benefit of reflection. Dialogical space collapses as the self becomes the instrument of the voice (Watkins, 1986). In less severe experience we witness similar imbalances in power between "inner" voices that criticize, berate, predict doom, and the often more fragile self who is the victim of these critiques and disparagements. Indeed, the psychotherapy of depression can be seen as addressing such inner abuses of power that leave other voices silenced or rendered impotent. The inner sustaining of voice in situations where the culture (family, school, wider culture) one is in has systematically discouraged it, is particularly difficult, often impossible. Carol Gilligan and her colleagues' work with adolescent girls exemplifies this.

In turning their attention to normative development in pre-adolescent and adolescent American girls, they unfortunately found that not all the changes they witnessed in girls were ideal. On the one hand,

As these girls grow older they become less dependent on external authorities, less egocentric or locked into their own experience or point of view, more differentiated from others in the sense of being able to distinguish their feelings and thoughts from those of other people, more autonomous in the sense of being able to rely on or to take responsibility for themselves, more appreciative of the complex interplay of voices and perspectives in any relationship, more aware of the diversity of human experience and the differences between societal and cultural groups.

On the other hand, they found,

(...) that this developmental progress goes hand in hand with evidence of a loss of voice, a struggle to authorize or take seriously their own experience--to listen to their own voices in conversation and respond to their feelings and thoughts--increased confusion, sometimes defensiveness, as well as evidence for the replacement of real with inauthentic or idealized relationships. If we consider responding to oneself, knowing one's feelings and thoughts, clarity, courage, openness, and free-flowing connections with others and the world as signs of psychological health, as we do, then these girls are in fact not developing, but are showing evidence of loss and struggle and signs of an impasse in their ability to act in the face of conflict. (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 6)

In order to maintain the semblance of relationship these girls were struggling with "a series of disconnections that seem at once adaptive and psychologically wounding, between psyche and body, voice and desire, thoughts and feelings, self and relationship" (Brown & Gilligan, 1992, p. 7). Too often girls were found stepping away from articulating their thoughts and feelings if these would bring them into conflict with others. What was initially conscious public disavowal of thoughts and feelings, over time became unconscious disclaiming. Girls then expressed that they felt confused about what they thought and felt, that they were unsure. Over time, many took themselves out of authentic relationship--with others and with themselves. They became unable to identify relational violations, and were thus more susceptible to abuse. Brown and Gilligan began to wonder if they were "witnessing the beginning of psychological splits and relational struggles well documented in the psychology of women" (1992, p. 106).

To encourage girls' resistance and resilience, Gilligan and her colleagues realized that it was not enough to help girls put into words for others their thoughts and feelings. For many, the fear of how their thoughts and feelings would be received had already metamorphosed into the girls' not listening to themselves. And so the women working with these girls tried to find ways to help the inner ear not go deaf and to revive a capacity to listen to one's selves, while at the same time building a group where the girls could experience that others can survive their voice(s): that authentic dialogue is possible, not just false or idealized relations. Without such an experience of being received--to counter the culture's messages--the ear cannot reawaken and the voice cannot speak; be it in "internal" dialogue or "external" dialogue. Akin to

Selman and Schultz's move toward play, Gilligan's team moved toward supporting the girls' diary and journal writing, their dramatic and poetic writing, and their literally claiming their voices in voice work.

Dialogue--in the ideal sense--necessitates both the capacity to deeply receive the other and the capacity to receive oneself; to allow the other a voice and to allow the self a voice. Dialogue requires the experience of being listened into words.

Being Silenced vs. Opportunities for Dialogue: Voice, Mind, Relationship, and Social Action

Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule (1986), in Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind, vividly describe the interpenetration of dialogical domains I am addressing, as they study different ways of women's knowing. In one group of women they studied women's silence in adulthood was linked to family experiences of neglect and abuse. These women were passive, subdued, and subordinate in adulthood. "The ever-present fear of volcanic eruptions and catastrophic events leaves children speechless and numbed, unwilling to develop their capacities for hearing and knowing" (1986, p. 159). These women experienced themselves as mindless and voiceless. Their childhoods were not only lived in isolation from their family members and others outside the family, but most often were lived without play. The intersection of an absence of dialogue with an absence of play turned out to be particularly damaging for these children as they grew to womanhood.

In the ordinary course of development, the use of play metaphors gives way to language--a consensually validated symbol system--allowing for more precise communication of meanings between persons. Outer speech becomes increasingly internalized as it is transformed into inner speech. Impulsive behavior gives way to behavior that is guided by the actor's own symbolic representations of hopes, plans, and meanings. Without playing, conversing, listening to others, and drawing out their own voice, people fail to develop a sense that they can talk and think things through. (1986, p. 33)

Moreover, the world becomes a place of simple dichotomies--good/bad, big/little, win/lose--losing all subtlety and texture.

Without the imaginal dialogues of play and substantive interpersonal dialogues the child is constrained within a narrow band of reality. Both play and dialogue allow the child to visit the perspectives of others, as well as to dream of that which has not yet come into reality. "What is" and "who one is" become radically widened as one decenters from the ego's perspective and the given. Through the metaphorizing of play one leaps past the given confines of "self" and "reality." The dialogues of play and the dialogues of social interaction are both creative of the self and libertory of the self. Through each empathic leap, through each re-embodiment of ourselves in play, we pass beyond our usual borders and exceed what has been. What "is" is surpassed by what might be, and "who" I am is replaced by my transit beyond myself--either through projection of the self or through the reception of the other. Working an

issue through play--expressing it, addressing it from several perspectives, taking the role of the others in play--is translated into the dialogues of thought and those of our everyday interactions. It should come as no surprise that the complexity and subtlety of a child's play, her flexibility in moving between the dramatis personae, can be seen in his or her participation in interpersonal dialogue, and in his or her capacities for reflection.

Childhoods that do not give opportunity for pretend play--that movement between dramatis personae--, whose families discourage interpersonal dialogue, and whose schools limit the classroom experience to verbal exchanges that are unilateral and teacher-initiated make it highly unlikely that children will learn the "give and take of dialogue" (Belenky et al, 1986, p. 34), giving them access to what lies beyond a narrow self which has been schooled for silence. For such children, and the adults that are generated from them, words have force only when uttered violently. Thus they "tend to be action-oriented, with little insight into their own behaviors or motivations. Since they do not expect to be heard they expect no response, the volume of their voices is more important than the content. They lack verbal negotiating skills and do not expect conflicts to be resolved through non-violent means" (1986, p. 160). Those who do not escape silence pass the legacy of their early homes on to their children:

Mothers who have so little sense of their own minds and voices are unable to imagine such capacities in their children. Not being fully aware of the power of words for communicating meaning, they expect their children to know what is

on their minds without the benefit of words. These parents do not tell their children what they mean by "good"--much less why. Nor do they ask their children to explain themselves. (...)

We observed these mothers "backhanding" their children whenever the child asked questions, even when the questions stemmed from genuine curiosity and desire for knowledge. It was if the questions themselves were another example of the child's "talking back" and "disrespect." Such a mother finds the curious, thinking child's questions stressful, since she does not yet see herself as an authority who has anything to say or teach. (1986, pp. 163-164)

Interestingly, these women were not aware of any experience within themselves of dialogue with a self or of having an inner voice; nor did their words express a familiarity with introspection or a sense of their own consciousness. Those women in Belenky's study who were able to emerge from silence into adulthood had the benefit of a school which encouraged the cultivation of mind and an interaction with the arts, had been able to forge significant relationships outside the home despite the prohibition not to do so, or had "created such relationships for themselves through the sheer power of their imaginations, by endowing their pets and imaginary playmates with those attributes that nourish the human potential" (1986, p. 163).

In the other ways of knowing that Belenky et al. describe--received knowing, subjective knowing, procedural knowing and constructed knowing--intrapyschic and interpersonal dialogue are intimately related to each other, together forming a sense

of the flatness or complexity and fullness of reality. For instance, in received knowing women experience others as the authority, silencing their own voices to be better able to imbibe the wisdom of others. It is not surprising that they seek to eliminate ambiguity from their worlds, and can be described themselves as literal-minded. On the other hand, subjective knowers conceive of all truth arising internally, stilling their public voice, and often turning a "deaf ear to other voices." Often distrusting words, they cover disagreement with conformity, and live in the isolation of their own thoughts and inner voices.

In what is clearly their preferred developmental telos, Belenky and her colleagues describe those who experience constructed knowing. In this way of knowing, knowledge is contextual. There are multiple viewpoints to be had, but not all are equally adequate to revealing what one is trying to understand. These knowers are familiar with listening to the inner voice or voices. Yet they know that even an inner voice may be wrong at times, for it is but one part of a whole. They are, as well, adept at patient listening to the voices of others. They have a high tolerance for internal contradiction and ambiguity.

Just as the child breaks the confines of the given through the dialogue of play, so too may the adult who can move between perspectives and systems of knowing. Liberated from subservience to external authority, to any one system of thought, and from slavish devotion to their own internal voices, these knowers have the dialogical tools to break the oppressive aspects of "reality." Strikingly, their nurture, care, and engagement with their own voices, the voices of others, and ideas broaden out to their nurture and care of aspects of the world. They understand that cultural dialogue itself

can be intervened in, effected, and transformed. Such a work, however, cannot be undertaken when there is little or no awareness of the multiplicity of thought, little or no experience of being listened into speech, or of practice being an active participant in the give and take of dialogue, revealing as it does the perspectival nature of truth.

From Cultures of Silence to Libertory Dialogue: The Work of Paulo Freire

This connection between coming to see the context one is in, gaining voice in relation to this context, and being able to creatively engage in efforts to effect culture is beautifully articulated in the work of Paulo Freire. Here silence and lack of dialogical capacity is understood to arise through oppression, which purposely creates voicelessness and obscures context in order to maintain power. Paulo Freire, the founder of the literacy movement in Brazil and radical pedagogist, argues that, for the disenfranchised, learning to read should involve a process of becoming able to decode the cultural and socio-economic circumstances that shape your life and your thinking. Once able to decode these conditions one is then able to participate in the shaping of those circumstances. He called the first step in this empowering process "conscientization," a group process which allows one to actively engage with the structures one has previously identified with and been blind to.

In Freire's model, an "animator" helps group participants to question their day-to-day experience, their concerns and suffering, exploring the relation between daily life and the cultural dictates that suffuse it. Here words, much like play for the child, begin to open up the realm of the possible, liberating "reality" from the bonds of the

given. Efforts at change are directed not foremost to the individual level, but to wider cultural change that will, in the end, effect the participants. This change becomes possible through the second step of Freire's method, "annunciation." Once a group knows how to decode the dominant paradigm and its effects--through having spoken together--then they can begin to conceive of social arrangements which are more just through the process of dialogue.

Why is this process necessary? Freire says that the dominant class attempts "by means of the power of its ideology, to make everyone believe that its ideas are the ideas of the nation" (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 74). A dominant paradigm operates by way of the monologue, not dialogue. It requires voicelessness on the part of the other to sustain itself. "The power of an ideology to rule," says Freire, "lies basically in the fact that it is embedded in the activities of the everyday life" (Ibid., pp. 26-27).

It is through dialogue that one breaks out of the "bureaucratization" of mind, where there can be a rupture from previously established patterns. "In fact, there is no creativity without ruptura, without a break from the old, without conflict in which you have to make a decision" (Freire, in Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 38). For Freire, true education is not the accumulation of information, placed in the student by the teacher. True education must encourage this rupture through dialogue. Teacher and student must each be able to effect, to communicate with, and to challenge each other, rather than perpetuate domination through monological teaching methods that further disempower.

Freire is well aware of the internalization of oppression. Through the animator's questioning a participant begins to claim what she knows about the

situation under discussion. Instead of being a passive recipient of the situation the words of writing and speaking usher a transformation from object to subject. It is such a subject who can then dream a different reality than what is given. The animator is careful not to indoctrinate, to announce the problem and the solution. To do so would intensify the internalized oppression the participant is subject to, encouraging inner and outer silence and subservience. It is the radical listening, hosting, of the animator that opens a space for voice to occur--both internally and externally. As the other group members, who are similar to one, are able to speak and take hold of their situation in words, this empowering of voice is felt by those who listen, as if it were their own.

With brilliant clarity Freire connects dialogue with love:

Dialogue cannot exist, however, in the absence of profound love for the world and for women and men. The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. It is thus necessarily the task of responsible subjects and cannot exist in a relation of domination.

Domination reveals the pathology of love: sadism in the dominator and masochism in the dominated. Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause--the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical (...). (Freire, 1970, p. 77)

Dialogue Across Difference: Bohm's Large Group Dialogue

In Freire and Faundez's work the concept of culture is not linked to ideas of unity, but to diversity and tolerance. This shift toward the acknowledgment of diversity, invites voices to speak that have been marginalized by the dominant culture and its paradigms. This movement from center to margin requires a process of dialogue that assumes difference and seeks to articulate it. Truth is not located in a particular perspective, it "is to be found in the 'becoming' of dialogue" (Faundez, in Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 32).

David Bohm, physicist and colleague of Krishnmurti, describes a kind of large group dialogue where it is through the difference that is present that one can begin to hear one's own assumptions. Bohm asks that, once we hear these assumptions, we try to suspend them, rather than using our characteristic defensive moves of overpowering the other voices, defending our assumptions as the truth. This acknowledgment and suspension of assumptions is done in the service of beginning to see what it is one means, and what it is the other might mean. It is through the diversity of the group that the partialness of a single mind can be grasped. The opportunity for this kind of large group dialogue begins to release the self from such partiality, and makes possible a more complex and subtle form of thinking. De Mare, a colleague of Bohm's, says that

Dialogue has a tremendous thought potential: it is from dialogue that ideas spring to transform the mindlessness and massification that accompany

social oppression, replacing it with higher levels of cultural sensitivity, intelligence, and humanity. (de Mare, Piper & Thompson, 1991, p. 17)

When we defend an assumption, says Bohm, we are at the same time "pushing out whatever is new. (...) There is a great deal of violence in the opinions we are defending" (1990, p. 15). The other is not granted a full and free position in the dialogue. Through coming to see our own and others' assumptions we arrive at a place where we can begin to think together, seeing more of the totality that comprises our situation. Sampson (1993, pp. 1220, 1223) is careful to remind us that allowing others to speak is not enough, however, if they cannot be "heard in their own way, on their own terms," rather than constrained to "use the voice of those who have constructed them." Here, one is required to take a third-person point of view towards oneself, reflecting on how one's actions, attitudes, and assumptions arise from particular ideologies--and, further, how the ideologies we are identified with have effected the other, the stranger.

As is the case in imaginal dialogues, such dialogue in a large group requires the suspension of usual egoic modes of operation: judging, condemning, deeming oneself superior (or inferior). These interfere with listening deeply, with the radical entertaining of the other, which at the same moment can awaken us to where we each stand. Bohm releases thought from the confines of an individual person. To adequately think we need to invite and witness the multiplicity within the group. Without this reflective, conscious practice mind remains partial, blinded by the assumptions it has identified with.

Coda

In the end, I am asking that we focus on the interconnecting web of dialogue throughout life, committing to the nurture of dialogical capacities. Imaginal dialogues do not exist separately from the other domains of our lives. The present hierarchies of our culture, schools, and family--and thus of mind--do not deeply invite dialogue... neither does the voicelessness directly resulting from such hierarchies of power. Here I am trying to underscore the interpenetration of dialogues with imaginal others, with dialogues with oneself, one's neighbors, within one's community, between communities, and with the earth and its creatures.

These examples show the deep reciprocity between what I have called dialogical domains. The liberation of a potential voice through play, for instance, can be a harbinger of a substantial shift in the range of how one can be with another interpersonally. Likewise, the experience of deep interpersonal receptivity in a group can call into voice someone who has been silenced, this establishment of dialogical space is then more available in internal conversation. Such a focus on dialogue moves the psychological focus from the self and its interiority to the "between," across domains.

To nurture dialogical capacities that have liberational potential, we are pointed not only toward an illumination of psychic structures and their personified voices but toward the creation of child care contexts where the dramatic fray of play can be delighted in, to elementary schools where the leap between self and others in a small

group can be practiced, to spiritual education and practice where the voices within silence can be discerned and addressed. It points us toward high schools and colleges where previously marginalized voices can be admitted to the mosaic, changing the underlying structure of education from the conveyance of dominant paradigms to one of dialogue across difference. It turns us toward the processes of non-violent communication and often of reconciliation that are needed to nurture the neighborhoods and communities--and ultimately nations--that we are homed in. And, finally, to the dialogue beyond words required between nature and humans if our actions are to finally preserve this earth.

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