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EVALUATING BELIEVED-IN IMAGININGS

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The concept of believed-in imaginings is intended to be nonperjorative, a nonpathological way of describing how any person may come to believe things that others (often at different times or in different circumstances) may regard as untrue, even ridiculous or bizarre. However, because what is imagined is often contrasted with what is actual, to call something a believed-in imagining may itself be taken as a devaluation as though a believed-in imagining is something that is not real. Because of this dichotomy between the imagined and the actual, the concept of believed-in imagining may be attacked either for saying too little or for implying too much. On the one hand, Wiener (chapter 2) appears to be saying that *all* narratives are believed-in imaginings or, at least, that there is no way to distinguish a believed-in imagining from a believed-in actuality. On the other hand, Vinden (chapter 4) appears to argue that the concept reduces all believing to imagining and to impoverish reality by implying that pragmatic actuality is all that exists.

In this chapter, I address these concerns. First, I take the empirical, secular, perspective of social science on believed-in imaginings, the perspective that Sarbin (chapter 1) takes and address Wiener's (chapter 2)

critique from this perspective. Second, I examine the “a-rational” perspective implicit in Vinden’s (chapter 4) plea for some reality that is not socially constructed. This examination leads me to look at the concept of reality, Scheibe’s (chapter 3) attempt to go beyond pragmatic tests of what is real by using the concept of dynamic authenticity, and the nature of the emotion that is implied in authenticity. Finally, returning to the nature of reality, I draw on the work of a contemporary philosopher to propose a way of evaluating the reality captured by believed-in imaginings.

AN EMPIRICAL PERSPECTIVE

The concept of believed-in imaginings is designed to describe how people in our culture can come to honestly believe—take as real—things that have no factual support and to describe how they can sometimes become entrapped in what are illusions, at least to those committed to a rational perspective. The experimental studies reported in this volume—those by Kirsch (chapter 9); Mazzoni and Loftus (chapter 8); and Lynn, Pintar, Stafford, Marmelstein, and Lock (chapter 7)—establish that people can be led to hold beliefs that are clearly counterfactual.

Of course, when we do not have experimentally controlled variables, there will always be some disagreement about whether a belief is an imagining; Wiener (chapter 2) argues that, in the absence of experimental controls, we can never be sure whether or not a given belief is an imagining. Certainly, we cannot rely on popular vote. There are thousands of people who believe in facilitated communication, the repression of memories of satanic cults, and alien abductions. Wiener appears to argue that one belief is as likely to be as veridical as another, but, at least insofar as a belief makes a general claim about empirical reality, this position seems impossible to defend. To illustrate his position, Wiener charges Sarbin with using words that bias the listener’s judgment, and he replaces these words with more “neutral” words that make the beliefs seem more credible. However, as Wiener himself expounds, words are never neutral. Rather, their use must be defended, and, if we are using them to refer to empirical reality, they cannot be used as arbitrarily as Wiener imagines. I would argue that in the examples given by Sarbin, Sarbin’s words rather than Wiener’s are justified by the empirical facts. If the accuracy of word use is in question, third-party judges can examine the evidence and collect more if it is necessary.

To the extent that people claim that phenomena are matters of fact, their claims must be subject to empirical tests, the presence or absence of evidence, and the critique of logic and common sense. If people who use pragmatic reasoning and are open to evidence are not convinced of the existence of a phenomenon that claims empirical support, we may presume

the phenomenon is a believed-in imagining. There may be initial doubts, but putative phenomena such as facilitated communication, satanic ritual abuse, and the recovery of repressed traumatic memories, like cold fusion, are being increasingly dismissed as illusory.

Thus, from a rational perspective, the concept of believed-in imaginings appears to be a useful tool for understanding how people may come to have counterfactual beliefs. There are, however, many beliefs that do not claim pragmatic existence. Joan of Arc did not suppose that other people could hear the voices she heard and took to be divinely inspired. Wiener raises the question of whether her belief was a believed-in imagining. Was she delusional, following the will of God, or a witch?

AN A-RATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

It must be admitted that the rational world view emphasized by our culture is not the only possible world view. Whenever we attempt to understand other cultures (including preenlightenment European culture), we find ourselves dealing with world views that do not prioritize rationality and personal agency. In order to make sense of another culture from our own rational perspective we speak of their "beliefs." Even when we try to craft a historical narrative that captures the point of view of other people, we find ourselves distancing from them by using the concept of belief and, essentially, using the concept of believed-in imagining.

For example, rather than dealing with the external causes of the Santal rebellion of 1855 (as a traditional British historian of India might), Guha (1988) attempted to make the insurgent peasant's consciousness (their will and reason) the subject of a historical narrative about the rebellion. However, the peasant leaders denied their subjecthood or agency! They stated that their God (Thakur) made an appearance, issued a divine command to fight, and assured them that British bullets would not harm his devotees. They stated that it was Thakur and not themselves who were fighting.

In his critique of Guha's account, Chakrabarty (1997) noted that there is no way for Guha to "give us a narrative strategy that is rationally-defensible in the modern understanding of what constitutes public life. The Santal's own understanding does not directly serve the cause of democracy or citizenship or socialism. It needs to be reinterpreted" (p. 23). In the narrative of the rebels, the rebellion was not secular. What we might call the supernatural was part of the Santal's public life. However, Chakrabarty observed, "the professional historian must tell a narrative . . . in which the idea of historical evidence, like evidence allowed in a court of law, cannot admit of the supernatural except as part of the nonrational (i.e., somebody's belief system)" (p. 23).

Chakrabarty appreciated the value of rational historical narratives and noted that our own culture's secularizing enables us to construct the social sciences and is tied to the way in which our society searches for justice. However, he was also sensitive to the fact that there are other modes of public being in the world. "The supernatural can inhabit the world in these other modes and not always as a problem or result of belief; the supernatural or the divine can be brought into presence by our practice" (1997, p. 30).

Of course from a pragmatic standpoint this is no different from how Sarbin articulates believed-in imaginings. That is, if we act as if something is present and become fully involved in the enactment, then the believed-in imagining will be instantiated—that is, taken as real. However, from a nonpragmatic standpoint, "brought into presence" does not simply mean taken as real (which implies that which is illusory); rather, it asserts a spiritual reality or a spiritual dimension to reality.

Vinden (chapter 4) makes the important point that many cultures do not have a sharp boundary between the material or natural world and the immaterial or supernatural world. Rather than divide the world into separate spheres, these realities are seen as interpenetrating. Magic or miracles exist; they are just as real as the facts and explanations of the material world. In fact, whereas we may refer magic and miracles to a supernatural dimension of being, Werner (1948) pointed out that in children, and for peoples who believe in magic, there is no complete differentiation among magic, religious activity, and nature. He established the existence of "primitive" organizations of thought in which behavior is relatively undifferentiated, less articulate and definite, and more rigid and labile. In such primitive thinking, everything exists in action, and objects are understood as animate in the same way as we may perceive a landscape as being sad or cheerful. Likewise, the difference between subjective and objective is not as clearly defined, so that dreams and wishes may be treated as being intimately connected with reality.

Objects are primarily understood through motor and affective attitudes. Whereas adults in our culture tend to make distinctions among perceiving, imagining, feeling, thinking, moving, and so on, primitive thought tends to unify these events and often not distinguish subject and object. Thus, "things" do not exist in their own right but exist as "signal-things." A dog is not an objective structure with parts but something that bites or that one pets. Motor and affective elements are merged in the perception of things such that the objects of perception have dynamic powers and magical properties. This is inherent in primitive perception. The world perceived by primitive people is filled with what we might categorize as magical entities that reflect fears and desires. When a traditional Papuan rubs his back and leg against rocks to obtain strength and durability, or when one burns a lock of someone's hair to injure an enemy, the person

is not making magic by analogy or imagining an as-if behavior. In primitive thought modes, the person is actually bringing the strength or harm into being through the magical activity.

Werner noted

the basic tendencies of magic behavior proceed out of a kind of thinking which, although deviating from the western man's point of view, is quite intelligible and in no sense is of mysterious import to the native himself. . . . It is natural that things should be mutable in essence. . . . Only in higher civilization, where material and supernatural events are completely separated and where magic does not pervade the whole culture, is it possible for the specifically mystical experience to develop. (1948, p. 352)

As was noted by Vinden (chapter 4), even those of us who live in highly civilized cultures may be able to engage in primitive thinking when our emotions are engaged, as when we hesitate to drink from a water bottle on which we have pasted a cyanide label. Let the reader observe the defenses enacted if he or she burns out the eyes of a loved one's face from a photograph.

Our own culture, or at least a dominant segment of its people, has rejected a good deal of the interpenetration of supernatural and natural worlds in favor of rational explanations. Science and rational thought have extended the realm of our control over much of the material world so that we have less use for magic and dismiss many beliefs as superstitions. Although some flirt with ghosts, angels, and other spiritual beings, they are likely to regard them as figurative or metaphorical rather than taking them seriously. For most, such immaterial beings are not-believed-in imaginings.

We have learned that there are many things in the world that do not exist. At least we *think* we have learned that. A skeptic might suggest that our hold on rationality is quite tentative, and that past beliefs have merely been replaced by beliefs in the influence of repressed memories, UFOs, and, of course, Satan (or his demonic material counterparts in the form of communists, terrorists, homosexuals, sex-abusers, etc.). Also, although it is clear that many academics view religious beliefs as opiates, the majority of people subscribe to some sort of belief in God and spiritual reality, although this tends to be underutilized and quite removed from their belief in science and the material world.

In fact, it may be argued that Western society's emphasis on rationality and personal agency is actually a consequence of its adoption of the Judaic-Christian narrative of creation. In this narrative the world is regarded as created by God, and, hence, is worthy of our attention, and individuals are regarded as created in God's image.

Hillman (1975) for example, pointed out that our modern world view confines subjectivity and agency to human people. He stated,

The Christian idea of person as the true focus of the divine and the only carrier of soul is basic to this world view. . . . We do not believe that imaginary people could possibly *be as they present themselves*, as valid psychological subjects with will and feelings like ours but not reducible to ours. (pp. 1–2)

He argued that we should stop insisting that our egos are the only things that really exist. Rather, ghosts, angels, gods, and mental illness are a part of our psyche, and we should grant them agency and would do well to let them be and deal with them.

Thus, Hillman argued that what most in our culture take to be real—an empirical world of fact in which only people (and not gods, angels, and demons) are agents—is itself a believed-in imagining. Applying Sarbin's reasoning to ourselves, we might argue that empirical reality alone is real because of our complete involvement in such a world. And we are left with Vinden's plea for some reality apart from believed-in imaginings.

REALITY AND AUTHENTICITY

Sarbin (chapter 1), citing Cohen, argues that to say something is real is a rhetorical claim (i.e., that one's belief has credibility) rather than a descriptive term. For Sarbin the claim that a believed-in imagining is real masks the process that is involved. It would be more useful to speak of the extent to which one is involved in as-if behavior. The higher the degree of involvement, the more the actor will interpret the imaginings as veridical perceptions, will drop as-if qualifiers, and claim "reality" for what is imagined (see also the "perception of reality" offered by Morawski in chapter 13).

In one sense this is clearly so. In fact, Sarbin's analysis also pertains to observers of as-if behavior. A number of years ago I was working with a graduate student on the experience of realness. She witnessed a group of three children who were having a "parade" in front of a house with their saucepans and other accouterments. At first she was somewhat embarrassed for the children because they were taking their parade so seriously. However, her perception soon changed and her embarrassment ceased. The children were so involved in their imagining that she decided they had created a real parade.

In another sense, however, the relegation of reality to involvement seems to miss some important nonempirical referents of the term *real*. Sarbin assumes that imaginative constructions—"poetic narratives"—have no connection with a reality apart from themselves. From his perspective any

claims about reality must simply reflect the degree to which the person is involved in the poetry of the narrative. This, however, reduces realness to mere pragmatic reality. To portray all believed-in imaginings as equally illusory implies that all poetic narratives are not real in spite of the fact that some aspects of reality—emotional experience, for example—are better captured by poetry than by prose. And certainly if art criticism has any merit and is not simply a matter of taste, works of art can be objectively judged as capturing some aspect of outer or inner reality. For example, there is agreement between discerning viewers who know a medium as to whether aspects of a work are contrived or reflect spontaneity and the personality of the artist. Good works of art are highly personal. Whereas people expect scientists to come up with the same observations of an event, we expect artists to come up with different renditions of the same referent. As Macmurray (1961/1979) stated,

If two painters were to produce identical representations of the same scene, the genuineness of the work of the one or of the other or of both would at once be questionable. Either one would be a copy of the other one or both mere mechanical reproductions of the scene, using the same technique but devoid of genuine emotional reflection. (p. 18)

This facet of reality appears to be what Scheibe is referencing when he speaks of dynamic authenticity.

Scheibe (chapter 3) argues that tests of authenticity, which involve matching against a standard, have limited usefulness. In part they are limited because we are often biased by our beliefs and, in part, because we can never reproduce the historical context in which events occur. Whereas some inauthenticity may be revealed by pragmatic tests (e.g., a counterfeit coin or bill), the inauthenticity of much of modern life is revealed by its dramatic poverty. Scheibe clearly values the aliveness present in good drama. Although he does not directly address the question of why reproductions are of less value than originals, we might conjecture that he would say that reproductions are less authentic because the spontaneous emotion that led to the original creation is absent in the reproduction. Perhaps this is the reason why Scheibe appears to argue that emotion is what gives the mark of authenticity to an event. It is inherent in good drama. And in the event he relates—the ceremony of initiation into adulthood—it seems clear that emotion is an integral part of the ceremony. Ceremonies and rituals that *work*—so that a person really becomes an adult, or married, or dead—must involve emotion in order to succeed in transforming social reality (see Denison, 1928, p. 15).

However, Scheibe suggests that all emotion that is felt rather than feigned is real emotion. Of course, in one sense he is certainly correct. We can distinguish between *acting* as if one has an emotion and *feeling* the

emotion. However, the extent to which an emotion is felt may simply reflect the depth of the person's involvement in a believed-in imagining that is illusory. Kenny (chapter 15) shows how it is a mistake to use emotion as an index of veridicality. When Scheibe argues that all felt emotion is real, this relegates emotion and feeling to the realm of subjectivity. Yet there are strong grounds for arguing that emotions have a cognitive dimension, that they are about the reality we perceive. From this perspective emotions may be as true and valid, or as false and mistaken, as our perceptions of reality. Just as a perception may prove to be an illusion, an emotion may be illusory even though it is strongly felt.

I am not speaking here of what we might call emotional mistakes. These are simply due to misinterpretations of objective reality as when a person who is hurt or angry at not being invited to a party discovers that he or she actually was invited, or when a slight was perceived but not intended. Rather I am referring to mistaken emotion. For example, Merleau-Ponty (1962, pp. 378–383) distinguished between illusory or imaginary feelings and actual feelings by referring to Scheler's distinction between the outer fringes and the core of the self. Thus, he spoke of feelings that are simply reflective of one's current situation (pleased at receiving a present, sad because one is at a funeral) as opposed to being moved at the core of one's being. The adolescent in love is familiar with narratives such as that of Romeo and Juliet and infuses the feelings of these narratives into his or her own life. However, this is largely sentimental fantasy and until a "personal and authentic feeling" occurs, the person has no way of discovering the illusory, literary element in the love. Thus, the person loses reality in the emotional narrative as an actor does in the part he or she plays. For Merleau-Ponty, one only gradually makes his or her own reality by acts of love or hatred that are directed toward real others.

THE NATURE OF EMOTION

Sarbin (chapter 16) argues that our emotional life is an aspect of our narratives and a result of how events effect the identity claims we make in these narratives. Although there is much to be said for this view, it seems important to note that there are two other important aspects of emotion. First, there are times when emotions appear to be an impetus for narratives. This occurs for some people much of the time and for many people some of the time. There are some whose fear leads them to anticipate danger in any unknown situation or whose anger leads them to repeatedly create hostile encounters. I remember one incident when my own anger created a narrative. I was meditating in a large group of people and became angry when I noticed that someone had turned up the heat in the meditation hall. The pleasant coolness of the hall was spoiled by someone

who preferred heat and unilaterally inflicted it upon us. As I observed my anger grow, I noticed that it was making me hot; as it passed, I grew cooler. Finally, I realized that no one had turned up the heat in the hall. The heat I had attributed to some inconsiderate moron had been the heat of my own anger. Although that anger may have sprung from some unconscious narrative, it clearly formed the basis for the spinning of a believed-in imagining.

Second, even when emotion is a response to events that are shaped by a narrative, the emotion itself is not simply a reaction to those events or a narrative plot. Although I agree with Sarbin that it is not useful to regard emotions as bodily perturbations or states, I would also not reduce them to narrative plots. Narrative plots include stories of revenge or romantic love, and include anger or love, but they are not the emotions of anger and love per se. Rather, anger, love, and other emotions are aspects of the relationship between the actor and others involved in the narrative. They are "choices" or "judgments" that reveal the value of the object of the emotion and, accordingly, transform the embodied stance or "attitude" of the actor (see de Rivera, 1977; Solomon, 1984).

Macmurray (1932/1992), like Merleau-Ponty, distinguished between real and unreal feelings. For Macmurray, feelings grasp the value of things or people. When feeling ceases to be directed toward the person or thing with which it is connected, it becomes unreal. A bad temper may lead to unreal anger in that the person at whom we were angry only occasioned our outburst of anger. The anger was not really directed at the other. We may be in love with the feeling of love rather than the person whom we supposedly love, or we may refuse to admit that we are jealous when we really are.

Often, in fact, we are more concerned with enjoying our feelings than with enjoying the person or object we are engaged with. According to Winston (1996), viewers who prefer popular art (large-eyed children, idealized maidens, scenes of country life) are seeking the warm pleasant feelings produced by the image rather than feeling the dynamic tonal properties of high art images. They are being sentimental rather than experiencing a work of art per se. Speaking of reading a sensationalized story, Macmurray noted that "the feelings are unreal feelings, not because they are not felt, of course, (they are apt to be very intense), but because they are not grasping the real value of the story" (1932/1992, p. 102). To say that felt emotion is necessarily real is to say that emotions are merely subjective and, because values are intimately connected with emotions, that values are subjective. I want to argue that although emotions are always *personal*, and although they *may* be subjective, they ideally are objective in the sense that they reveal what is objectively valuable for the person and, hence, are tied to personal reality.

When Scheibe reports that farm life was real for him and movies an

escape, but that he now sees people for whom movies are real, is he merely making a value-free observation, or does he want to argue that farm life is objectively more real? If the latter, is this simply because there are more constraints, more pragmatic matters that must be dealt with, or is it somehow more authentic? Certainly farm life brings us to our senses, demands we use our bodies, forces us to deal with the properties of things that we cannot control. This does not seem to merely invoke pragmatic tests, but authentic emotions. Let us contrast this, not with the life of mind, for this is authentic when one's ideas are one's own, but with the TV life that many are living today.

Many people become involved in TV soap operas and have "parasocial" interactions with the characters in the program, feeling comfortable with them, missing them, sending them baby presents, and so on. A recent study concluded, "While they are a functional alternative for those who seek but cannot handle real relationships, they are even more attractive for others who are not interested in real relationships in the first place" (Vorderer, 1996, p. 122). Is the love that motivates people to send presents to a baby born in a soap opera as real as the love that motivates people to help a neighbor's baby or to sponsor a child in a developing country, or is the former emotion unauthentic and the TV narrative unreal?

REALITY

What do we mean by "real"? Macmurray (1992) argued that something that is real is not necessarily something that exists in a pragmatic sense, but something that is significant, has consequences, and provides meaning to our lives. In one sense, Sarbin does not disagree with this, for he equates believing and hence organismic involvement with the value that a narrative has for the person. However, for Sarbin the reality of a believed-in imagining is simply a function of this involvement, an index to it. To the extent that we are dealing with narratives, at least with nonrational narratives, one person's reality is another's fantasy, and all involve illusion. At least, there is no way of distinguishing between them without the possibility of empirical tests. By contrast, for Macmurray, a believed-in imagining may be real or illusory: One acts as if a friend is faithful, and the friend may prove to be faithful or false.

For Macmurray, the rational includes science, pragmatic tests, and historical narratives, but it is not limited to that domain. It also includes art criticism, for an artistic object may or may not express spontaneity and capture the form of an object as it is uniquely experienced by the individual artist; it includes religious thought; and it includes feelings, which may or may not be in touch with external reality. Furthermore, whereas rocks, plants, and animals cannot be unreal, people can be. People are not always

themselves. They may engage in unreal thinking by thinking about matters that have no significance, or by dealing with generalities for which no examples can be provided, or by divorcing their thought from its application to their lives. They may engage in unreal feeling. They may be engaged in self-deception (Shapiro, 1996). We are often called upon to confirm or disconfirm another's emotions and identity. If we fail to confirm genuine feelings we cause pain, whereas if we confirm unreal ones, we support pretenses and reinforce self-delusion. If we confirm another's pretensions in exchange for their confirming our own, we become engaged in what Keen (1937/1975) terms a collusion, and we become locked into static identities that ignore contrary evidence. To the extent that a person's thinking or feeling is unreal, the person will be unreal. If a person has no real feelings, he or she must rely on external authority. Feeling divorced from thought becomes sentimental and at the mercy of tradition, feeling what one is supposed to feel, or feeling what is stimulated rather than one's own feelings. To be real is to be oneself, and that can only occur when one's actions are directed to the world.

If reality simply depends on the degree of our involvement, then valuing is a subjective phenomena in that there are no values apart from the narrative. One poetic narrative is as good as another as long as one is sufficiently involved. Yet this does not ring true. When Jesus becomes so involved in the narrative told by Isaiah that he offers himself as the sacrificial lamb for his people, we personally may or may not become involved in the narrative, accept his sacrifice, and take him as the Messiah, but we all recognize a significant narrative, a narrative having some sort of authenticity, of touching some sort of reality. Jesus cannot be dismissed as delusional in the way we may dismiss a contemporary who claims that he is Jesus (see Schweitzer, 1968/1975).

Is Wiener correct that the dismissal of a contemporary who claims to be Jesus is solely a function of our not giving credence to the narrative? Or is the narrative less compelling because it is less in touch with what is objectively valuable, with what is personally real? Just as we can be mistaken about empirical reality, we can be mistaken about interpersonal reality, we may trust in someone who betrays us, and we may live in the illusion that we are hated when we are actually loved. Likewise, we may live in the illusion that there is a meaning we can give our lives or in the delusion that there is no such meaning. There is an ultimate Reality. We simply cannot be sure what it is.

DISTINGUISHING REALITY FROM ILLUSION

The chapters in the book have attempted to clarify the psychological and social antecedents of believed-in imaginings. However, we may also

inquire into how we might evaluate believed-in imaginings. One possibility is suggested by Macmurray's work (1961/1979). For Macmurray, as for Sarbin, the person is an agent, an actor, who is necessarily involved in social relationships. However, rather than grounding the analysis of these relationships in narratives, Macmurray grounded narratives in the motivational underpinnings of personal relationships. He asserted that there are always two central motivations present: a caring for the other and a concern for the self. At any moment, one of these motivations will be dominant. When caring for the other dominates a person's activity, the ego recedes, the person is available for mutuality, and there is a working relationship between imagined ideals and perceptions of the actual. People can trust one another and be themselves in friendship, and then they can struggle to unite the ideal and the actual. However, whenever people are hurt—either apparently or actually abandoned, betrayed, or injured—their concern for themselves becomes dominant, the ego becomes defensive, and the ideal world of imagination is split off from action in the perceived world. The dualistic thinking with which we are plagued—the separation of mind from body, feeling from reason, ideals from pragmatism, the self as presented from the self as felt—are symptoms of this splitting. Unity is achieved only when the person manages to restore the dominance of caring.

As long as concern for the self and the split between imagining and perceiving continues, people will either be "good," submitting to authority, conforming to custom, and identifying themselves with the social roles in whatever drama is being played out in their society, or they will be "self-serving," seeking power to protect the interests of the self. In the former case, they will use imaginings to create a fantasy life, and this ideal realm, divorced from the actual world, will be what is real for them. In the latter case, the imagination will simply be used to gain power, ideals will be viewed as unrealistic, and only pragmatic concerns will appear real. Because both cases are based on a concern for the self, one may conjecture that the underlying fear will be reflected in fearful narratives. When unity is restored by the person caring for what is other than him- or herself, the imagination will be used to create, and works will be spontaneous rather than contrived, friendships genuine, actions authentic, the person real.

We may use Macmurray's reasoning to evaluate the reality of any narrative. Let us consider those discussed by Wiener. In the case of a narrative based on a recovered memory of childhood sexual abuse, we may ask whether the narrative restores the client's ability to care for others and, hence, unifies the self, or whether it produces more self-concern and fragments the self. We know that when abuse has actually occurred, communication about that abuse is restorative in the manner outlined by Pennebaker (1993). By contrast, the narratives that are based on the idea of repressed or disassociative memories of traumatic abuse appear to have led clients to become more fearful and to lose their ability to love and to work.

An example is provided by the State of Washington's Victim Compensation Program (Loftus, 1977). In 1991, an amendment to the Crime Victims Act allowed individuals to request compensation if they suffered from the return of repressed memories. In the succeeding years, 325 people were awarded compensation. In 1996, a sample of 30 of these cases was selected for review. In 26 cases the first memory surfaced during therapy. Before the repressed abuse narratives were related (29 of these involved satanic ritual abuse), 3 people had attempted or thought of suicide, 2 had been hospitalized, and 1 had engaged in self-mutilation. At the time of the study—after the narrative and therapy—20 were suicidal, 11 had been hospitalized, and 8 had mutilated themselves. Before the narratives, 25 had been employed, and 23 were married. After the narratives, only 3 were employed, 11 of the 23 who had been married were separated or divorced, and all were estranged from their families of origin. This suggests that such narratives are illusory rather than real.

In the case of the Heaven's Gate deaths, we may note that the narrative of joining a space ship was not used to gain strength for a project in this life. Rather, it appears to be a use of imagining to compensate for unsatisfactory life experiences. The leader had been badly betrayed by a colleague, and we may conjecture that he became self-concerned and was unable to restore the dominance of his ability to care. It is also apparent that many of the members were disillusioned and found no meaning in living in this world. They were unable to care for things outside themselves. The notes that were left indicate that the "the essential rituals for . . . transmutation" (as Wiener puts it) were motivated by self-concern rather than by caring for others.

In the case of the retired postal worker who reported conversations with saints, we do not have enough details to engage in a motivational analysis. We would want to know what the voices said. Did they encourage him to act with charity to others, and did he do so, or did the voices simply relieve loneliness and secure needed attention? We are more fortunate in having these details about Joan of Arc.

In the case of Joan of Arc there are conflicting believed-in imaginings. Factually, we know that Joan, a peasant girl, reported that she heard the voices of various saints who, when she was 16, exhorted her to aid the Dauphin of France to recapture the throne of France from the English. There was a prophecy that France would be redeemed by a virgin from Lorraine, and she gradually succeeded in enlisting some supporters and eventually convincing the Dauphin himself that she was divinely inspired. She then persuaded the court to allow her to play a leading role in an expedition to relieve the siege of Orleans. Inspired by her presence, the French defeated the English in a series of important battles, and the Dauphin was (reluctantly) crowned as she had prophesized. In a later battle she was captured and turned over to a pro-English ecclesiastical court. She

was tried for witchcraft and heresy (her claim that she was directly inspired by God was perceived to subvert the authority of the church hierarchy). Imprisoned and shackled, alone (save for the constant presence of five British soldiers who sometimes attempted to rape her), and without any legal assistance, she fought off her persecutors throughout a lengthy trial. However, after a verdict of guilty separated her from the church and made death inevitable, she recanted her belief, was condemned to life imprisonment, and was led back to her cell. She then retracted her abjuration and was burned at the stake. Just before her death, she prayed for the forgiveness of all those involved in her death. Her calm presence and last words so moved those assembled that a British soldier gave her a crucifix, many in the hostile audience became convinced of her innocence, and the executioner confessed that he had burned a saint. A latter, pro-French, court declared her innocent, and after 500 years she was canonized (Sackville-West, 1936).

These are the empirical events. What are we to make of the narratives? Many of the British believed she was a witch and that it was the use of witchcraft that allowed her to overcome their troops. She, and her French supporters, believed she was divinely inspired. How may we ourselves evaluate these conflicting narratives? Clearly, Joan was completely involved in her narrative, convinced others as to her claims, and altered the history of France. However, this says nothing about the objective reality of her narrative. However, when we examine the motivations underlying the two narratives, the differences seem clear.

The narrative of witchcraft was fear-based, as was the first court's desire to maintain the hierarchical authority of the church, and Joan's brief recanting of her belief. By contrast, Joan's narrative involved caring for her country, and the details of her life reveal concern for the soldiers she was with, and sympathy for the English troops (whose deaths she clearly mourned). Although it might be supposed that she wanted attention and that her ego was enlarged by her narrative, the evidence suggests that she simply wanted to fulfill the mission she was given by her voices. Finally, she died as she had lived, with the sort of purity and unity that impressed all those who knew her. Thus, an analysis in terms of motives supports her narrative as having the more reality.

It may, of course, be objected that such a judgment simply reflects Christian values of love, and it is true that analysis in terms of love for others and fear for oneself is fully compatible with the Christian narrative presented in the Gospels. However, I would argue that the analysis is compatible with all religious traditions. Elsewhere (de Rivera, 1989), I have attempted to show that although different societies differ in the defenses that they use, they agree as to valuing the unity that is achieved when ego concerns are subordinated to caring for what is other than the self.

Religion itself, of course, can be subjected to this analysis. After ob-

serving that all religion is concerned with overcoming fear, Macmurray (1979) noted that one can distinguish real from illusory religion by the way fear is overcome: "The maxim of illusory religion runs: 'fear not; trust in God and he will see that none of the things you fear will happen to you'; that of real religion, on the contrary, is 'fear not; the things that you are afraid of are quite likely to happen to you, but they are nothing to be afraid of'" (p. 171). That is, illusory religion is defensive, seeks security, and is grounded in the fear of life, whereas real religion is heterocentric, for the sake of something other than the ego. For Macmurray, religion is empirical in its search for reality, and philosophy should be a natural theology. Religious doctrines, like scientific theories, require constant revision and verification. However, although this verification must include pragmatic concerns, it must also go beyond them. Consequently, verification can only be by the commitment of people to the way of life prescribed by the religious doctrine in question.

Narratives that involve the denial of empirical facts, whether that involves the denial of sexual abuse within families or churches, the denial of poorly conducted psychotherapy, the denial of the effects of poverty within the United States, or the denial of the disappearance of people in Argentina, are narratives that are defensive, believed-in imaginings that are dominated by fear. However, there are also narratives that go beyond empirical fact, believed-in imaginings, that are dominated by love, compassion, and faith in the reality what we can never completely grasp. Such narratives minimize our defenses and our pain, help us live openly, help us care for one another.

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