

Should You Stay or Should You Go? On Development between the Worlds of Children and Adults

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Abstract. *We premise two worlds whose notions of time differ: of children and of adults. For the former, time is cyclical, and for the latter it is linear. Another time, spiral time, is located between them. When a child in a development process performs a learning activity, her development will pursue the passage of spiral time.*

Keywords: *Child time and adult time, spiral time, development, contradiction, Learning III*

Introduction

The world of children is different from the world of grownups. The latter assumes that the former is chaotic and has not attained the well-ordered adult world status yet, which divides the two. Although in the future children will take part in the world of adults, what exactly is that world? People act as if they spend their time adhering to plans written on calendars to maintain public order (Hiroi, 2000, pp. 107-115). This adult world is built on rationality, and people advance in a straight line to the future and toward their goals. In other words, an awareness of the distinction between the worlds of children/adults relates to a basic human element: the notion of time. We grownups think that time passes linearly from the past to the future, but in the world of children time forms a life circle that slowly draws an arc from birth to death. Hiroi describes this distinction as two images of life cycle (Figure 1). Since children have only lived for a brief time, they are nearer birth and death. (The elderly find themselves in similar situations, which shows their close relationship with

children.) Children live in a circle of time due to their proximity to birth and death: life and death follow each other. Such a conception of time is not found in the world of adults. Thus, time can be divided into two types: circular line and straight. The former is called child time, the latter adult time.

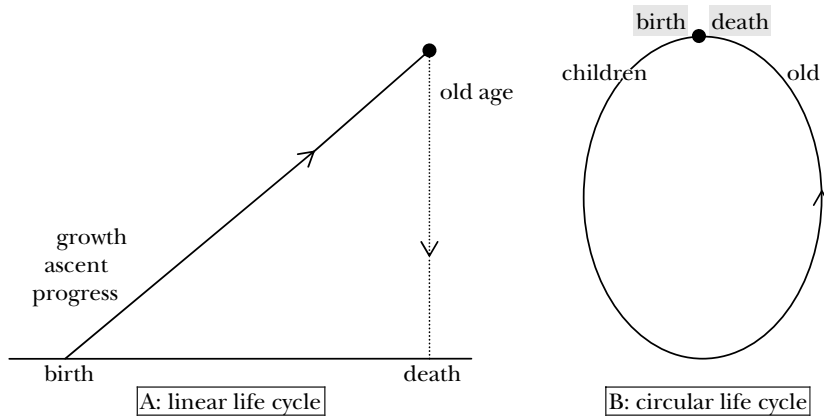


FIGURE 1 Two images of life cycles (Hiroi, 2000, p. 107)

However, note the relationship between the worlds of children and adults. If the children’s world is isolated, where is the boundary between them? It is reasonable to suppose that ‘development’ creates the relation: the child in the process of becoming an adult. As we shall see later, while individual development from child to adult will connect these two worlds, societal development will simultaneously take place.

Moreover, probably such development is inseparably linked to learning. Looking at the relationship between the worlds of children and adults from the point of view of education, development occurs after learning. “Development can only take place as a ‘result’ of learning” (Engeström, 1987, p. 155). Thus, one can safely state that education strongly affects the development of children. But questions remain. While receiving education, do they just grow up along the passage of linear time? What do we think about their development in respect of time? Is child time unrelated to development? Is not child time the basis of adult time? We will examine these questions.

Separation of Worlds of Children and Adults

In 1958, Hannah Arendt criticized a modern theory about learning in the United States that shifted the focus from learning to doing. Excising the distinction between play and work, the theory suggests that children learn through energetic play at school. But the “very thing that should prepare the child for the world of adults, the gradually acquired habit of work and of not-

playing, is done away with in favor of the autonomy of the world of childhood” (Arendt, 1977, p. 183). As a result of applying this theory, the world of children is isolated, which Arendt labels a crisis in education because the educational content remains at an infant level. In addition, children are exposed to public spaces without protection from parents. Arendt recognizes that children are in the process of becoming adults, so that if a world of children exists, it should maintain close ties with adults. Arendt obviously disagreed that the twentieth century was ‘the Century of the Child,’ as advocated by Ellen Karolina Sofia Key at the opening of the century:

This holding back of the child is artificial because it breaks off the natural relationship between grown-ups and children, which consists among other things in teaching and learning, and because at the same time it belies the fact that the child is a developing human being, that childhood is a temporary stage, a preparation for adulthood. (Arendt, 1977, p. 184)

“That modern education, insofar as it attempts to establish a world of children, destroys the necessary conditions for vital development and growth seems obvious” (p. 187). There is a suggestion here that what segregates the world of children from adults is causing the crisis in education. The world of children is not the final stage but a tentative one. Education has to provide children with activities for learning diverse factual knowledge accumulated in the past so that they can become adults. Through various approaches to such knowledge, children can establish connections with adults. Thus, perhaps Arendt is denying the establishment of the world of children. However, when discussing the world of adults, she must ponder the premise, as an opposite concept, that a world of children does exist. (A close study of the world of children as a cultural-historical concept built in the modern period is not necessary for our purpose.)

The idea of a world of children is useful to explore development with relevance to the passing of time because the world of children represents an unknown future outside of history. Starting from the nearest point of birth and death, children go around each life cycle and form a cyclical child time that transcends history. Such a hypothesis makes it possible to explain that segregation between the world of children (new world) and the world of adults (old world) also divides the future and the past. As Arendt writes, “Only because man is inserted into time and only to the extent that he stands his ground does the flow of indifferent time break up into tenses” (p. 11). When children are in the development stage, they split time into future and past by being in the present. (But are they children or adults or drifters?) At the same time, they get a little bit from the world of children and are in the process of becoming adults. On one hand children divide future and past; on the other hand, they build a bridge between adults and children by developing. Although, of course, since both the past and future are found in the world of adults, the

above metaphorically emphasizes the relationship between children and grownups. Arendt's following remark about Franz Kafka, who described thinking as "the most vital and the liveliest part of reality" [p. 10]), is relevant here:

To avoid misunderstandings: the imagery I am using here to indicate metaphorically and tentatively the contemporary conditions of thought can be valid only within the realm of mental phenomena. Applied to historical or biographical time, none of these metaphors can possibly make sense because gaps in time do not occur there. Only insofar as he thinks, and that is insofar as he is ageless—a "he" as Kafka so rightly calls him, and not a "somebody"—does man in the full actuality of his concrete being live in this gap of time between past and future. The gap, I suspect, is not a modern phenomenon, it is perhaps not even a historical datum but is coeval with the existence of man on earth. (p. 13)

Note that when considering the world of children, such thought is "within the realm of mental phenomena." In fact, the world does not have actual territory. However, like Kafka, such thought can be regarded as "the most vital and the liveliest part of reality" because we cannot let go of our thought, even though it is incorporeal. If so, what is the world of children?

Time and Death in the World of Children

Let us now examine our theme from a different angle. Kenjiro Okazaki made several important statements about being a child based on Roberto Rossellini's movie, *Germania Anno Zero* (*Germany Year Zero*, 1948). The movie tells the story of a twelve-year-old boy named Edmund living in poverty with his family in Germany after the Second World War. To help support his family he works as a gravedigger and a black marketer in the ruins of Berlin, because his father is bed-ridden and his elder brother, who was a Nazi, hides at home from the police. When Edmund asks his old school teacher for advice about his father's illness, the teacher convinces him that the world is a place where the weak are victims of the strong. Taking it seriously, Edmund poisons his father, and in the end, he kills himself. Okazaki concentrates on the last fifteen minutes of the movie that dramatize Edmund desultorily playing alone. In the scene, after a church organ rings out, the world around Edmund changes as if time stops (=Germany Year Zero!). As a child Edmund finally secures freedom from the world of adults by deciding to die. Okazaki argues that the scene deviates from time that passes historically and chronologically (Asada & Okazaki, 2006, p. 14). Although the scene will be omitted from the main thrust of the movie, the world of the child appears with death in it due to idleness. In the sense that the child is excluded from history, which also means that he has been discarded into an unknown future, Okazaki believes that the child has lived through death. He also contends that most modern juvenile literature is stories about

near-death experiences (p. 14).

This example is interesting because it shows that time in the world of children differs from that of adults. As I said earlier, in the world of children time is cyclical. It is unlikely that time accelerates children's development. Rather, development takes on a different aspect. On the other hand, linear time in the world of grownups would foster children's development due to its goal-directedness, but the world of children will fall into oblivion. There is a clear distinction between the natures of time.

I will expand this argument to include psychoanalysis to further examine the world of children. In "Beyond the pleasure principle," Freud hypothesizes that human beings possess opposing instincts: sexual instincts (life) and ego-instincts (death). Sexual instincts demand the prolongation of life, but ego-instincts aim to return to an original inanimate state, namely, death. These two instincts possess opposite purposes. Freud writes:

If we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for *internal* reasons – becomes inorganic once again – then we shall be compelled to say that '*the aim of all life is death*' and, looking backwards, that '*inanimate things existed before living ones.*' (Freud, 1991, pp. 310-311. Italics in original)

It seems contradictory that 'the aim of all life is death.' Freud brought up the death instinct because he had found cases in which subjects voluntarily threw themselves into predicaments, behavior that seemingly contradicts our mental processes that generally seek pleasure. Freud illustrates his hypothesis with a child's game. While observing a toddler play a game in which he threw a wooden reel over his bed and took it out by drawing the string of the reel, Freud realized that it was "the complete game – disappearance and return," because the boy said 'o-o-o-o,' which was interpreted as 'fort' meaning 'gone' in German when the reel disappeared, and he cheerfully uttered 'da' meaning 'there' when it reappeared (p. 284). What is important here is that the boy repeated the unpleasant act of disappearance more often than the pleasant return. Freud interprets the boy's action as a mastery of the painful position when his mother left him alone or his revenge against his mother (p. 285). However, such an interpretation does not account for the boy's repetition of the game, a compulsion Freud links to the death instinct. He claims that the compulsion to repeat seen in the boy's action indicates "to a high degree an instinctual character" (p. 307). Such character is the instinct to return to an initial inanimate state, namely, death, which is the fundamental character of human beings:

Let us suppose, then, that all the organic instincts are conservative, are acquired historically and tend towards the restoration of an earlier state of things. It follows that the phenomena of organic development must be at-

tributed to external disturbing and diverting influences. The elementary living entity would from its very beginning have had no wish to change; if conditions remained the same, it would do no more than constantly repeat the same course of life. (p. 310)

Note that this hypothesis explains the children's instincts as well as the 'organic instincts.' On one hand the outside world stimulates the development of living entities; on the other hand, they want to retain the initial inanimate state of repetition-compulsion based on death instincts, which are considered "homeostasis in all organic life" (Brown, 1959, p. 88). As a result, they will necessarily follow such cyclical and static time as the earth's revolution around the sun. In respect of time, living entities act like children in the world of children. Freud's hypothesis concerning the death instinct leads us to consider the primitive idea that time is cyclical.

Morris Berman writes, "the premodern conception of time is cyclical" (Berman, 1981, p. 56). For example, distinguishing sacred from profane time, Mircea Eliade argues that "sacred time, [which] appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time, [is] reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites" (Eliade, 1987, p. 70). Although irrational or religious matters are irrelevant to the main subject, to quote Norman O. Brown, "Thus interpreted, psychoanalysis reaffirms ageless religious aspiration" (Brown, 1959, p. 90). (We should not overlook that the Christian concept of history is based on the linear time-concept [Arendt, 1977, p. 65].)

Recall that child time here, which as I have mentioned before, is cyclical while adult time is linear. It seems reasonable to suppose that child time is the same as the conception of time led by death instincts. Both notions are cyclical, as they would also be in eternity. Brown writes, "in fact eternity seems to be the time in which childhood lives" (p. 94). Assuming that living entities including both children and adults fundamentally live in child time due to the repetition-compulsion, adult time is built on child time. Hiroi points out that such notions of time as child time belong to a deeper level of time than the idea of linear time like adult time (Hiroi, 2000, p. 108). Thus, it might be wrong to assume that the world of children is different from the adults. Rather, the latter is based on the former.

However, Freud leaves the central problem untouched: the problem of development. For instance, Freud's speculation focuses not on the toddler's new development activity but on his regressive activity. Freud believes that the child's activity is led by the compulsion to repeat because his concern is 'beyond the pleasure principle.' Looking at the repetitive activity from a different angle, we will find that the child addresses a contradiction (allowing his mother to leave him alone, even though he hates being alone) by the disappearance/return game, described by activity theorists as a mediating artifact that breaks through the contradiction. Even if he clings to the compulsion to re-

peat, his game will stimulate his development. Note that even though this matter takes place in the relationship between the child and his mother, Freud seems to ignore the relation. Needless to say, development is indispensable to relations with parents, teachers, things, others, places, and so on.

Spiral Time as Third Time

When following cyclical and eternal child time, persons will be quite satisfied with their lives in comparison with living in the stressful adult world. They are simply following the happy dispensation of Nature. Such people can lead a full life in the world of children. However, realizing such a world is almost impossible in a post-industrial society. Moreover, if we cling to the idea of the cycle or eternity of time, we will not think of development, especially societal development. Because the world is completed by itself, people will not require development that influences the world, except such individual development as child language acquisition. In a sense, the world of children is closed, and therefore, on the whole, it does not need to develop.

I do not contend that we must only consider adults when examining the problem of development, for development does not always pursue a straight course. Yrjö Engeström describes the cycle of learning and development as expansive (Figure 2), reflecting Adrian Cussins' theory of cognitive trails that depict the fluctuations of the perspective-dependence ratio and stabilization in creature cognition as a spiral (Figure 3).

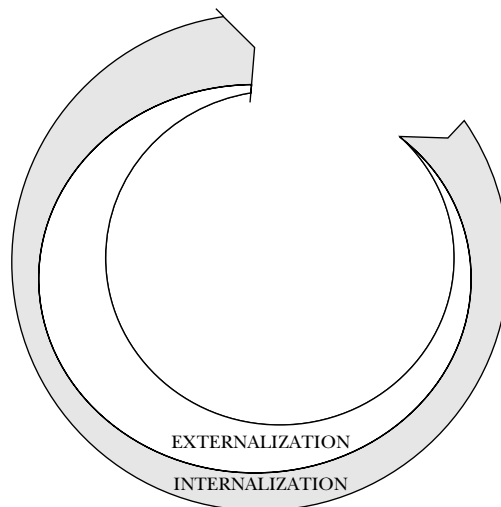


FIGURE 2 Oscillation of internalization and externalization in expansive cycles (Engeström, 2006, p. 26)

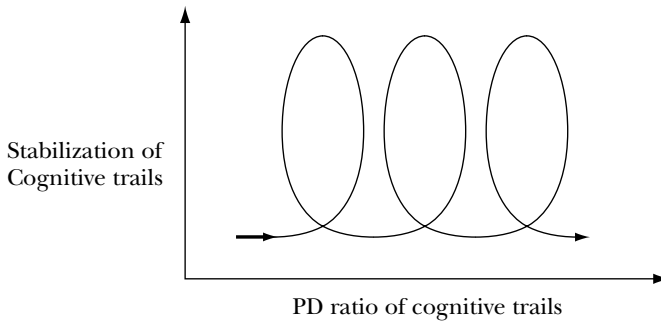


FIGURE 3 The spiral of virtuous representational activity (Cussins, 1993, p. 250)

The expansive cycle (...) begins with an almost exclusive emphasis on internalization, for example in the sense of socializing and training the novices to become competent members of the activity as it is routinely carried out. Creative externalization occurs first in the form of discrete individual deviations and mundane innovations. As the disruptions and contradictions of the activity become more demanding, internalization increasingly takes the form of defense on the one hand and critical self-reflection on the other hand. Externalization, search for novel solutions, increases and reaches its peak when a new model and germ-cell concept for the activity is designed and implemented. As the new model is stabilized, internalization of its inherent ways and means again becomes the dominant form of learning and development. (Engeström, 2006, pp. 26-27)

As hinted in this passage from Engeström, we see how the form of learning (internalization) and development (externalization) is comprised. The form is not a straight line but a spiral that repeats internalization and externalization. Although a few years earlier Engeström presented two notions of time about the expansive cycle, “action time,” which “is basically linear and anticipates a finite termination,” and “activity time,” which “is recurrent and cyclic” (Engeström, 1991, p. 14), activity time is the important factor for us. For instance, while a student learns a subject to acquire knowledge or to graduate, she does not know whether such knowledge is practically useful in the future, unless she chooses a utilitarian view. But by deviating from rigid contradictions, the student will find her own solution as a creative externalization. As an externalization draws to a conclusion, it gradually becomes an internalization. In such oscillation of internalization and externalization, development resembles a spiral.

Let us now attempt to extend our observation into another notion of time: spiral time. Although spiral time is almost identical to activity time, it is not opposed to linear time, like action time vs. activity time. I said at the outset that

children live in circle time, whereas grownups follow calendar time. While that point clearly breaks up the world of children and adults, the notion of spiral time connects both worlds. Thus, the notion of spiral time maintains both aspects of child and adult time. Spiral time passes not only cyclically but also straightly.

Reapplying Figure 2 to Cussins' spiral, the shape of learning and development is shown in Figure 4.

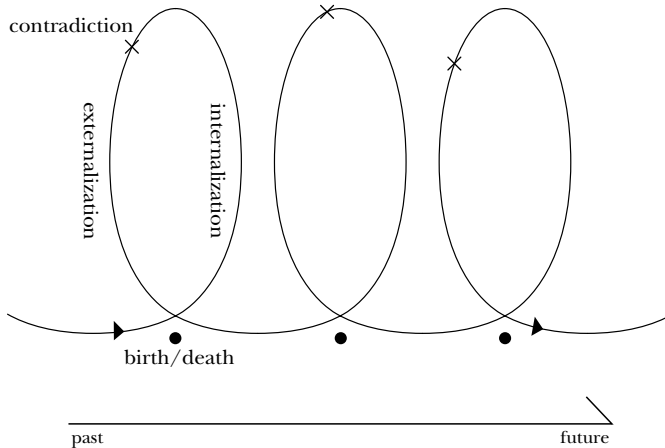


FIGURE 4 Notion of spiral time as a third type of time

Figure 4 indicates that the subject who lies between the world of children and adults develops by following spiral time. On one hand, the subject internalizes the meaning of his surroundings (the closed cyclical world) through learning; on the other hand, he deviates from the old environment by creating new activities that transport him to a new phase in his life. After that, the subject moves forward repeating the same behavior whose quality, however, differs from previous actions. The shape of such a movement of the subject's development is spiral time.

While child time symbolizes the primitive conception of time, adult time reveals its modern conception. It is built on child time, but world views will differ among adult and child time. We cannot judge which is better. The notion of time, however, is not limited to either child and adult types. Spiral time, which generates the subject's development, mediates between them as the third time.

Notion of Time and World View

After indicating that a modern view of nature that considers the world of nature progressive is different from Greek and Renaissance cyclical cosmology, R. G. Collingwood gives an account of modern thought:

Changes that appear to be cyclical are not really cyclical. It is always possible to explain them as cyclical in appearance only, and in reality progressive, in either of two ways: subjectively, by saying that what have been taken for identicals are only similars, or objectively, by saying (to speak metaphorically) that what has been taken for a rotary or circular movement is in fact a spiral movement, one in which the radius is constantly changing or the centre constantly displaced, or both. (Collingwood, 1960, p. 14)

If I interpret the author correctly, he is suggesting that the modern world has advanced by new discoveries or inventions based on the accumulation of knowledge in the past, and therefore, changes in the world create not a circle but a spiral shifting the center. The suggestion seems to explain spiral time. However, the suggestion is not about the notion of time but rather the method of progress. It would be more accurate to say that in the modern world the notion of time is linear rather than spiral. Why?

Modern thought equals modern scientific consciousness as follows. In *The Reenchantment of the World*, Morris Berman argues that since the scientific revolution the west has lost a sense of unity with its surroundings. Modern scientific consciousness is “alienated consciousness: there is no ecstatic merger with nature, but rather total separation from it;” it pervades modern society (Berman, 1981, p. 17). He describes the change from one of “participating consciousness” to “nonparticipation.” He also mentions a fundamental transformation in the notion of time: from cyclical to linear:

For the people of the Middle Ages, the seasons and events of life followed one another with a comforting regularity. The notion of time as linear was experientially alien to this world, and the need to measure it correspondingly muted. But by the thirteenth century this situation was already changing. (p. 56)

The new concern with time running out was much in evidence by the sixteenth century. The phrase “time is money” dates from this period, as does the invention of the pocket watch, in which time, like money, could be held in the hand or pocket. The mentality that seeks to grasp and control time was the same mentality that produced the world view of modern science. . . . The rise of linear time and mechanical thinking, the equating of time with money and the clock with the world order, were parts of the same transformation, and each part helped to reinforce the others. (p. 57)

The passage immediately clarifies the notion of time that directly affects world view. Although we cannot return to the Middle Ages, Berman tries to advance an alternative world view to recover a “participating consciousness” lost in modern thought with the help of Gregory Bateson’s work. He consults Bateson because his work is “both scientific *and* based on unconscious know-

ing” (p. 196). Berman sees Bateson’s work as a conduit between pre-modern and modern consciousnesses. After referring to Bateson’s learning theory, Berman predicts that “Learning III will continue to gain momentum, and the most crucial political issue of the twenty-first century may be how to provide it with a proper context” (p. 295). What is Learning III? It is one level in the hierarchy of the learning processes presented by Bateson.

Bateson calls a passive response like Pavlov’s dog Learning I (or ‘proto-learning’). Learning II (or ‘deutero-learning’) is “learning to learn” (Bateson, 2000, p. 249) as a learner grasps overall context. Learning III is learning to learn Learning II, but what does it bring human beings? Berman explains the difficulty of Learning III:

In Learning III, the individual learns to change habits acquired in Learning II, the schismogenic habits that double bind us all. He learns that he is a creature who unconsciously achieves Learning II, or he learns to limit or direct his Learning II. Learning III is learning *about* Learning II, about your own “character” and world view. It is a freedom from the bondage of your own personality – an “awakening to ecstasy,” as William Bateson [Gregory Bateson’s father] once defined true education. This awakening necessarily involves a redefinition of the self, which is the product of one’s precious deutero-learning. In fact, the self starts to take on a certain irrelevance; in Bateson’s words, it ceases to “function as a nodal argument in the punctuation of experience.” As we have seen, the journey can be dangerous. The problem of the self is so difficult that many psychotics will not use the first person singular in their speech. (Berman, 1981, pp. 231-232)

Since a redefinition of the self accompanies Learning III, its achievement becomes extremely difficult. However, quoting Bateson, Berman raises the following possibility in Learning III: “For others more fortunate, Bateson claims, there is a merger of personal identity with ‘all the processes of relationship in some vast ecology or aesthetics....’” (p. 232). As these remarks indicate, Bateson’s learning theory is intimately related with one’s identity and world view. For example, as for Learning I, “clearly, to the ‘pure’ Pavlovian, only a very limited fatalism would be possible” (Bateson, 2000, p. 173). To “create a source of identity,” Berman advocates his claim with a full understanding of Bateson’s theory: “the most crucial political issue of the twenty-first century may be how to provide it with a proper context” (Berman, 1981, p. 295).

Although we focus on the notion of time and the problem of development, if we presume that the notion of time equals the world view, Berman’s argument may be amenable to ours in the quest for an alternative world view. Clearly both arguments are positioned between one thing and another: old/new, past/future, circle/line, etc. But Berman wants to recover a pre-modern world view, as his book title, *The Reenchantment of the World*, indicates, even if he knows that it is impossible. As Arendt states, “the answers of science will always

remain replies to questions asked by men; the confusion in the issue of ‘objectivity’ was to assume that there could be answers without questions and results independent of a question-asking being” (Arendt, 1977, p. 49). The subject is not completely separated from the object by scientific consciousness (or Cartesian dualism) criticized by Berman. Despite the fact that scientific consciousness behaves as if it can sever the subject from the object, it leaves room for a merger with nature. A chance remains to recover a pre-modern world view in the modern scientific consciousness. But searching for an answer that satisfies the quest between them is important. We propose spiral time, which generates subject development that mediates between pre-modern cyclical and modern linear times. It is necessary, at this point, to explain contradictions in connection with development.

Contradictions for Development

Neither individual nor societal developments emerge without contradictions. Contradictions of the learning activity as the moving force, as stated above, are connected with developments. In other words, contradictions are the principle of the formation of development: “new qualitative stages and forms of activity emerge as solutions to the contradictions of the preceding stage of form” (Engeström, 2006, p. 28). When Engeström explores the relationship between learning and development in *Learning by Expanding*, he emphasizes contradictions with the help of Bateson’s learning theory, especially Learning III, for there is a moment to break through contradictions in Learning III that results not only in personal development but also societal development. Engeström says, “The typically human type of development, not found in any other species, is transition to Learning III” (Engeström, 1987, p. 150).

To explain Learning III one must point to a contradiction in Learning II. Bateson illustrates the contradiction with an example from Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). AA does not preach conquering the temptation to drink when an alcoholic is sober, but giving in to alcohol. Bateson pays attention to ‘Twelve Steps’ of AA and quotes the first two steps:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (Bateson, 2000, p. 313)

Bateson notices an important element of these two steps:

Implicit in the combination of these two steps is an extraordinary – and I believe correct – idea: the experience of defeat not only serves to convince the alcoholic that change is necessary; it *is* the first step in that change. To be defeated by the bottle and to know it is the first “spiritual experience.”

The myth of self-power is thereby broken by the demonstration of a greater power. (p. 313)

As the first step what AA tries to resolve in an alcoholic is the contradiction between the fact that “the total personality of an alcoholic is an alcoholic personality” and such an alcoholic’s will to “fight alcoholism” (p. 312). Bateson continues: “Philosophically viewed, this first step is *not* a surrender; it is simply a change in epistemology, a change in how to know about the personality-in-the-world” (p. 313). The step negates the Cartesian dualism between sobriety vs. intoxication and introduces the alcoholic to a new world view. Thus, for Bateson ‘a Power greater than ourselves’ does not mean God, as AA believes. Berman neatly sums up this point:

This Higher Power — “God as you understand Him to be,” as AA says — is of course the unconscious mind, but is more than this as well. It is also your social reality, the other members of AA, and the struggle that their lives represent. The individual ego (conscious will) leaves the field in favor of a more mature form of self; one that is both intra- and inter-personal. Such a surrender is not a collapse, but a renewal. For the alcoholic who has finally “hit bottom,” as AA calls it, the first two steps of the AA program in effect constitute Learning III, and the alcoholic frequently experiences them as a religious conversion. (Berman, 1981, pp. 241-242)

We see, hinted in this excerpt from Berman, how Learning III takes place. In Learning III an alcoholic acts as part of the AA system with other members: “the ‘self’ as ordinarily understood is only a small part of a much larger trial-and-error system which does the thinking, acting, and deciding” (Bateson, 2000, p. 331), which is an aspect of societal development in Learning III. Since Berman describes Bateson’s work as “both scientific *and* based on unconscious knowing” (Berman, 1981, p. 196), Learning III undeniably has a religious side, as does psychoanalysis. Recall Brown’s words: “Thus interpreted, psychoanalysis reaffirms ageless religious aspiration” (Brown, 1959, p. 90). When AA encourages members to do some ‘controlled drinking’ so that they will realize their powerlessness, it may be regarded as an application of Freud’s ‘death instinct’ to the unpleasant measures for alcoholics: “a tendency to verify the unpleasant by seeking repeated experience of it is a common human trait” (Bateson, 2000, p. 328). However, if AA only uses this way (step 1 of AA), alcoholics will be trapped in a vicious circle. Step 2 is needed to change the context. Thus, it is nonsense to assume that Learning III is intended for emerge in circular time. In Learning III, alcoholics enter a new phase through the above contradiction.

Interestingly, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger take up AA as a case of apprenticeship in their *Situating Learning* by focusing not on the contradiction faced by alcoholics but on newcomers in the process of becoming old-timers:

An apprentice alcoholic attends several meetings a week, spending that time in the company of near-peers and adepts, those whose practice and identities are the community of A. A. At these meetings old-timers give testimony about their drinking past and the course of the process of becoming sober. . . . Goals are also made plain in the litany of the “Twelve Steps” to sobriety, which guide the process of moving from peripheral to full participation in A. A., much as the garment inventory of the tailors’ apprentices serves as an itinerary for their progress through apprenticeship. . . . In due course, the Twelfth-Step visit to an active drinker to try to persuade that person to become a newcomer in the organization initiates a new phase of participation, now as a recognized old-timer. (Lave & Wenger, 1991, pp. 79-80)

In Lave and Wenger’s explanation, personal stories are the most important key to complete AA participation; an apprentice alcoholic becomes an old-timer through her/his personal story. Although the relationship between an individual and the AA community is indicated, we cannot see alcoholics’ internal contradictions as seen in Bateson’s observation. Thus, Lave and Wenger’s conception of AA resembles a closed community in which members become ‘full participants.’ The cycle in which an apprentice becomes an old-timer is repeated. In other words, the community follows cyclical time, and nobody seems to escape from the world of alcoholism and sobriety. The community appears closed because there is no contradiction in the explanation. The contradiction, as Bateson pointed out about AA, has the potentiality to give the subject and the community the opportunity to get away from the existing context or system.

Staying or Going?

So far, we have identified the notion of spiral time. First, we premised two worlds, of children and adults, that differ in their notions of time. In the former the notion of time is cyclical, and it is linear in the latter. Second, we located spiral time between cyclical and linear time. When a child in the process of development does a learning activity, as a result of learning, his development pursues the passage of spiral time. Third, development does not emerge without a contradiction between two things: the contradiction functions as a motive power to develop. Such development does not remain at the level of individual. It leads to societal development. That is an outline of our argument.

What kind of world view does the notion of spiral time as a third type of time offer? It is not a ‘participating consciousness’ but a ‘participating-leaving consciousness.’ One participates in an old community as a member to learn, to establish a link between it and another community, or to leave it to build a new community. With the notion of spiral time, one does not commit in a *closed* community for a long time or push forward toward goals as scheduled. Instead,

one detours, because a process of development follows not a cyclical or a straight but a spiral course. It may be roundabout, but it is certain to offer learning and development.

We may pose a question based on what has been argued above. Should you stay in the community or should you go based on a schedule? It is important to consider that one's development pursues the passage of spiral time.

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