

Consummatory Moments and Moral Order in Organizational Life

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One of the contributions that Appreciative Inquiry had made to management, consultation, and organizational studies is commitment to the that profitability suffers when organizations do not take into account the complexity of communication patterns ways that the term "organization" summarizes. In this chapter we want to focus on the relationship between two aspects of the communication patterns that constitute organizations. One is the artistic dimension of everyday life and how persons constitute what the American philosopher John Dewey called "consummatory moments" in experience. The other is the moral aspect of life that we think is also universally present in communication in and out of organizations. Briefly, consummatory moments refer to those experiences in the art of living when a harmony is achieved readjusting our being in the world, pointing toward new possible futures (Dewey, 1934a, see especially pp. 17-18). By the moral dimension of life we mean understandings about what we must do, can do, and cannot do, and the extent to which we are responsible for our actions (Cronen, 1995). These understandings make up ways of living in which respect and dignity can be achieved and virtues developed. We would like the reader to consider three claims about consummatory

moments and moral life:

1. The image of a future worth having must include the ability to constitute consummatory moments.
2. Consummatory moments are particularly important when they are involved in the expression of persons' place in an institution's moral order.
3. Understanding communication's episodic organization suggests ways to help organizations begin moving toward a desired future.

Our chapter is organized as follows: In the first part we introduce the reader very briefly to the perspective from which we work. It is a theory of Communication called "Coordinated Management of Meaning, " for brevity, CMM (Pearce & Cronen, 1980; Cronen, Johnson & Lannamann, 1982; Pearce, 1989; Cronen and Lang, 1994; Cronen, 1994, 1995; Cronen and Chetro-Szivos, in press) . That perspective will show how we inquire into consummatory moments in moral life. The second and third parts develop our understanding of consummatory moments and moral order in communication. The third part offers a case example of how these two aspects of communication are related when police officers together affirm their place in a moral order and the virtues associated with that way of living. Finally, we make some brief suggestions about how the analysis of episodes in which consummatory moments are created may be useful to appreciative inquiry.

Coordinated Management of Meaning and the Pragmatic-Systemic Tradition

CMM has its intellectual roots in three related traditions. Two of these are philosophical pragmatism as developed by William James, John Dewey, and George

Herbert Mead, and the Human Systems tradition as developed by Gregory Bateson and his followers. These two traditions are linked by a common commitment to evolutionary biology. Neither endorses biological determinism or relies on Darwinian principles to explain change. The important thing about evolutionary thinking as a philosophy is the idea that form emerges in process (Mead, 1936/1956). The forms of institutional life, identity, relationship, and culture emerge *in* the process of social action and cannot be sufficiently explained by principles external to the patterns of activity. The third tradition from which CMM developed is Wittgenstein's later philosophy of language. It has much in common with evolutionary philosophy although Wittgenstein did not start from a reading of Darwin (Bernstein, 1966).

Anti-Dualism

All three traditions are anti-dualistic. They do not, for example, pit individuality against sociality. Instead, individuality is viewed as a social achievement (Dewey, 1916/1966; Mead, 1934; Becker, 1971). Neither do they separate thought from action, perception from logic, or emotion from reason. These are viewed as integrated aspects of a unified processes.¹

Because consummatory experience is related to emotion, let us pause to briefly consider the integral relationship of emotion, reason and action. This is observable in the way emotions have developed and disappeared in cultural context. For example, the *accide* was a prominent emotion, and a serious problem, in medieval monastic life. However, its symptomology disappeared during the renaissance when the new understanding of church, world and culture left no

¹ Dewey's book, Logic: The theory of inquiry (1938) describe how perceiving, far from being a separate process prior to the operation of reason, comes to be organized in ways consistent with the ways we think, act and recall. Learning is process exhibiting the continual integral adjustment of these processes. See also Cronen & Chetro Szivos, in press.

coherent place for that emotion (Harre, 1984). Emotions are considered dysfunctional when they are not coherent. When someone says her or she is persistently sad, although every thing in life seems good, professionals either look to create coherence for that person or consider neurological causes. The coherence of emotion is organized in time. We get into and out of emotional roles in ways that make cultural sense for the episode of communication in which we engage (Averill, 1980).

Experience, abilities, meaning and action.

In the philosophy of John Dewey, the term experience expresses the integration of thought, action, and world in the development of persons' lives. He rejected the idea that experience is a "psychical thing infected throughout with "subjectivity" (Dewey, 1916/1966). Experience for Dewey is what he called a double-barreled term. It refers to the meeting of persons actions with events in the real world resulting in the modification of both. Experience is double barreled in another way. It is both the source and outcome of action. When persons communicate, their abilities are used to create the way they act into the actions of others.and their abilities are formed in the situated action. Because of the reciprocal relationship between abilities and action a person's grammatical abilities *alone* do not form the way she or he acts. Persons may understand their conditions in different ways, but they must somehow take them into account. The way a person understands what happens before he or she speaks is formed not only by the abilities brought to the moment of action, but also by what is done by the other.

Wittgenstein described human social abilities by analogy to learning the grammar of a language. He extended the idea of grammar to encompass more than

sentence organization. Like Dewey (1910/1997) before him, he argued that we learn how words can be coherently connected to each other and we also learn how larger forms can be coherently connected to form contexts. In Wittgenstein's terms we can talk about the grammar of a word like, "stress." We can explore rules for using the word stress is in a specific organization in its cultural context . Those rules make up the grammar of stress. At a Kensington Consultation Centre Systemic Management Summer School a few years ago, managers from several countries discussed differences among their grammars of "stress." In one organization, stress had to shown but never acknowledged by the person showing it. It was not coherent to say either, "She is a good worker, she never shows stress," or "he is a good worker, just yesterday he told me how stressed he was." In that organization, the following exchange would make sense in a discussion of who should be promoted:

"He never shows much stress, however, he seems to get the work done well"

"Yes, but I doubt he gives his work his full effort."

"Is he really committed to the company?"

In this example we see how rules not only create sentence level coherence, but also how larger units of talk can be sensibly organized.²

Talk is not all that we organize by learning to use rules. We learn to weave physical circumstances into our actions. We also use and develop rules for weaving together ways to coherently focus attention, move our bodies and other objects, manifest and experience feelings, recall what is important, adjust the sound of our voices, respond to the rhythms of the activity, and manage consciousness of our participation in social processes.³ From Wittgenstein's perspective we can explore

² For a fuller explanation of Wittgenstein's ideas about grammar as applied to management and consultation, see Cronen & Lang, 1994.

³ In the pragmatist view, consciousness is not a state of the organism (James, 1912/1996). It describes the ability to attend to and act toward particular phenomena. Self consciousness is the ability to tell a story about the participation of the self in social action (Cronen and Pearce, 1991-1992).

the grammar of a an emotional experience by inquiring into how it can coherently function in various larger units that Wittgenstein called "language games," that we call episodes. Later in this paper we will explore some grammars of consummatory moments.

Where do rule come from? In the work of Dewey (1922; 1916/1944)⁴ and Wittgenstein (1954) rules are not learned separately and then applied to words. Nor are they representative of a fundamental cognitive structure. We learn to use rules by acting into the activities of others and getting a response. The response is crucial. We know the meaning when we know how to go on in coordinated action. Every action sets new conditions that enter into the formation of the next . All behavior including language thus bears a history of use, a presence in situated action, and a projection into the future (James, 1912/1996; Dewey 1911/ 1933; Wittgenstein, 1954). It would be fair to say that the ideas of James, Dewey and Wittgenstein extend the appreciative sensibility about the future to include the meaning of every behavior.

Learning rules includes learning how and when to act from different positions. At the level of the sentence, for example, we learn when to respond in the first person, second person, or third person; and when to speak for a single person such as the self, and when to speak for a collective "us." The language we use provides opportunity and constraints for moving position. For example, the absence of a formal voice in contemporary English grammar makes it complicated to clearly indicate a move to a more formal conversation. That must be done with means other than verb tense. Spanish speakers find it easy to indicate a move to formal relationship in conversation, but difficult to move from the formal to the informal. Social rules beyond sentence level grammar obligate that persons respond to formal talk with formal talk.

Language, like artistic materials, gives us a flexibility that makes human

⁴ Dewey preferred the term "habit" to rules, but his analysis is very much like Wittgenstein's

communication distinct from other kinds of interactions (Dewey, 1934a). When learning language children often play with the possibilities of different work orders. For example a child may lie alone in bed and say, "I love cookies....cookies love me...ha ha ha!" The grammatical forms of language allow us to move, for example, from first-person talk to third person talk. A parent can say to a child, "I think you need to go to sleep now," and can also choose to say , "Daddies always knows when a children need to sleep." In larger contexts persons' abilities include the ability to reorganize language games, and reposition themselves in conversation. For example, a clerk in an administrative office may take the position of a third-person conduit for the institution. When someone comes to the desk and complains, "Don't you think that was wrong? How would you feel," the clerk may respond, "My job here is to see that everyone follows the proper procedures. According to administrative form #100235 you are at fault." At the sentence level, the clerk uses words in the first and second person singular form. However, at the level of the utterance, the clerk chooses to take the position of someone removed from the direct engagement and speaking only as a mechanical. Notice also the moral import of making the change in person position. There are different rights and responsibilities associated with being the impersonal voice of institutional procedures as compared to having a direct relationship as one person to another (Shotter, 1984). The clerk's choice may display a wise choice if the clerk believes he or she is talking to someone who is trying to use personal sympathy to gain advantage.

It is useful to think about persons' grammatical abilities as organized into stories. Some aspects of these stories have well rehearsed features. For example, when we meet a friend for dinner we do not usually have to think carefully about how to do an episode of ordering dinner at a restaurant. We have a story, organized by

rules about the various ways such episodes can develop. The story is used to organize our action, but cannot fully determine it because we are always acting into new circumstances. Persons have stories about many things including particular relationships, who they are, what their organization is about, what it means to be in a profession, etc. As inquirers we are always interested in the relationships these stories have to each other. For example, the story a manager has about how to get ahead in her career may be connected to her story about creating certain kinds of work relationships. These stories may be connected to the way she conducts particular episodes with subordinates and superiors.

The stories can be well developed or fragmentary, internally consistent or contradictory. The fragmentary nature of some stories may be problematic and may allow for a wide range of development. Appreciative inquirers know that one risk of problem talk is that it may further develop the complex abilities for doing episodes of blaming, despair, stagnation and conflict.⁵ Persons may or may not be able to report their organized abilities and the way those abilities form situated practices. When a person reports such connections, that is, tells a story about them, we call that self consciousness.

The stories that organize abilities for use typically include possible futures. For example, consider a developing close personal relationship. The couple goes to dinner at a romantic setting. There is wine, music and candle light. One of them has a story of the relationship that includes the prospect of marriage in the near future. That partner also has a story about how an episode might proceed that evening. It should move to a mutual expression of commitment. However, it proceeds like this:

He: We have had such good times together. I have never known a woman as

⁵ Peter Lang often tells clinicians in training, "Never interview into a pathology." His point is that by doing so the client and therapist may further develop problems by enriching their coherence and detail.

wonderful as you.
She: [looks in his eyes and smiles.]
He: [Takes her hand in his.]
She [smiles more.]
He: I never want this to end. I love you.
She: That's so nice of you to say. [pulls back hand] You know Ted and Jane are having a party to night? If we eat fast we can make it.

We want to make two point based on this conversation. One is that relational stories not only guide action, but are also sustained, developed, and sometimes changed in the course of action. The other point is that the ends persons seek --their desired futures, are best described as "ends in view" (Dewey, 1925/1958, p 161). They are parts of stories we create and make sense only in light of persons' abilities to develop those contexts in which such ends have a reasonable place.

In the next part of our chapter we undertake a more detailed examination of consummatory moments and moral order based on the pragmatic-systemic orientation to experience described above.

Consummatory moments in the art of everyday life.

Dewey (1925/1958) argued that there are two dimensions of experience, the instrumental and the consummatory. The instrumental dimension is that aspect of communication which creates and and advances ends-in view. The consummatory dimension of experience has to do with the aesthetic qualities of living. Dewey (1934a) argued that all experience has an aesthetic dimension. The rhythm and organization of vocal sounds, body movements, and object arrangements are intrinsic to communication. He goes on to say

Art is a quality that permeates an experience; it is not, save by a figure of speech, the experience itself. Aesthetic experience is always more than aesthetic. It is a body of matters and meanings, not in themselves aesthetic, *become* aesthetic as they enter into an ordered rhythmic movement

toward consummation. (p.326)

There is thus an artistic aspect to everyday living including the act of thinking in private (Dewey, 1934a). ⁶

"Consummatory moments" refers to those moments when various important aspects of experience come together in a way that gives a profound sense of "harmony." A consummatory moment achieves a harmony of persons, actions, and world by selectivity. Nothing in the moment feels left out or extraneous. There is a powerful feeling of completeness (Dewey, 1934a, p.17). Both authors of this chapter have had the experience at different times of walking with their wives across a Santa Barbara California beach at sunset with no one else in sight. Extraneous conversation about work would have spoiled the harmony. When the sun finally goes down, a vital part is missing and the moment gradually fades.

The harmony is felt within the individual person, between persons, and between persons and their world. Dewey (1934b) argues that when consummatory experience has the consequence of changing our orientation to life in fundamental ways, that experience can fairly be called religious whether or not it is associated with traditional religious observance. While we usually associate consummatory moments as beautiful they need not be so in the sense of a beach walk, Delius's "A Song Before Sunrise," or a Renoir's, "The Bathers." Works such as Shostakovich's "Leningrad Symphony," and Picasso's "Guernica," may both evoke consummatory moments.

The consummatory moment has its own *unique* self sufficiency as an experience (Dewey, 1934a,) . We have seen many sunsets, but if we look across the beach and think only, "Here is one more good sunset, " we do not have a

⁶ Some narrative analysts including Riessman (1993) reduce narrative texts to a core narrative by organizing them as poetic stanzas thus emphasizing the artistic aspect of the text.

consummatory moment. Each such moment must have its own unique details of it and/or its own unique place in experience. Such moments are never fully captured in language no matter how detailed the description. In fact, the more detailed the description, the farther we get from the moving, harmonious moment. This meaning beyond language is a feature of all experience. For example, a teacher working with a student training to be a consultant cannot fully teach what a practitioner must learn by descriptions and instructions. The student must get an intuitive feel for how to observe and interview, when to be reflective and when to enter more deeply into the moment of conversation with a client. The teacher guides, but the student must engage in practice. The teacher and other students may help saying, "good question there... good idea....what were you thinking about then?" However, there is always tacit dimension to experience beyond linguistic description, even in scientific work (Polanyi, 1958). Consummatory moments, however, are unique in part because the tacit dimension that is beyond words is paramount. A person may have no words to give the experience a clear classification. In this way, consummatory moments differ from emotions because emotions involve linguistically identifiable social roles such as love, hate, joy, and the like (Averill, 1980).⁷

The fact that we often remember consummatory moments and can reflect on them, shows that they are, "integrated within and demarcated in the general stream of experience" (Dewey, 1934a, p. 35). If either couple had been arguing about something as they walked to the beach, it would have been very hard for them to constitute a consummatory moment within experience. While integrated into experience, the moment is arresting -- we cannot have such moments but not know it. Typically, the moment is sufficiently demarcated that later we can say to our

⁷ In addition, emotions may involve narrowing one's perspective to very few elements of experience and may not produce a harmony. They also differ from emotions because they must feel unique.

spouses or to ourselves, “I remember that time on the beach at sunset...”

All experience points beyond itself. Consummatory moments, because of the harmony they create within and between persons, and between persons and their world, usually entail an especially powerful sense of a new beginning and a new orientation (Dewey, 1934a, p.17). While consummatory moments involve experience that is not readily reduced to precise description, they are very meaningful. Remember that in the pragmatic philosophical tradition, as in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, meaning is use, and we know the meaning of something when we know how to go on into the future. Thus, we may be able substantialize our abilities as a consummatory moment, but that moment must be *realized as meaningful* by creating a new beginning in lived experience. A couple may create a consummatory moment on a beautiful beach. However, they must have the skill to go on together in a revitalized relationship.

To summarize, we have described a number of features that describe consummatory moments: These moments involve powerful feelings, and they are felt to harmonize people in their world. Each is unique and beyond full description in language. They are demarcated within experience and are part of experience. They point into the future, offering the possibility of creating the beginnings of new futures, but they do not in themselves guarantee that the promise of a new beginning will be fulfilled. We do not want the reader to treat this set of characteristics as defining the essence of consummatory moments. That is why we have used words like ‘Usually,’ and “typically” in our discussion. Our descriptions of consummatory moments should be treated as “family resemblances”⁸ that may help inquirers.

We want to continue developing an explanation of consummatory moments in the art of living by looking at three different kinds of situations: musical performance,

⁸ See Wittgenstein’s (1954) treatment of this term.

conversations in a close personal relationship, and communication in the workplace. Although our primary interest for this chapter is the workplace, the other two situations are more usually associated with art and consummatory moments. They help illuminate similarities and differences among consummatory moments.

The Musical Performance.

In music, a consummatory moment can be constituted when we hear a particularly moving musical passage. This situation highlights the abilities one must have to not only appreciate the music, but also to manage their consciousness in different ways. The consummatory moment of hearing the moving musical phrase seems to “come over” the listener as something we undergo, rather than as something we do or create. More precisely, we are not at these times conscious of how our learned ability to appreciate the music contributes. For the listener, consummatory moments in a musical performance are more like passions, such as western love, than they are like an action such as working up one’s courage (Dewey, 1925/1958; Averill, 1980).

The listener is deeply involved in the ongoing performance and not conscious of how his or her abilities play a role in constituting the experience. However, the listener must be able to momentarily reflect on the experience, demarcating it from the rest of the performance. The listener must learn how to manage consciousness in his way. Of course, the listeners' abilities are involved in the making of all experience. As Dewey (1929/1960) says, “sensations are the consequences of actions”⁹ However, If the listener is being consciously analytical about the structure or technique in what is heard, and conscious of the knowledge, biases and sensitivities

⁹ Dewey understood action in a very complex way including attending, perceiving, thinking, moving, speaking and exhibiting physiological changes.

he or she brings to the experience, the listener may not have that beautiful moment, but may appreciate the performance in other ways.

The position of the performer is rather different from that of the listener. The performer may have the feeling that things are fitting together in a particularly beautiful way at a certain moment, and be very much aware that he or she is responsible for doing it, bringing to bear well developed abilities in a very special way. The performer may even be aware of how, by making a particular choice during performance, a truly stunning effect is achieved. At other times the musician may be aware of the sounds being produced, but not of particular hand or finger movements. The performer cannot be constantly reflecting on every note played. That could only lead to a very mechanical presentation.

Sequence is crucial for the consummatory moment because it is constituted *within* experience that evolves over time. Indeed, no musical note is harmonious by itself. There is an often cited comment by the American jazz musician Miles Davis who is reputed to have said, "There are no wrong notes, only wrong connections." William James (1890/1950) was particularly concerned about the tendency to analyze social phenomena as stationary objects. He coined the phrase, "psychologists fallacy" (p. 196) to describe the mistake of thinking that the principles that can describe a completed product are adequate to describe the moment by moment processes by which activity is woven together.¹⁰ When appreciative inquirers look for the abilities that exist in an organization that can be identified, developed and related to an image of the future, it is well to seek those abilities inside the processes where they are developed and used.

A person needs to have certain kinds of abilities developed from listening

¹⁰ Some contemporary psychologists still commit that fallacy. They do so when, for example, they try to study work place stress by analyzing its parts, rather than considering how it is created and sustained in real episodes of action.

experience in order to have a profound experience. Some performances are not good fits for the abilities of particular listeners at particular times. A young repairman came to a house where the andante movement of Mozart's 21st piano concerto playing on the stereo. He said, "What's that? Roll over Beethoven? Ha! Ha!" To be fair, it should be added that there is more to the context of that situation than cultural experience with classical music. The hot afternoon, the hard work ahead, and other features of the situation were obviously unsuited to music appreciation. The role of culture as part of the context cannot be ignored. No matter how sophisticated the listener may be, that sophistication must be developed in one or more cultural systems. Some Chinese listeners with highly refined musical knowledge and sensibility, find Mozart boring when they first hear his music. They find the repeated patterns of western music simplistic in contrast to the linear development of Chinese music.

^{THREE}
~~Four~~ points stand out in the situation of musical performance. One is that the creation of a moving moment is neither fully objective nor subjective. It must involve the meeting of the abilities of persons with phenomena in the world. In the case of music what is entailed is the conjoint achievement of the composer, musicians, and listeners. The second point is that there are complex layers of context involved in creating a consummatory moment in music, and that all action in context is informed by culture. The third point illuminated by the example of musical performance comes from comparing the performer to the listener. There is no one universal position for all consummatory experiences with respect to the constitution of experience.

Close Personal Relationships.

A few years ago Cronen (1995) reported a case from his work with the

Kensington Consultation Centre of London that illustrated the importance of learning how to create beautiful moments. In that case, focusing on the instrumental dimension of a couple's experience told the team very little that was useful. Each partner had nothing but praise for the ideals, intelligence, support, respect, and helpfulness of the other. Developing the positive features of the relationship resulted in no observable change. During a break Cronen and the Kensington group decided to watch the video tape of the session at different speeds and without sound. What they saw was a very clumsy performance -- like 12 year olds at their first dance. Progress began when interviewing moved to aesthetic questions beginning with this one, "When did you two last have a beautiful, moment together -- one that was deeply moving and things seemed just right.?" They looked at each other, grinned at the interviewer, and said they could not think of any in years.

Competence at social interaction is never a purely individual achievement (Pearce and Cronen, 1980) It is very hard to co-create a consummatory moment in a badly coordinated, uncomfortable episode. As we looked at the tape, we could see that the man did not quite know how to get his arm around his wife's shoulders. The wife, moved responsively in a way that made the husband's effort at an embrace more difficult. The more poorly coordinated they were, the more self conscious they became. "Who is to blame?" or, "Who begins the poor coordination," are not useful questions as Bateson (1972) observed. The better question is, "How can circumstances be created in which the couple learns to more artistically coordinate?."

Consummatory moments, or the failure to create them, involves multiple contexts. The couple's underdeveloped ability to coordinate artistic episodes had implications for multiple contexts including, of course, stories about the future of their relationship. Also affected were stories about the kinds of people they were, and

what a good and significant life is all about. The wife described herself as a bad person who God must hate because she could not love her good and caring husband. This highlights the idea that the multiple contexts used to create consummatory experience are themselves constituted in the episodes jointly created. The case illustrates the spiraling relationship between contextually organized abilities and conjoint action.

The wife's belief that her inability to feel love for her husband shows she is not a good person alerts us to the idea that the experience of, or absence of, consummatory moments can be consequential in many ways. The experience of a consummatory moment is sometimes treated as a proof. Dewey (1925/1958) observed that in the West this idea can be traced to a mistake made by Greek philosophers.¹¹ He observed that there is great deal of difference between a momentary feeling of finality and completeness and the idea that such feelings show we have reached a final answer (Bernstein, 1966). Although epistemologically we may reject the idea that such moments are proofs, persons may regard them that way. The wife in the foregoing example did. In relational life this may make some sense. It is reasonable to say that one's experience of consummatory moment with a person demonstrates that the two of them together are capable of creating that kind of enriching experience. However, it is quite another matter to say that such feelings are sufficient to prove the relationship is a good one in the long view.

Consummatory moment may have functions very differently than proofs. For example, consider the case of a person who has lost an important relationship and finds later that they are able to have wonderfully moving moments with another person. This may be described in very different ways. Some persons describe it as

¹¹ An excellent example is the way the feeling of recognition functions in Plato's *Meno* dialogue even after Plato has disparaged all sensory experience as likely to distort the truth.

discovering that they,"still had love to give." Instead, of that container view of the self, other persons attribute great power to the other who, "taught me how to love again." Many other ways of making sense of such experience can be envisioned.

Close personal relationships highlight features of consummatory experience that are present in the case of the fine arts, but less readily apparent. One feature highlighted was the importance of conjoint action (see Cronen, 1995). The constitution of a moving moment in a close personal relationship, however, requires continual and mutual adaptation.¹² Another feature highlighted by intimate relationships is the way consummatory moments point into the future. Like all experience, their meaning is neither finished at the moment of experience, nor exhausted by linguistic formalization. In intimate relationships the multiplicity of functions that consummatory experiences may serve is also readily observed.

This is, not to say that the fine arts do not have similar or even greater impact resonating through persons' abilities. An example might be the orientation to personal tragedy that can come from listening to Beethoven's "Tempest" sonata in which he responds to the despair of his increasing deafness. We need not puzzle over how a medium such as music can have consequences for autobiography. This is only puzzling if we think dualistically separating the instrumental from the artistic as separate domains rather than as dimensions of an integrated process. In cultural and personal learning we come to integrate patterns of sound and feeling into other aspects of life. It would be very hard, for example, to convince someone that Hartmann's Prelude in G Minor is meant to be heard at a Munich beer hall, although it might very possibly provide an interesting way to experience a sun set on the

¹² All experience requires coordination. Interpersonal communication requires a mutuality of adaptation that is unlike listening to a Brandenburg Concerto on a CD.

American west coast.¹³

The Work Place.

Dewey made an important point when he said that because there is an artistic dimension to all experience that must include the work place. He offered us a challenge when he said, "The problem of conferring esthetic quality upon all modes of production is a serious problem. But it is a human problem for human solution; not a problem incapable of solution because of it is set off by some unpassable gulf in human nature or the nature of things" (Dewey, 1934a, p.80).

At work persons surely do experience moments that are, in Dewey's sense, consummatory. The first author of this chapter still recalls very clearly such moments when, working with his colleague Barnett Pearce and their graduate students, they achieved important insights in the early development of Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory. Various ideas fit together in a way that was elegant. New ways of working were possible, though we could not at the moment specify exactly what would happen next. We arrived at the experience in a coherent way, similar to the way the development of a musical performance coherently takes listener and performer to a consummatory moment. The experience of the moment could not be easily or even usefully described in language, though it had a coherent place in the CMM groups' linguistic action. Like all social action, the consummatory moment is meaningful in the way that it points into the future, opening and closing possibilities for future development. The result for us at these moments of conversation was not only a

¹³ With respect to music, ours is not a deterministic position. We are not saying that the music of Munich beer halls must be connected to extreme nationalism. Such connections have to be made. Surely many of those same songs were sung and are now sung as a variation of European communal fun, extolling nature and good beer. However, neither is it the case that these songs can be readily connected to any feelings at any particular time, such as the feelings associated with seeing French impressionist paintings, walking along the Northern Swedish coast, or walking by the statue of the little Mermaid in Copenhagen.

powerful sense of things fitting together, but also a heightened sense of wonder and mystery.¹⁴ As in the examples of the fine arts and intimate relationships, multiple contexts were involved including our ideas about who we were as individuals and our potential, our relationship to our profession, our relationship to situations outside of the academy, and our relationship to each other.

Telling this story about CMM reminds us that reflective story telling can create consummatory moments. Most organizations we know pass on stories. Some of these involve the retelling of episodes in which consummatory moments were shared. Some we have heard are quite moving stories about how a problem was solved in a way that bonded the group. Sometimes the stories we hear are less desirable. For example, used car salespeople sometimes exchange stories about how they cheated a customer. The telling has a pattern which, perhaps like the original experience, builds to a climax in which the skill of the salesperson and the ineptness of the customer come together. These stories do more than bond the group. They pass on to new salespersons a pattern for how to feel when working with a customer. The new salespersons are learning how to have a kind of experience in a particular situation. This is part of the mystery and awe involved in the life of these salespersons.¹⁵ There is another feature of these stories that is important. They are moral stories that pass on ideas of what one can do must do and must not do. In so ordering a moral world (even one which we may not fully approve) they tell how to live a life of dignity and respect in the group. Writers such as Senge (1990) have

sharpened our awareness that organizations provide situations where persons can

¹⁴ As Pearce (1989) observes, all communication involves a sense of wonder and mystery. The reason for this, he argues, is that every utterance opens and closes possibilities for a future that is not fully determined. If we believe that meaning depends on context, then the meaning of any utterance is always being formed in the process of conversation and never under the control of any one person.

¹⁵ This example comes from experience in the USA only. It should not be taken to mean that all or most used car sales people enjoy cheating customers, however, there are some that do engage in this kind of bonding.

be moral actors experiencing those consummatory moments without which life is not fully human (Dewey, 1934a).¹⁶

What is especially interesting in these examples is that the consummatory moment may sometimes be more vivid in storytelling than in the actual situations. In story telling extraneous details may be more easily removed and new features may even be added. The past event can be adapted to new circumstances by the artistry of a good story teller.

Consummatory Moments: A Cautionary Note. There is a tendency to think of the arts and profound moments in experience as necessarily positive. Clearly, these moments have elements that can be appreciated. In everyday life they typically involve commitment and the ability to reorient one's outlook in multiple ways. However, they may also open possibilities that are less socially and institutionally desirable. We suspect that when some people watch American professional wrestling they have deeply moving experiences when a wrestler they like hits another with a chair. It is our suspicion that the social problem with this type of media presentation is not with the number of violent acts per minute, but rather with the way persons learn to have consummatory moments within the development of a simplistic, brutal morality play. For our own country we wonder what opportunities young males have for learning how to constitute powerfully moving consummatory moments in different kinds of contexts.

We must remember that many people who watched Nazi pageants in the 1930s experienced consummatory moments in which new ideas of personal identity, national identity, and relationship to others, were brought into harmony (Burke, 1941).

We must also be aware that, like all lived experience, profoundly moving

¹⁶ Of course we are well aware that families and other close personal relationships are very important places for the enactment of a moral life and for passing on stories that give continuity the morality of a family tradition.

moments can become an addiction. Persons may find that they so enjoy these moments that they seek more intense repetitions. In the absence of novelty the need for more intense versions of old and once moving episodes may increase.

The Moral Organization of Everyday Life.

In his famous book The descent of man and selection in relation to sex.

Darwin (1859/n.d.) argued that morality was a natural response to the physiological and neurological condition of being human:

The following proposition seems to me in a high degree probable - namely, that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being there included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellect had become as well, or nearly as well developed, as in man. (pp. 471-2).

We are a species born to coordinate with others of our species (Tronick, 1982) and we survive only by acting together. The necessity of living by conjoint action, not the ability to know what is in another's head, is fundamental to human social life and the moral orders created in it. The intellectual ability necessary for human moral life includes the ability to select the self from other objects and develop stories about our selves as responsible agents in joint action (Harre, 1984).

While all human association exhibits moral order, what that moral order will be is not determined by our nature and is obviously varied across cultures and relationships.

Two Universals of Human Social Life.

One generalization we think we can safely make about human life is that

persons everywhere develop ideas about what they can do, what they must do, what they must not do, and the relevance of circumstances to responsibility. The CMM extension of pragmatism takes the anti-dualistic stand further by contending that coherence and morality are constant co-present dimensions of social action. Consider the simple case of two strangers meeting at a bus stop. In the culture of New England, USA ¹⁷ after about 8 to 10 minutes one person might say to the other, "It's a cold, wet day for August." The second person might say, "It sure is," then turn away, ending the conversation. In some regions of the USA the two persons would feel obligated to say something much sooner. It is sensible for them to wait in light of their cultural stories. To speak too soon would be intrusive for many New Englanders. It would mean disrespect for the other person's privacy. Given these understandings it is prohibited to speak as soon as one gets to the bus stop. If one person chooses to speak, why tell the other something so obvious? Why make the point that it is cold and wet to a cold and wet person? It is prohibited to begin talking about something personal, although there are American subcultures in which that is legitimate. What New Englanders take to be legitimate kinds of initiations fit a way of understanding that guards personal space and privacy from strangers. The legitimate kinds of utterances also make it easy for the other to terminate talk as in our example. The rules for coherent conduct of the short episode are moral rules.

While this example is a simple one, the same claims about coherence as a moral achievement can even be made for scientific conversation. To be a scientist is to, "agree to abide by the judgment of the consensus about how scientific practice is carried out..." (Welchman, 1995, p136). Welchman gives a concise statement of Dewey's (1908/1978) position on the relationship of normative to descriptive

statements in a medical judgment. She asks us to consider what is involved when a

¹⁷ New England refers to a group of small states along the extreme northeastern coast of the USA.

doctor makes the judgment, "This pain is a symptom of bursitis":

The doctor's process of judgment, with its implicit assumptions spelled out would run roughly thus: 'If one is a doctor, a person with certain intellectual commitments, and is presented with a case of shoulder pain of such and such a description, then one must conclude that the pain is caused by bursitis.' (p.139)

We would say that the doctor in the foregoing example is guided by a story about how the body works and how symptoms are related to physiological processes. He or she is also guided by a story about doctors' intellectual commitments. We would add that the doctor's assertion is guided by additional stories. The doctor's utterance is also informed by the episode, perhaps informing a patient, and by a story of the relationship he has to the person or persons addressed.¹⁸

The foregoing discussion is important to understanding rules. The rules we use and created to make coherent communication are moral in character. They are not cold logical connections having little to do with responsibilities to others.

Conceptions of responsibility also differ culturally. Laws and rules in all cultures we know allow for diminished responsibility. Administrators in the USA often say, "I must do this because it is a requirement of the job." Students from Korea who come to graduate school in the USA find it difficult to speak in a seminar. They say that they know it culturally right, even obligatory in the West to do so, but that they just cannot. In their culture, speaking risks threatening the face of both speaker listener. both of these are example of moral moves in which persons indicate that they should not be held accountable in the same way as if they were making a conscious individual choice.

The second relevant cultural universal can be briefly and easily stated. In every

¹⁸ If the same doctor was in the second set of doubles tennis, and his partner complained of the same symptoms, the doctor might very well say, "Don't worry about it now unless it gets worse." In this situation the doctor's utterance is informed by different relational and episodic stories.

culture we know, persons attempt to find relationships in which they have respect and dignity, and in which others care about them. Mary Gergen (personal communication) reported how some inner city high school student wrote about what they wanted from a family or a personal relationship. They said what they most wanted was what a gang gave you -- love and respect. Cultures differ in what constitutes love and respect, Within any culture, as in any organization, there are different ways to earn and show respect and caring. This claim about respect and caring is, of course, close to the fundamental insights of appreciative inquiry.

Morality stories and their ends-in view. There is a moral aspect to the rule organized stories about our professions, our organizations, institutional roles, and our work relationships. Among engineers it is common to hear stories told about acting as an engineer. Being an engineer means thinking in particular ways that are right and good even if the subject is not engineering. In a study of an Acadian community, the second author (Chertro-Szivos, in progress) found that both men and women, had powerfully important stories about being hard working people and about making a difference through work. In their case, the moral life was a life of hard work that made a difference regardless of whether their employers rewarded them, or whether non Acadians thought them foolish. Their stories about working were overtly moral stories about how to lead a life of dignity and respect . These stories that organize persons abilities embody past experience either explicitly or implicitly. They typically, but not necessarily, include elements of how the story may project into the future, perhaps including understandings about desired and less desired futures.

We like to think of the future aspects of stories as ends in view because those futures only make sense in light of the larger story. An image of the future within the

story of a young entrepreneur business career may include retiring at age 40 with a summer home, boat, and plenty of time for playing golf. That end in view is less sensible in the personal career story for a person concerned with public service. Because the stories used to form our actions are also created in action, changes in the stories will lead to changes in our images of the future.

Moral choice and virtue. While all action is moral action, Dewey reserves the terms “moral choice” for those situations in which there are incompatible ends in view. Moral choice involves a conscious decision to act so as to bring about one kind of future instead of another.

Suppose a manager criticizes a worker for poor performance. Interviewing the manager, she says what she did was simply what a responsible manager is obligated to do for the good of the company. We would say that the manager's story about her manager-subordinate relationship, story about her career as a manager, story about the company, and story about what the employee has done, together form her obligation to criticize the employee. Included in the manager's stories may be ideas about the future of her career, the kind of relationship to the employee she wants to create, and the success of the company. In other words they include ends in view. If the manager simply acts out of the confluence of these stories with the actions of the employees, there is a moral dimension to her action. However, only when the manager reflects on alternative incompatible futures and chooses to move toward one future instead of another, that that Dewey would call the situation one of moral choice.¹⁹

¹⁹ If the manager does not have sufficiently detailed ideas about alternative futures, it will be very difficult for her to articulate her stories about the future into instrumental action. That is why consultants like McAdam and Lang (see their chapter in this volume) spend a lot of time with clients developing detailed images of the future, and why they work with clients on the abilities they possess that could allow clients to act so as to move toward that future.

If a manager has the ability to develop and compare alternative futures prior to action, and to reflect on the way particular actions move toward a future, we can say that he or she has that *virtue*. The term virtue is an old one now rarely used in English, but it is a term worth distinguishing from *values*. MacIntyre (1981) distinguishes the terms this way. A virtue is an ability to *act* in certain ways that is identifiable to a community and useful to that community. A value is a general way of acting or condition that is praised but not necessarily enacted. For example, a person may say she or he values courage, but may not be able to act courageously. That person values courage, but does not have the virtue of courage. An appreciative inquirer may find it useful to think in terms of distinguishing virtues from values. Values are of little consequence if the organization cannot be helped to learn the virtues of character that will enable it to achieve its valued end-in-view.

The Relationship of Moral Life to Consummatory Moments

In previous sections of this chapter we offered examples of episodes in which consummatory moment were constituted. Several of these had important moral import. Recall the example of the used car dealers discussing a sale. In telling and hearing a story, they pass on their own moral order. Young salespersons learn the forms in which consummatory moments can be constituted in both the actual sales episode and in the telling of these stories. To understand how moral order and consummatory moments work together, we want to report on some work the current authors did together with a police department.

The Case.

We were asked to do some training for a city police department in the eastern USA. The department was moving toward community policing. That means putting more police on the streets where they get to know the people who live in the area they patrol. It also mean giving the officer more authority to decide how to solve problems. An officer is encouraged to decide how to deal with, for example, the first offense of minor theft by a juvenile. Rather than arresting the child the officer may choose to have a discussion with the child, the parents and the store owner, and then assign the child to help the store owner in some way.

To develop the new approach to policing, the department chief was working hard to recruit young college educated officers with an interest in community service. He wanted more individual initiative, and less rigid go-by-the-book thinking. The new patrol officers hired in the last several years were all college graduates. Some had M.A. degrees, and one had a law degree. The supervising sergeants and Lieutenants were different from the young officers in several ways. Most supervisors came from the military, none of the young officers did. The supervisors were, however, also highly educated, most all of them earning B.A. and M.A. degrees while on the force. The new officers were also more diverse in culture, religion and gender than their supervisors. Supervisors had virtually no influence on promotions of young officers. Promotion was earned by serving a specified number of years on the force and by passing a standardized examination. This was instituted to avoid racial and gender bias.

It was evident to the sergeants and Lieutenants that the captain meant to transform the department with a different kind of officer. The chief even let it be know that if junior offices did not like the way their supervisors spoke to them, they could

come directly to their chief. Our job was to do some training of the supervisors for working with the new officers.

We needed to get some richer understanding about what was changing and what was constant as the supervising officers understood and lived police work. We knew there was a powerful moral order that connects police and we wanted to understand what was happening to that moral order under the changing conditions. We met three different groups of supervising officers at three different times.²⁰ Each time we put supervising officers in groups and charged each group with creating lists of what were the best changes that had come into their police department in recent years, and what were the best things from the past that they wanted to carry into the future. We saw this as a first step to creating a new image of the future that might allow for the exploration of new ways to supervise. Amazingly, all three times before the groups began their work, one supervising officer stood up and said words very close to these: "This is stupid. Nothing changes in police work." Some others nodded agreement. We then worked to accept that point of view as important for us to hear and the groups decided they did want to do the task. Groups met for 20 minutes after which we asked for feedback. All three times the same supervisor who declared nothing had changed, raised his hand first and said, "nothing is the same as it was, everything has changed." We looked closely at the facial expressions and sounds responding to that comment. There was a uniform mutter of agreement, and most of us sounded and looked approving.

As we worked with the groups we learned that they were concerned about respect in the department. They talked a lot about wanting a future in which they would have dignity and respect both from the chief and the new officers. They wanted a future in which their view of police work would have an honorable place. However, they were

²⁰ This arrangement was not our choice, nor was it our choice to meet only with the supervising officers.

not simply opposed to change. Rather, each supervisor had two different and positive stories about nearly everything. The new officers were called the best and smartest to ever come into the force. The new officers were also described as, "a bunch of little kids." They even complained about who got the best patrol car. The new officers were "intelligent," "committed to police work," and "showing initiative." They were also criticized for "not knowing how to follow orders," "lacking respect for the chain of command," and generally lacking the discipline the army had taught the older officers. The supervising officers all affirmed their new mentoring roles and said over and over that this was a much better relationship than they had with sergeants and lieutenants when they were new. They also said that the new officers did not know when to simply do what is ordered and when to rely on the experience of an older officer.

We began to form an hypothesis that there were two moral orders in the department. An older one based on a military model emphasizing authority, chain of command, and fighting the "bad guys," and a new moral order emphasizing personal initiative, mentoring, and community participation. The highest virtue in the older order was courage in the face of danger. In the newer moral order, it seemed to be the ability to manage a situation to avoid conflict and avoid turning children and spouses into criminals. It was not the case that this second kind of virtue was disparaged in the older moral order, but it was not an essential virtue. During our earlier meeting with the chief, he spoke passionately for the new virtues. He explained explaining how in the week before we met, a young officer had taken a child who was acting badly back to the child's home. Because the officer knew the parents, the officer was able to work with parents on discipline problems and on ways to involve the child in constructive activities. In the old days, said the chief, that child would have a juvenile court record and be on his way to becoming a criminal. "That

is the kind of thinking I'm looking for!" For the chief such events seemed to be consummatory moments in the new moral order.

There was a very powerful moment working with the supervisors at which we learned their depth of commitment to the older order. It occurred after an exchange among ourselves and the officers during which both moral orders were being affirmed. A supervisor would affirm the value of the new officers, then after others had spoken, affirm the old moral order. We continued bringing forth positive features of the two moral orders, realizing that they were not fundamentally incompatible. One supervising officer from criminal investigations broke the pattern of affirming both moral orders. He stood up and spoke for the older moral order in a way that showed us the power of it. With the rest of us, he participated in constructing a consummatory moment. The dialogue follows:²¹

1. Cronen: Tell us a little more about the best things from traditional practice
2. that should be maintained on the force?
3. Officer 1: Making eye contact with officers all across the room.] Look, police
4. work never really changes. It's always the same no
5. matter what changes they make here.
6. Others: Mmmm. Yeh. [Heads nodding, looking serious and down at their
7. tables or off and far away.]
8. Officer 1: [Looking at Cronen, and at Chetro-Szivos] It doesn't change.
9. [Said slowly and firmly] You go out and you catch the bad guys.
10. Others: [Even more serious looks and stronger nodding with tightened
- lips]
11. Officer 1: [Looking at the other supervising officers not us] You put your life
12. on the line out there.
13. Officer 2: ...and it doesn't matter if they appreciate it
14. or not [looking at Officer 1]. I don't know why anyone would do this
15. job, but it's the best job in the world.
16. Others: Mmmm, yeh. [nodding]
17. All officers: [Leaning back, look serious, long silence]

Notice that the moment was co-constructed. It depended on the responses of

²¹ The dialogue was reconstructed from our notes on the meeting the next day.

the officers to each other. Officer 1 (lines 3-5) affirms the idea that something basic does not change even in these times of great change. On lines 6 & 7 other officers give a strong affirmation to that. Officer 1 (lines 8 & 9) next states a key virtue that is part of the unchanging quality of policing : the courage to “put your life on the line.” Both of these statements are affirmed. The serious looks show a deep respect for each other and the virtue they claim. On lines 13-15 a second officer further develops the virtue story saying that you do this even though you are not appreciated. You are able to just put that aside. Then Officer 2 says that living this kind of life is the best job there is in spite of the dangers and lack of appreciation. This is strongly affirmed by the others and the episode is punctuated with a long silence in which eye contact is avoided clearly demarcating the moment in experience (lines 16-17). Coherence and moral order is rescued from the confusion and complexity of the prior episode.²²

If we consider the rules that were used in the construction of the moment, we observe a clear pattern; a rhythm of statement - affirmation - development -statement -affirmation-development - closure. The talking turns are short and direct just as traditional police work must be. The tone of the episode reminds us of the way Kid Ory’s Jazz band played “Blues for Jimmie Noone” in their 1944 recording. Like the officer’s story, the music is slow and measured. There is increasing intensity, but it is never loud or shrill. The short solos seem to both grieve for what is being lost, and to strongly affirm both the life of Jimmie Noone and the declining musical tradition of which the late clarinetist was a part. The band responds to the solos with profound but quietly stated affirmation.

Consider the rules used to coordinate the episode. It was legitimate for an officer (not the most senior officer) to initiate the episode. This was not the chain of

²² This episode, of course, presented a problem for us to overcome because it had the potential of shutting down talk about different kinds of futures.

command speaking, it was the brotherhood of officers. Therefore it was legitimate for others to add their voices to develop the statement of moral order. Introducing qualifications or raising questions, something that the officers felt legitimate to do in the earlier episode, were prohibited here. The group affirmations seemed obligatory for the participants. They affirmed a group identity as a moral community.

Positioning is important. Officers 1 and 2 do not speak for themselves, but for all police and for those present. The authors' presence was also important. Officer 1 first looks directly at us in lines 8 -10. He speaks for the officers to outsiders from a university who do not know what it is like to be police. The groups' affirmations, however, are directed to the officer speaking, not to us.

The officers were are not only enacting a more order, they were, in Dewey's sense, making a moral choice. They were fully aware that they could choose a different way of understanding police work. Part of our hypothesis was that the new moral order, by making different virtues equal to, or more important than, the old, seemed to present an alternative way of life rather than a complimentary one. In the old moral order, virtue has to do with serving the community in spite of the community's failure to accord police respect. Officers are detached heroes who, counting on their fellow offices, appear in a crisis, takes great risks, and "catch the bad guys," knowing there is little reward. Respect and safety comes form the brotherhood of police. In the new moral order, police should work to create community respect as familiar, everyday heroes. They should be as responsible to the community as to fellow officers, solving problems, offering advice, and sometimes taking great risks in a crisis.

Lastly, it is important to notice how much is harmonized. The episode is short and uncluttered. it includes the most important features of a way of life, its most

important virtues and the relationship it has to the rest of the community. We said earlier that multiple contexts are involved in the creation of a consummatory moment. Here, there are important stories that give the high risk life of a police officer dignity and worth. The multiple contexts were related. From what we observed, the traditional moral order of policing was a very high context within which other contexts made sense. That context with its emphasis on risk, danger, and the community's lack of respect, strongly contributes to stories of relationships among police in which they must count on each other. In the context of living those relationships a single officer can have dignity, respect. He or she is someone that others, brother officers, care for. In the context of being men and women of dignity and respect, living lives of honor, they develop stories comparing themselves to outsiders, including those police who become administrators rather than line officers. Outsiders, do not not live in the same moral order that police do.

All of these contexts are harmonized for the moment in the episode described above. The important features of these contexts are given voice in an elegant way. In turn, the consummatory moment created works to affirm and perpetuate these contexts. The moment does not *prove* the truth of the moral order, but it does reaffirm commitment to it at a time when efforts are being made to change it.

The Consummatory Moment and Appreciative Inquiry

In a recent discussion of art of everyday life at Goteborg Centrum for Konsultation, Susanne Bergman (2000) observed that in her experience the process of appreciative inquiry itself can produce a powerful consummatory moment for an organization. The process can identify and weave together abilities to producing a powerful feeling of harmony from which the organization can go forward in various

ways. That achievement can allow for the development of new contexts in the life of the organization whereby the artistic as well as the instrumental dimension of working life can be developed. The analysis of consummatory moments developed in this paper is meant to assist in identifying the varied processes and multiple abilities that are involved in the construction of such moments, and to stress the importance of realizing that such moments are not ends in themselves or meaningful in themselves. Their meaning is never finished, but rather is constantly realized and developed as patterns of communication continue. We have also stressed the importance of understanding the relationship between consummatory moments in social life, and the moral orders of which they are part. To focus on the artistic dimension of life apart from moral orders implicit in all aspects of living breaks the continuity of experience and inhibits the process of inquiry.

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