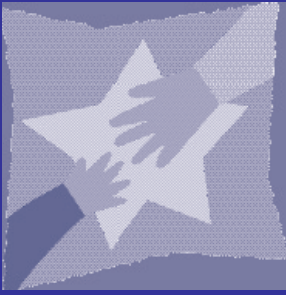


The Newsletter of
**The Indiana Association for Infant and Toddler
Mental Health**



REFLECTIONS

Spring
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Vol. 1 No. 2

*A Subsidiary of the Mental
Health Association in*

Conscience Development & Functioning:

A SYNOPTIC ACCOUNT DRAWN FROM
CONSCIENCE WORKS*

(with special reference to the research of G. Kochanska)

By Matthew R. Galvin, M.D.[x](#)

Consider three young persons: Cathy a toddler, Michael her three and one half brother and Cynthia their thirteen-year old babysitter. ¹ They are brought together through the agency of Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild, Cathy's and Michael's parents. Ahead of them is an evening of connecting and disconnecting, of following do's and don'ts—or not, of delayed gratifications and frustrations, perhaps of -- hopefully, no more than— minor transgressions and of holding one another accountable—or not— for little harms perceived or real. There may be even be some forgiveness seeking and granting or expressions of gratitude. Cathy, Michael and Cynthia are bound by their moral nature to have encounters as persons of conscience. Yet they are each at a very different level of their moral development.

How can grown-ups who aspire to be stewards of moral nature, learn to conserve, sustain and enable flourishing in the moral development of children?

What patterns can be discerned as progression is made from someone even younger than Cathy to someone even older than Cynthia? Will progression normally occur according to invariant hierarchical stages? Does the process admit of alternative tracks? Can there be accelerations (as well as arrests, interruptions and delays)? Under what conditions of psychopathological interference do trajectories become deviant? How can grown-ups who aspire to be stewards of moral nature, learn to conserve, sustain and enable flourishing in the moral development of children? (Continued on Page 2)

* Dr Galvin is currently in the practice of child and adolescent psychiatry, including consultation and service provision to **Children's Bureau Inc.**, Indiana School for the Blind and Damar in Indianapolis, In. He is Clinical Associate Professor in Psychiatry at Indiana University and serves as voluntary faculty, teaching with his wife Dr. Meg Gaffney in Introduction to Clinical Medicine I and Conscience Centered Psychiatric Ethics. He is author or co-author of several psycho-educational books for children, adolescents and adults. He is an active contributor to, and serves on the editorial board of, **Conscience Works**. He has been a member of the Board of the **Indiana Association for Infant and Toddler Mental Health** since 2004.

CONSCIENCE: THE HEART OF THE PERSONALITY⁴

Stages of Conscience Development

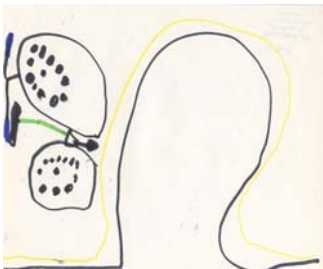


Think of younger persons you know. Whatever their ages, they have already journeyed through some *stages* in their moral development. Then too, they have other stages still to negotiate. Very young persons of conscience depend upon others to help them figure out what's right and wrong (or good and bad). That is called the **external stage**. As they mature, persons of conscience gradually bring moral awareness inside them and may even think of it as a part of their body. That is called the **brain/heart stage**. Still later, conscience becomes personalized. That is called the **heart/mind or personified stage**. Then conscience may go through a period in which it seems more or less confounded (the **confused stage**) before it is more fully put together (the **integrated stage**).

Here are the Stages of Conscience Development (in parentheses you will find an age, more or less, when we discern a person is at that stage):⁵

- I. External Stage (around 5 years old)
- II. Brain/Heart Stage (around 7 years old)
- III. Personified or Heart/Mind Stage (around 12 years old)
- IV. Confused Stage (around 16 years old)
- V. Integrated Stage (around 18+ years old)

Here is the narrative and pictorial image rendered by one of the youngest of our subjects (we have entitled it “A Slippery Slope”):



A Slippery Slope

A child knew he was being good, he says, “When the teacher didn't tell me to sit down.” In his drawing, he shows what happened while riding bikes with his cousin. “The hill was straight down, my cousin told me to stop but I didn't” When he approached the bottom he had to drag his feet in the mud. His cousin told him “that was bad and he would never ride bikes with me again”. The same child describes another bike adventure with his cousin who told him to pull over. He didn't and “flipped over the handlebars.”

Conscience Under 6 Years:

There is at least partial convergence of the psychobiological interpretations drawn from the conscience study conducted by Stilwell et al.^{6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12} and ideas presented by Jerome Kagan:¹³

The human capacity for a moral motive and its associated emotions took from our primate ancestry a keen sensitivity to the voice, face, and actions of others but added five unique abilities:

- (1) to infer the thoughts and feelings of others,
- (2) to be self-aware
- (3) to apply the categories of good and bad to events and to self,
- (4) to reflect on past actions, and
- (5) to know that a particular act could have been suppressed.

The combination of these five talents created a novel system that first emerges in children in the second year and matures during the decade that follows....

Allowing for overlaps, there is remarkable correspondence among these five unique abilities characterized in the preceding excerpt on the one hand and, on the other hand, the domains of conscience drawn from children's and adolescents own accounts and images, respectively:

- (1) Moralization of emotion;
- (2) Conceptualization of conscience;
- (3) Moral valuation;
- (4) Conceptualization of conscience and Moral Valuation;
- (5) Moral volition.¹⁴

In the most recent articulation of a theory of conscience developed by Kochanska and her colleagues based upon their longitudinal studies covering the first six years in the lifespan, the two major components of conscience are termed *moral emotions and moral conduct* compatible with rules and standards. An early discernible development is the child's eager, willing stance towards parental socialization (also termed committed compliance). Development is seen as influenced by biologically based temperament (in particular, fearfulness and effortful control) and features of socialization, including style of discipline and quality of the parent-child relationship (specifically, early security).^{18, 19, 20} As has been demonstrated by Stilwell and her colleagues, the signatures of such early forms of conscience development elucidated by Kochanska can be detected in the responses of older children and adolescents to semi-structured interviews, conducted in accordance with the youth's cognitive maturity.

IN SUMMARY, we have briefly visited a developmental theory of conscience which includes the features of 1) invariant hierarchical stages readily characterized in the lifespan between 5 and 17 years old with precursors identifiable even earlier in the lifespan, in recognizable patterns of progression with acceleration on the one hand, delay or interruption or arrest, on the other, 2) domains admitting of relative strengths and weaknesses and individualized contours of conscience within personhood and 3) intrinsic or bedrock values associated with the domains of conscience. The importance of the caregiver as well as the agencies and institutions supporting the various professions of care has, at every point, been implied.

For more details and complete references see:

* **Conscience Works**, An On-line Periodical: <http://shaw.medlib.iupui.edu/conscience/>
(all electronically published materials are freely available for down loading)

Also please see go to www.iaitmh.org for Dr. Galvin's complete original article for the IAITMH with all references.

Read More About It: [suggested references on early conscience development:](#)

Right Vs Wrong: Raising a Child with a Conscience by Barbara Stillwell, Matthew Galvin, and Stephen Kopta

Moral Minds: How Nature Designed our Universal Sense of Right and Wrong by Mark Hauser.

Indiana Association for Infant
and Toddler Mental Health
1431 North Delaware Street
Indianapolis, IN. 46202



Calendar Updates:

May

Stacey Ryan, ACSW & Angela Tomlin, Ph.D. will present on infant mental health for foster care parents and professionals. Contact atomlin@iupui.edu for details. Free.

June

Mental Health American in Indiana's Annual Meeting is scheduled for June 1, 2007 at the Union Station, Indianapolis.

July

Please check our website for information and registration for our Infant Mental Health Summer Institute, July 9-13, 2007 sponsored by the Indiana State Department of Health with support from the Indiana Department of Mental Health and Addiction. Designed for mental health professionals who wish to expand their clinical skills with very young children, the Institute features Susan McDonough, PhD and Janet Dean, LCSW.

August

IAITMH Annual Conference on IMH will be held August 17, 2007 at the Riley Outpatient Center Ruth Lilly Auditorium.

Membership

Yes, I want to become a member of the Indiana Association for Infant and Toddler Mental Health

Name _____

Address _____

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- Family \$15 Professional \$30
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 Send me info about group or corporate rates

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Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

From the Chair
Angela M. Tomlin, Ph.D.

I hope you enjoy this issue on conscience development and that you will visit the website for more details about this important area of research that impacts our personal interactions with our own children and our clinical practice.

The time to renew our membership is fast approaching. If you have not received a renewal letter, please consider renewing with the form above. We appreciate your membership and encourage you to invite others to join us in our work.

We have some openings on the Board and would welcome your interest. Please contact me (atomlin@iupui.edu) if you are interested or would like to submit a nomination.