Transformation and Epiphany in Moral Education

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The capacity to undergo transformative change remains one of the most enduringly mysterious aspects of the human experience. At crucial moments in the course of our lives, we are called to give up some of the core values, modes of thought, self-conceptions and guiding ideals that had hitherto given shape to our lives. We may be thrust into new kinds of relationships with our loved ones, or come to find friendship with news kinds of people. We may be suddenly confronted with the new life that parenthood brings with it, or pursue a job that profoundly changes what we think is worth striving for. We may be moved by a film, a piece of art, a symphony or play that challenges us to break out of the habitual routines that have previously strangled out our agency. Or, the inspiration may go the other way: we have a moment of insight in which we learn to affirm the seemingly mundane routines that govern our days and see the inherent value within them. Whatever the content may be, we call these experiences transformative, and we often look back on them with gratitude for the person they have made us into.

Although the capacity for transformative change has occasionally excited the concern of philosophers and educational theorists, it has only been recently that transformation has become a topic of extensive empirical and theoretical research. Especially in education, but not only there, the mystery and promise of transformation has generated an enthusiastic reception. In educational psychology, teachers are urged to adopt the methods of "transformational teaching" (Slavich & Zimbardo, 2012; cf. Rosebrough & Leverett, 2011) or to create a space for "transformative experiences" (Pugh, 2011, 2002). The theory of "transformative learning" has come to define the current research paradigm in adult education (Taylor & Cranton, 2012; Taylor, 2008; Mezirow, 2000). Social justice educators regularly couch their conscious-raising efforts in terms of "transformative pedagogy" (Elenes, 2013; Albers & Frederik, 2013; Nagda, Gurin & Lopez, 2003; hooks, 1994; Lusted, 1986; cf. Shields, 2010, 2004; Weiner, 2003). In philosophy of education, pragmatists, phenomenologists, neo-Aristotelians and postmodernists alike have pointed to the special transformative quality of education, both in the Anglo-American and German-language discourses (Nohl, 2016; Bakhurst, 2015; English, 2014, 2009; Higgins, 2011; Koller, 2012; Marotzki, 1990; Jackson, 1986; Meyer-Drawe, 1982).

One of the salient characteristics of this literature is the consistency with which theorists characterize the beginnings of the transformative process as some kind of "disruption". Jack Mezirow (1978, 2000) claims, for example, that transformative learning is preceded by 'disorienting dilemmas'. Erik Erikson (1985) famously argues that the transformative transitions between stages of ego development emerge out of 'crises'. Koller (2012) also underscores the educational importance of crisis and "irritation", as it prepares the psychological ground for the occasion of *Bildung*. Sharon Todd (2003) points to the immense feelings of guilt, suffering and even "violence" that transformative social justice education involves (p. 20). And Andrea English (2014) claims that the "transformative beginnings of learning" follow upon an "interruption" of experience, which involves "self-alienation" (p. 99), "struggle" and even "disillusionment" (p. 118).

In this paper, we argue that this consensus view of the emergence of transformation is one-sided, as are its recommendations for moral education. If transformative education truly involves moments of such drastic disruption, we might be somewhat leery about investing teachers with the power to transform their students. Can moral educators aim for transformation while avoiding the existential precarity of transformative experience? Is there a way to conduct transformative education while avoiding crisis, disillusionment, disorientation and disruption?

We think the answers to these question is yes and the concept of epiphany a key resource for re-envisioning transformative moral education beyond the standard view. We argue that epiphany not only often better captures the phenomenology of the beginnings of a transformative process than disruption, but it is also more helpful for understanding what teachers should seek to accomplish in contexts of moral education. By epiphany we are referring to a moral insight, a summons to virtue, or revelation that captures our attention and calls us to become a better version of ourselves. While often unsettling, epiphanic moments are morally clarifying more than they are baldly disruptive. In arguing this, we build on the recent defenses of epiphany in moral education by Jonas (2018a,b) and Kristjánsson (2018), showing that the concept shows particular promise for grasping the transformative dimensions of moral education. In conclusion, we argue that while teachers cannot *guarantee* moral epiphanies, they can create conditions for their occasion. Given the moral goods at stake, we think the attempt to do so is worthwhile.

Disruptive Beginnings: The Consensus View on Transformation

One of the central motifs of Western thought at least until the Romantic period was the belief in the continuity of all creation. As Lovejoy's (1976) classic study maintains, this continuity was most dramatically expressed in the idea of the Great Chain of Being, whose central philosophical principles were first laid down by Plato and Aristotle. Perhaps the most important of those principles were those of plenitude and continuity. Lovejoy argues that we owe the notion of plenitude to Plato, i.e. the notion that everything that could have been created has been created, and the notion of continuity to Aristotle, whereby each created thing is connected to every other by some attribute or series of qualities. In the finished concept of the Great Chain of Being, this principle of continuity would be radicalized. Not only do all creatures and things share some attribute in common, rather than can be ordered in a sequence of ascending forms.

This provocative worldview would propagate throughout the history of Western intellectual thought, providing inspiration for many of the systems of ethical, political and educational theory that would be advanced there, as Lovejoy compellingly shows. In the realm of education, continuity would mean that the role of the pedagogue is to usher students through a continuous developmental process, one that would mould the students according to the pedagogue's conception of the educated person or draw out students' inherent qualities to come to full fruition (Bollnow, 1959). It was not until the publication of Hegel's (1977) *Phenomenology of Spirit* that the Western belief in continuity would be challenged in a fundamental way. Hegel characterizes the progressive development of spirit, that is, its *Bildung*, as a tumultuous journey propelled by the tensions and contradictions that arise within the logic of each given spiritual shape. The spirit progresses by means of negation -- first, via a simple negation of the original position, then via a "determinate negation" of the negated position. Often, Hegel describes

these movements as involving a kind of suffering, culminating in phenomenological crises that cannot be resolved until the new form of spirit enters the scene.

Hegel's dramatic narrative of spiritual progress represents a significant departure from previous theoretical conceptions of *Bildung*. *Bildung* was understood to refer to an educational process of personal cultivation which activates, builds upon, improves and ennobles the raw materials of our selves. According to Humboldt's (2012) influential view, this involves an attempt "to fill up the conception of humanity inside of us with as much content as possible . . . through the most comprehensive, enlivened und free union of our selves with world" (p. 94). Although this definition is not completely opposed to Hegel's account, the centrality of its "filling up with content" metaphor implies a much more continuous process of learning and growth than what Hegel has in mind. After Hegel, theoretical accounts of educational growth that were influenced by the *Bildung* tradition would have to come to terms with a compelling new idea: Perhaps the most meaningful kind of education involves discontinuity rather than continuity, disruption rather than harmony.

Contemporary assertions of the transformative potential residing in the educational environment owe much to this Hegelian perspective. Truly transformative education should involve discontinuous and disruptive experiences, which cause us to grow in more profound ways than more continuous learning environments allow. Skilled educators, the standard argument continues, should therefore aim not merely for mere additive or accumulative forms of learning, but for transformative learning. This means making space in the classroom for disruption.

It is difficult to overstate how widely accepted this view of transformation was to become over the course of the 20th and first part of the 21st century. For John Dewey (1958) experiences that yield growth necessarily begin with "perplexity, confusion, doubt" and produce an "alienation" between self and world:

> Life itself consists of phases in which the organism falls out of step with the march of surrounding things and then recovers unison with it-either through effort or by some happy chance. And, in a growing life, the recovery is never mere return to a prior state, for it is enriched by the state of disparity and resistance through which it has successfully passed. If the gap between organism and environment is too wide, the creature dies. If its activity is not enhanced by the temporary alienation, it merely subsists. (p. 14)

In *Democracy and Education,* Dewey describes reflective experience, indeed every occasion of thinking, as a process beginning with "perplexity, confusion, doubt, due to the fact that one is implicated in an incomplete situation whose full character is not yet determined" (p. 176). Erik Erikson (1985) echoes Dewey's emphasis on the importance of such disruptions for transformative growth, attributing the motive power of ego development to the encounter, management and overcoming of psychological *crises*. Erikson's famous chapter on the "Eight Ages of Man" in *Childhood and Society* outlines a series of eight progressive phases of personality development, each of which encompass a characteristic struggle between a positive "ego-syntonic" psychological state and negative, neurotic one. The resolution of the struggle is secured through the rearing strategies of the child's guardian or educator, who must see to it that the child has enough experiences of the ego-syntonic state so that his or her tendencies to the neurotic state are quelled. The already delicate task of helping the child through such struggles becomes even more complex with the onset of adolescence. At this stage, Erikson famously argues that the child goes through a total crisis of identity.

With the establishment of a good initial relationship to the world of skills and tools, and with the advent of puberty, childhood proper comes to an end. Youth begins. But in puberty and adolescence all samenesses and continuities relied on earlier are more or less questioned again . . . . In their search for a new sense of continuity and sameness, adolescents have to refight many of the battles of earlier years. (p. 261)

The identity crisis is simultaneously a problem of social adaptation as well as a consequence of the "physiological revolution" that is occurring within the child. The result is a calling into question of the "continuities" of the child's former self and the subsequent search for new, more tenable continuities.

Although Erikson does not himself draw the conclusion that educators should try to initiate such transformative crises in students, Jack Mezirow, original purveyor of the now widely influential "transformative learning theory", would take this next step. Mezirow argues that meaningful, transformative learning proceeds upon the encounter with a "disorienting dilemma", which forces us into generating new ways of thinking and acting:

There are certain challenges or dilemmas of adult life that cannot be resolved by the usual way we handle problems—that is, by simply learning more about them or learning how to cope with them more effectively. Life becomes untenable, and we undergo significant phases of reassessment and growth in which familiar assumptions are challenged and new directions and commitments are charted. (p. 154)

According to Mezirow, educators should not wait around for such dilemmas to occur on their own, however. The transformative educator should help instigate disorienting dilemmas by calling our attention to phenomena that our "meaning perspectives" -- i.e. the structures of perception that enable us to understand our surroundings in actionable ways -- fail to invest with meaning. In this way, a structural shift from one meaning perspective to another is set in motion.

As a final demonstration of this consensus view, consider the remarkable similarities between the treatments of transformation in social justice education, pragmatic educational theory and the most popular conception of *Bildung* in contemporary German educational research. Megan Boler (1999), a social justice educator, believes a "pedagogy of discomfort" is necessary for students to "undergo a possible transformation of [their] self-identity in relation to others and to history" (p. 179), while Sharon Todd (2003) points to inherent and unavoidable "violence" of an education that confronts social injustice (p. 20). Andrea English (2014), a pragmatist following in the footsteps of Dewey, claims that transformative learning commences only after a discontinuous moment of "interruption" in our experience, while Hans-Christoph Koller (2016), the most prominent representative of the theory of transformative *Bildung*, argues that "irritations" can be invaluable catalysts for transformative *Bildung*-processes.

The diversity -- with respect to discipline, methodology and even historical context -- of the theorists who have pointed to disruption as the catalyst for transformative growth suggests that we can in fact speak of a consensus view here. Given the various perspectives discussed above, the consensus view consists in the following three principles:

1. The process of personal development involves, at least occasionally, moments of discontinuous, transformative growth.

2. The catalyst for discontinuous, transformative growth is a disruption of our habitual ways of thinking and acting.

3. Educators should strive to catalyze transformative growth in the classroom.

While there is much to commend in the consensus view of transformation, particularly principles 1 and 3, we would like to submit principle 2 to further scrutiny in the following sections. It is certainly the case that disruptive experiences can transform us as people and learners. Yet, the question is whether this is the *only* way to do so. Can education be transformative without being, at the same time, disruptive? That is, must a transformative education really submit learners to crises, interruptions, irritations, perplexity, moments of alienation and confusion? In the following, we shall argue that assuming so overlooks another, more compelling phenomenological possibility.

Ironic Experience: An Alternative View?

To challenge the consensus view on transformative education, we need to find a species of transformative experience that is not catalyzed by disruption. Does such a species of experience exist? As a first step to answering this question, we can turn to Jonathan Lear's (2014) account of a unique form of experience that can occur when we are engaged in a practice for the sake of achieving excellence. In particular, Lear describes an experience in which the assumptions and conventions of a practice suddenly seem to us to be quite inadequate and wholly strange, and we are pulled up short by the realization. A "gap" opens up between the realities of practical life and the ideals to which the practice constantly refers. In this case, Lear begins to re-see the meaning of his activities as a teacher.

> So, I am sitting at home in the evening grading papers, and I begin to wonder what this has to do with *actually teaching* my students. For a while, this is a normal reflection in which I step back and wonder about the value of my activity. I still have a sense of what the ideal is; I am just reflecting on how well the activity of grading contributes to it. [. . .] But then things get out of hand. I am *struck* by teaching in a way that disrupts my normal self-understanding of what it is to teach (which includes normal reflection on teaching). This is not a continuation of my practical reasoning; it is a disruption of it. It is more like vertigo than a process of stepping back to reflect. When it comes to previous, received understandings of teaching—even those that have been reflectively questioned and adjusted in the normal ways—*all bets are off*. (p. 17)

Lear's "vertigo" shares many of the phenomenological qualities that the defenders of the consensus view attributed to the catalyst for transformation. There is certainly something disruptive about the episode Lear describes. Yet there are several important differences between this vertigo and the disruption discussed earlier. Out of Lear's experience issues a profusion of fundamental questions about teaching that suddenly break into consciousness, demand his attention and generate new possibilities about how to inhabit the practice of teaching anew.

> Are my students the individuals coming into my classroom at the appointed time . . . or are they to be located elsewhere? Are they in the younger generation . . . or are they my age or older? Might they come along in a different generation altogether . . . maybe in the

next century? And if my classroom is where my students are, where is my classroom? What am I to make of the room I actually do walk into now? Where should I be to encounter my students? What would it be to encounter them? And if I were to encounter them, what would it be to help them, rather than harm them? What is development? (ibid.)

Crucially, Lear's are not questions about the value of the teaching practice itself. Lear's experience causes him to realize that there may be fundamental problems with his understanding of teaching, but the questions that emerge do not concern a choice between alternative occupations that he might pursue. He is not considering a career change. Rather, he has returned to the question of *how to practice teaching well*. Lear's questions issue from a deep desire to better realize some pedagogical ideal in his teaching. Lear's experience is occasioned by the realization that his prior identity as a teacher falls short, or is not obviously connected to, an ideal of teaching—that with respect to this ideal, he has been just "going through the motions," mindlessly accepting and enacting established norms of the teaching practice. Thus, while Lear confronts fundamental limitations of the social practice of teaching, he remains committed to it in a profound way. "It is because I care about teaching that I have come to a halt as a teacher," Lear writes (p. 19). Glossing what he means by being "struck" by teaching in his earlier account, Lear continues:

> I am *struck* by teaching—by an intimation of its goodness, its fundamental significance—and am filled with longing to grasp what it is and incorporate it into my life. I can no longer simply live with the available social understandings of teaching; if I am to return to them it must be in a different way. (p. 20)

Because Lear's questions call him to realize the ideal of good teaching, this experience, which Lear calls *ironic experience*, is evidence of devoted attachment to the teaching practice, even while it requires him to detach himself from certain ways of thinking and doing lodged therein. Ironic experience constitutes "a peculiar form of committed reflection" (p. 21), in which we demonstrate "utter seriousness and commitment (in this case, to teaching), not its opposite" (p. 19).

In this way, Lear's notion of ironic experience improves upon the consensus view of transformative catalysts in some important ways. In particular, he points to a species of experience that is substantively ethical. The catalyst for a professional transformation in Lear's sense is no mere negation, irritation, perplexity or disorientation, but remains tethered to an ethical ideal which is the source of the experience. That is, the catalyst of the transformative process is both the "vertigo" *and simultaneously* the ethical ideal (of teaching) that should inform his future practice. It is not enough merely to critically question one's reasons for doing X or Y; one must have a powerful ideal that *grips* us in some way, draws us to get closer to it.

Although with Lear's conception of ironic experience we are closer to that species of experience that can initiate transformation without disruption, it does not get us as far as we might hope. Lear conceives of the ironic experience as, at root, "a species of uncanniness" (p. 15), for it leads us to see our previous actions as wholly odd with respect to the newly recognized ideal. Though experiencing the uncanny in this sense is phenomenologically und ethically different from disruption, his account still places too much emphasis on the disruptive element of such experiences. In our view, Lear misses a chance to see the element of affirmation and empowerment that can accompany the moments he is trying to describe. We need an idea that can capture both sides of the experience.

Epiphany as Transformative Catalyst

In "The Rhythm of Education," A. N. Whitehead (1957) gets us even closer to such an idea. Whitehead's aim in the essay is to describe the fundamental phases of the educational process through which we become experienced practitioners in a social practice. According to Whitehead, "precision" is the process by which we attain mastery, expertise, and judgment in a practice. Although this is a crucial element of practical initiation, Whitehead shows that it too often considered the sole purpose of the endeavor. To this process, Whitehead appends two more stages—an initial stage of "romance" and a final stage of "generalization." The stage of "romance" refers to the initial steps of the initiation process in which the student develops, or rather *should* develop, a romantic attachment to the practice. For the early apprentice, "subject matter has the vividness of novelty; it holds within itself unexplored connections with possibilities half-disclosed by glimpses and half-concealed by the wealth of material." (p. 28) The teacher's job at this initial stage is to show students that the world before them holds a store of mysteries and paradoxes that hard work in the subject will someday explain. If done well, the novice is overcome by "romantic emotion," "the excitement consequent on the transition from the bare facts to the first realizations of the import of their unexplored relationships" (ibid.). Whitehead's argument is that the difficult and protracted process of appropriating subject matter and gaining precision in the skills of disciplinary practices will be an enriching experience only if the novice has developed a romantic attachment to the subject matter beforehand. "It is evident that a stage of precision is barren without a previous stage of romance. . . . It is simply a series of meaningless statements about bare facts, produced artificially and without any further relevance" (p. 29).

In the final stage, the stage of "generalization," Whitehead intriguingly claims that the student acquires both generalized knowledge in the practice and experiences a "return to romanticism" (p. 30). Somehow, the achievement of masterly precision in the practice leads back to the romance of apprenticeship. In spite of the immense suggestiveness of the notion of "masterly romanticism," Whitehead leaves his account just there. He devotes a mere six sentences to his description of this "fruition which has been the goal of the precise training" (p. 30).

A few pages earlier and in a somewhat different context, however, Whitehead adumbrates just enough of vision of the romantic master to allow us to determine what such a state might entail. Discussing the seeming paradox that the use of language is one of the most complex mental tasks we can think of and yet it is one of the first that infants learn, Whitehead writes:

> The first intellectual task which confronts an infant is the acquirement of spoken language. What an appalling task, the correlation of meanings with sounds! It requires an analysis of ideas and an analysis of sounds. We all know that the infant does it, and the miracle of his achievement is explicable. But so are all miracles, and yet to the wise they remain miracles. (p. 25)

The final line of this passage "and yet to the wise they remain miracles" is the key, we think, to the phenomenology of that experience which we are searching for -- a catalyst that impels transformative change without implying some kind of harrowing disruption. After passing through a phase of honing one's skills and systematizing one's understanding of a disciplinary practice—say in linguistics, to follow Whitehead's example—the linguist comes to a stage at which the original wonder and enticement with language is felt again with full force. This original enthrallment was nourished by the hope that the

discipline's conceptual content and forms of reasoning might harbor the power to explain away the mysteries of, say, illocution and perlocution that had appeared in the linguist's early experiences with linguistics. Indeed, part of the linguist's motivation to gain precision in the discipline was presumably its promise to solve some of these open questions. However, Whitehead suggests that finally solving the mysteries that initially lead us into practices, mastering their skills and standards of excellence, and developing general and systematic understanding of the discipline do not exhaust the complexity of the true master's perspective. Rather, the true master possesses the capacity for reenchanted experience, in which she can see the things she now deeply understands again in the light of the novice's romantic gaze. The trained linguist can still marvel at the miracle of learning language, though she can give a precise account of it.

At this final stage of initiation, the master realizes that the promise of precision that was once the source of her romantic attachment to the practice can never be fulfilled, that even the simplest phenomena remain ponderous and obscure, and that the reticence of nature from the instruments of the discipline is itself beautiful. The new romance thus derives from a sort of tragic humility, admixed with gratitude and reverence. This stance is not only an acknowledgment of the epistemic boundaries of one's discipline, but a capacity to see even the phenomena that the discipline can explain as miraculous—that is, miraculous not in the literal sense of a supernatural visitation, but in the sense of an uncanny, and yet simultaneously affirmative and empowering experience. In other words, the master retains the romantic capacity for *epiphany*—for experiencing the mystery of the familiar.

Though Whitehead himself does not use this language, we call this specific kind of experience *epiphany* because of its unique phenomenological qualities it possesses vis-a-vis Lear's ironic experience and the disruptive experience of the consensus view. One of the central aspects of epiphany is the "occasionality" of the experience. This occasionality stands in between what we might call the utter "spontaneity" of ironic experience and the "controllability" of disruptive experience. While ironic experiences in Lear's sense come necessarily unheeded, Whitehead is pointing to a habituated experiential disposition in which we are open to, even expectant of such insights. Yet even though one can prepare for epiphany, it is unlike the disruptive experience that the defenders of the consensus view highlight. Disruptive experience can be initiated via straightforward pedagogical methodology -- namely, disruption. In contrast, epiphanys occasion us; they cannot be called up out of sheer pedagogical will. The best we can do is try to create the conditions for them. Their influence will always be something that is worked out between the individual and those conditions, calling forth their agency while offering new paths into which it can be directed. In this way, epiphanies constitute a transformative catalyst that bypasses the ethical and phenomenological risks of disruption.

Whitehead's account only gives us some of the full spectrum of epiphany, especially as it relates to moral education, since in his context it seems an experience accessible only to the master of a practice. Yet if we extend the logic of this experience somewhat further, we get closer to a general concept of epiphany, one that includes students at every stage of the educational process. According to Whitehead, epiphanies require a practiced gaze in order to possess the full force of their phenomenological impulse. If we add to our understanding of the "practiced gaze" any mode of experience in which we are caught up in everyday, familiar, and the routine habits, we begin to near the conception of epiphany that James Joyce considered central for transformative moral progress. For Joyce, the city of Dublin—its sterility, monotony and tedium—is symbolic of human malaise. Its "brown brick houses," Joyce says, "[are] the very incarnation of Irish paralysis." (Joyce, 1944, p.211) Joyce's characters are trapped in worlds of

stagnation and everydayness, suffering the despair of necessity, characterized by a hardened resignation that negates alternative possibilities. This banal existence, however, is not the final word. Amidst this stultifying ennui, epiphanic possibilities emerge in the mundane and trivial. What might be an ordinary "item in the catalogue of Dublin's street furniture" (Joyce, 1944, p. 211) can prompt an epiphanic revelation. The profane in Joyce's stories becomes sacred; the ordinary becomes extraordinary grist for epiphanic discoveries. In a letter to his brother Stanislaus, Joyce explicitly states the purpose of his literature:

> [T]here is a certain resemblance between the mystery of the mass and what I am trying to do . . . to give people a kind of intellectual pleasure or spiritual enjoyment by converting the bread of everyday life into something that has a permanent artistic life of its own . . . for their mental, moral and spiritual uplift. (Joyce, 1976, p. 104)

Elsewhere he says his aim is to let the Irish people take one "good look at themselves in his nicely polished looking-glass" (Joyce, 1976, p. 90). Joyce seeks not only to reveal the epiphanic in the profane, but also to provoke epiphanies in his reader—prompting the readers to live vicariously through his protagonists. Both "the fictional characters of the tales and the readers are meant to undergo an epiphanic confrontation" (Valente, 1997).

This is on clear display in Joyce's short-story *Araby,* where a young man, driven to and fro by his crush for his neighbor's sister, suffers the following revelation: "Gazing up into the darkness I saw myself as a creature driven and derided by vanity; and my eyes burned with anguish and anger." (Joyce, 2017, p. 28). This existential insight is also evident in Gabriel Conroy's epiphany in the "The Dead." Gabriel, seeing his wife as though for the first time, is overcome with a "shameful consciousness." He sees

> himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous, well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealising his own clownish lusts, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror…..[Gazing at his sleeping wife it] hardly pained him now to think how poor a part he, her husband, had played in her life. He watched her while she slept, as though he and she had never lived together as man and wife. (Joyce, 2008, p. 342)

Crucially, although these moments are described in stark and negative terms, Joyce does not seem them as merely disruptive. Stephen Hero, the protagonist of Joyce's posthumously published autobiographical novel, defines an epiphany as a "sudden spiritual manifestation, whether in the vulgarity of speech or of a gesture or in a memorable phase of the mind itself" (Joyce, 1944, p. 211). Such experiences, Stephen goes on to say, "...are the most delicate and evanescent of moments" (Joyce, 1944, p. 211). Noting their significance, Joyce's other key protagonist, Stephen Dedalus offers the following counsel: "Remember your epiphanies on green oval leaves, deeply deep, copies to be sent if you died to all the great libraries of the world, including Alexandria?" (Joyce, 1934/1990, p. 40). Stephen Dedalus, underscoring the existential significance of epiphanies, claims the "soul is born" in such moments (Joyce, 1916/1992, p. 157). This birth though is hard-won; Stephen elaborates: "[The soul] has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man [sic] is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight" (Joyce, 1916/1992, p. 157).

In our view, Joyce and Whitehead's studies of human experience point to an alternative approach to moral education that aims for transformative progress without recommending (merely) disruptive or ironic pedagogy. That is, it helps us to understand what we are doing in the classroom when we are

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attempting to bring about those moments. Though rare and difficult of orchestration, we are trying to create the conditions to occasion epiphanies, moments of insight that help us to re-see the familiar, everyday, routine and monotonous quality of our surroundings, or perhaps the uninspired ways we view our own lives and aspirations. We are not arguing that such an "education for epiphany" is easy or always achieves its transformative end. Epiphanies, if they are to support and cultivate students' moral agency, must always be personal affairs. The student must, at some subconscious or conscious level, say "yes" to the new path they have been shown, or at least to the value of searching for a new path. As a result, there will always be a measure, and perhaps a great one, of uncertainty and openendedness. And yet, we believe that the picture we have shown of epiphany as a potential catalyst for transformation is a more attractive one than the consensus view.

Conclusion

The poet Robert Hayden, in his poem "Those Winter Sundays," asks the question, "What did I know, what did I know of love's austere and lonely offices?" The question is prompted by memories of his childhood, in particular, by recollections of his father's unsung love and sacrifice:

Sundays too my father got up early

and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,

then with cracked hands that ached

from labor in the weekday weather made

banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.

I'd wake and hear the cold splintering, breaking.

When the rooms were warm, he'd call,

and slowly I would rise and dress,

fearing the chronic angers of that house,

Speaking indifferently to him,

who had driven out the cold

and polished my good shoes as well.

What did I know, what did I know

of love's austere and lonely offices?

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Hayden's haunting question reveals a transformation in his vision. Where before he was indifferent to his father's care, he now sees and understands love's lonely offices. What he once viewed as ordinary happenings (starting a fire, polishing shoes), he now sees—and appreciates—as acts of love.

We have argued that the potential within epiphany for initiating transformative moral development has been forgotten, or clouded out of the vast and growing discussion of transformative education. In doing so, we rob ourselves of a rich form of experience that is of central importance for moral education.

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