Conceptions of morality held by eminent people

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CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY HELD BY EMINENT PEOPLE

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Janine Mary Lehane
May 2006
CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY HELD BY EMINENT PEOPLE

by

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments ...............................................................................................................viii
List of Tables ...........................................................................................................................ix
Abstract ......................................................................................................................................x

Chapter I: The Problem.............................................................................................................2
  Introduction ...........................................................................................................................2
  Statement of the Problem .................................................................................................3
  Purpose and Research Questions .....................................................................................15
  Rationale ............................................................................................................................18
  Summary of Methodology .................................................................................................23
  Limitations and Delimitations .........................................................................................24
  Definitions of Related Terms ............................................................................................25

Chapter II: Review of the Related Literature ........................................................................29
  Introduction ........................................................................................................................29
  Talent Development ...........................................................................................................32
  Conceptions of Morality ....................................................................................................33
  Morality and Culture ..........................................................................................................37
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List of Tables

Table 1  Metaphors for Conceptions of Morality held by Participants with Sample Comments  95
Table 2  Conceptions of Morality held by Eminent Participants  101
Table 3  Participants’ Reported Greatest Achievements and Ultimate Goals by Domain  119
Table 4  Participants’ Greatest Achievements and Ultimate Goals  119
Table 5  Common Values Expressed by Participants in this Study  131
Table 6  Examples of Constraints Experienced by Participants  153
CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY HELD BY EMINENT PEOPLE

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore conceptions of morality held by ten eminent people to gain an understanding of their experience of the phenomenon. A phenomenological approach was used involving interviews with participants.

The essence of morality for participants was an ideal of right relation with others. The structure of participants' conceptions of morality involved movement towards the ideal that occurred with a growing awareness of our fundamental connectedness to others. An increased sense of responsibility for others accompanied this growth. Movement towards the ideal involved continual struggle in relation to the enactment of participants' values. Alignment between values and their enactment was described as necessary to wisdom or cultivation.

Participants described characteristic ways of negotiating intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints that included striving for perspective, balance, and effectiveness in relation to their perceived capacities. Participants demonstrated a heightened faculty for critical inquiry. They emphasized reflection on received values and on the relevance of conventional ways of enacting them.

Further study is needed to investigate the experiences that are favorable to the development of critical and creative inquiry among eminent people, the values conflicts they experience, and the potential consequences of these experiences for the development and expression of their talents.

Findings indicate a need for curriculum that allows gifted students to experience the consequences of their thinking and actions, an increased tolerance for perceived
difference in others, the fundamentals of collaborative leadership, and alternative ways of viewing challenge and failure.
CONCEPTIONS OF MORALITY HELD BY EMINENT PEOPLE
CHAPTER I
The Problem

Introduction

I elected to explore the conceptions of morality held by eminent people and whether these conceptions guide and/or sustain their productivity, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the essence of the phenomenon of morality as experienced, i.e., given meaning to, by eminent people. An exploration of the fundamental values of eminent people was essentially an exploration of the framework out of which springs their motivation (aims and goals) (Murphy & Ellis, 1996). Eminent people have been found to be motivated by their values, including the value of developing their talents (Barron, 1963a and b; MacKinnon, 1992; Piechowski, 1997; Torrance, 1962). The process of talent development is driven by conceptions of value, i.e., what is good and worthy of pursuit. Intense commitment is needed to sustain the levels of achievement eminent people attain. What goals and, hence, values, engage the intense commitment of eminent people?

I assumed that this exploratory study would necessarily reveal something about what is valued in our culture and about the ways in which eminent people respond to social and cultural arrangements in the pursuit of the development and expression of their talents. Language is the medium of culture and during the interviews with participants in this study their descriptions of their conceptions of morality revealed congruence with the
dominant values in our culture and resistance to their enactment. Talented individuals become eminent because their extraordinary talents are admired and valued. They are, therefore, symbolic of particular values and power arrangements in our culture. In our culture, the development of talent is prescribed by the values of dominant groups.

The development of eminent people is, of course, of primary concern for researchers and teachers within the field of gifted education because of its focus on talent development. This study of the conceptions of morality of eminent people in relation to the process of talent development in their lives has generated implications for future research and for the development of curriculum and design of gifted education programs.

Statement of the Problem

Aspects of intrapersonal and interpersonal facilitators and constraints to the development of talent in the lives of eminent people have been explored by researchers within the field of gifted education. Little research has addressed the issue of institutional constraint. No research, to my knowledge, has examined the values of eminent people in relation to the dominant morality of our culture (Gardner, 1997, p. 133) in fields other than morally-oriented ones (Colby & Damon, 1992; DeBenedetti, 1986). This study, therefore, is an important contribution to research in the field of gifted education.

The creative products and performances of eminent people attract admiration and reward in our culture. Eminent people face constraints in relation to their sustained productivity. How have eminent people adapted to our culture to maintain a sense of personal integrity and balance as they have produced and continue to produce extraordinary products or performances? The broad categories of constraining forces to the enactment of an individual’s thinking and actions are intrapersonal, interpersonal, and
institutional constraints. What is the nature of the constraints to the expression of their talents that eminent people encounter? How do they overcome these obstacles? These were some of the questions that prompted this study.

In the first instance, I used sensitizing concepts (Patton, 2002) that were derived from the literature in a range of disciplines. I expressed these sensitizing concepts in the form of generalizations about essential features of the concept of morality.

1. Morality is a way of life based on an internal hierarchy of values.
3. Morality is impervious to attack.
4. Morality involves suffering.
5. Morality affords meaning and purpose in life.
6. Morality is grounded in relationships.

The term “morality” means custom: essentially, customary ways of treating self and other (Buber, 1970; Levinas, 1988). There are many ways of conceiving of this fundamental attitude and all of them have consequences for the thinking and actions of individuals and groups in the social world (Buber, 1970). Fundamental notions about the nature of humanity, and the implications of these notions in a social world, are typically assumed and remain unexamined (Scott & Harker, 1998).

My study is a response to the unsatisfactory quantity and content of existing studies of eminent people. These studies have not explored the conceptions of morality of eminent people or the influence of socio-historical and cultural context on these conceptions in relation to the thinking and activities of eminent people.
"Eminence" is one of the socially-valued end-points of the talent development process, the promotion of which is the raison d’être for the field of gifted education. The wisdom that eminent people possess regarding core aspects of the process of talent development, the ways in which human beings might conduct their lives as they pursue the fulfillment of human potential, remains essentially untapped. I, therefore, asked participants to make explicit their conceptions of morality to determine whether these conceptions oriented and sustained their productivity.

While I could not hypothesize about the moral phenomena their accolades represent, I assumed that they must reflect other cultural phenomena and be rooted in culturally-based and shared values (Georges & Jones, 1980). Eminent people are admired and rewarded in our culture because their extraordinary contributions are valued. I began with the fact that they are admired and rewarded in our culture believing that this pointed to a way to begin to examine the influence of dominant values in our culture and the mode of their expression in relation to the development of talent within educational institutions. An exploration of the conceptions of morality held by eminent people would potentially provide a way of uncovering the core values of our culture. I assumed that core values underpinned and thus sustained the extraordinary productivity of eminent people, given intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints.

Theoretical Assumptions

We all “stand heir to an unstatably large set of meanings” (Bayles & Orland, 1993, pp. 68-69) and, therefore, assumptions about the world in which we live. I recognized that the task of stating my theoretical assumptions for this qualitative study was particularly important given that I, as researcher, would be both instrument and
interpreter for the study. I have attempted to articulate the more readily recognizable philosophical, psychological, field-specific, and other assumptions upon which my study is founded. Since I used an interdisciplinary framework for this study, theoretical assumptions were drawn from a range of disciplines relevant to the subject of study. I will, therefore, outline those assumptions according to the relevant disciplines. I have reserved a statement of my methodological assumptions for a later chapter.

Philosophical and Theological Assumptions

Morality is a way of life based on an internal hierarchy of values. At the core of this hierarchy is a fundamental disposition as to the way in which self and other ought to be treated in a social world (Buber, 1970; Kung & Kuschel, 1993; Levinas, 1988). An individual’s core values are in dynamic tension with the perceived enactment of these core values in the public sphere.

Morality is the framework or worldview out of which an individual constructs judgments about worthy goals. Presuppositions that underlie judgments about worthy goals “can only be justified in light of a theory of ethics—an account of the ultimate good for human life” (Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 78). Choices among, for instance, “aesthetic, interpersonal, and spiritual goods will depend first on ethical judgments and, ultimately, on theological or metaphysical accounts of reality” and entail judgments of worth (Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 81).

Morality presupposes self-knowledge. Knowledge about one’s self, especially knowledge about one’s motives for action, is very difficult to obtain (Scott & Harker, 1998). Scott and Harker (1998) have argued: “Our genetic history, social history, and ongoing circumstances play an enormous part in shaping the way in which our prime
motive has found expression in behaviour...such factors were never personally chosen” (p. 16). Self-knowledge involves “a paradigm shift about the real meaning of one’s life ... [and is not] purely [an] intellectual or cognitive event.” (p. 17). Self-knowledge brings the opportunity to make more humane estimations of self-worth which is essential to finding meaning and purpose in life (Scott & Harker, 1998). There can be no growth without self-awareness.

**Morality is impervious to attack.** Values are not readily changed or subverted, despite the experience of pain or suffering that may be brought about through the encounter with constraints to the fulfillment of personal goals. Morality involves the maintenance of “personal integrity in the face of demands to compromise” (Colby & Damon, 1992, p. 5). An individual’s values are usually unquestioned and “taken as real” (Scott & Harker, 1998).

**Morality involves suffering.** Murphy and Ellis (1996) have argued that the essence of morality is “a ‘kenotic’ or self-renunciatory ethic, according to which one must renounce self-interest for the sake of the other, no matter what the cost to oneself” (Murphy & Ellis, p. xv). From this formulation I generalized that morality involves suffering and that morality is grounded in relationships.

**Morality affords meaning and purpose in life.** Morality is a framework that guides thinking and action in a social world. Effective action in a social world is dependent on the belief that one’s actions in relation to personal goals are meaningful and of value (Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 76). Robert Nozick has argued:

Values involve something being integrated within its own boundaries, while meaning involves its having some connection beyond those boundaries. The
problem of meaning is raised by the presence of limits... To seek to give life meaning is to transcend the limits of one's individual life. (as cited in Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 77)

Morality is grounded in relationships. Morality is an essentially relational phenomenon (Buber, 1970; Levinas, 1988). Morality is founded on a fundamental human disposition as to the way in which people ought to be treated that guides an individual's actions in a social world. Morality concerns how we ought to relate to one another (Turiel, 2002).

An individual's ultimate goals rest on core values that affect social activity. Social organizations rest on systems of values (Murphy & Ellis, 1996). Murphy and Ellis have argued that clues to social reality may be found by analyzing the steps by which individuals choose goals and that "some of these factors have an ethical character" (Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 83). They, therefore, argue: "Social reality has an ethical ingredient" (p. 83).

The development of morality entails the construction of judgments about "justice, equality, and cooperation" that are derived from the experience of reciprocal interactions with others (Turiel, 2002, p. 1). Turiel (2002) cites Piaget's observation that "individuals and society are in reciprocal relationship, and individuals make judgments that are both in accord with society's traditions and accepted practices and that serve to potentially transform those traditions and practices" (as cited in Turiel, 2002, p. 1).

Psychological Assumptions

The core values according to which people conduct their lives influence their beliefs, ideals, and aspirations. People must understand and live in congruence with these
values in every life setting if they are to be effective, that is, if they are to realize their goals (Scott & Harker (1998).

Fundamental notions about the nature of humanity in a social world, and the implications of these notions are typically assumed and remain unexamined (Scott & Harker, 1998). Scott and Harker (1998) have argued that if we behave in ways that are counter to our fundamental beliefs, we find that we are at odds with ourselves. If we respond to social expectations or other factors in a way that is contrary to our fundamental beliefs, "we will experience psychological distress and begin to lose our capacity to function effectively" (pp. 10-11). If we maintain belief sets that are out of phase with practical concerns and that do not allow us to accommodate the world, we will find ourselves at odds with the social reality in which we live" (pp. 10-11). There can be no divide between what we value and what we do without considerable psychological distress (Scott & Harker, 1998).

Individuals develop moral and social judgments that are applied to societal arrangements and cultural practices. This process can "result in harmony, conflict, and opposition in people's social lives" (Turiel, 2002, p. 2). Social organizations reflect the shared values, and the underlying beliefs and assumptions, of the individuals within them (Scott & Harker, 1998, p. 9). We must "understand the individual if we are to understand the way people relate to each other, the norms that prevail, the rituals and the artifacts, that all combine to determine...culture." (p. 9)

**Field-Specific Assumptions**

Eminent people are highly gifted individuals who are motivated by their talents and values (Barron, 1963a and b; MacKinnon, 1992; Piechowski, 1997; Torrance, 1962).
Highly gifted people are typically at risk for succumbing to the effects of trauma and suffering (Janos, Marwood, & Robinson, 1985; Kline & Meckstroth, 1985; Milligan & Clare, 1994; Piechowski, 1991; Lovecky, 1993; Luthar, 1991; Schiever, 1985; Wolff, 1995). Eminent people must negotiate constraints in order to realize their extraordinary talents. Eminent people are, therefore, resilient people (Luthar, 1991; Jamison, 1993; Wolff, 1995).

“Eminence” combines extraordinary achievement with societal recognition. This status is accorded people who possess the skills and qualities that are demanded at particular moments in history (Howe, 1999) by those who are expert and sufficiently experienced to recognize and appreciate outstanding products or performances (Albert, 1992a). Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer have observed that eminence is achieved when, having attained the level of expert, a person surpasses the achievements of the eminent within a domain to make innovative and lasting contributions (see also Simonton, 1996).

Eminence is a social distinction (Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978) that is calibrated according to the influence of socio-cultural forces (Simonton, 1996). Social forces determine the types of talent that will be developed or neglected and the standards of excellence within a society (Bloom, 1985; Sternberg, 1986). Standards of excellence rest on conceptions of value. Eminent people are also emblematic of the status quo, that is, they are symbolic of power arrangements in our culture.

Eminent people are often creative individuals (Abra, 1997; Simonton, 1996): “Any experiences and/or characteristics are creative that happen to be present when undeniably creative products result” (Abra, 1997, pp. 13-14). Creative work is “impelled
by dissatisfactions (whatever their source) and also drawn by aims it seeks to achieve” (Abra, 1997, p. 19).

Eminent people attract our admiration through a process of identification (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). They “serve as models of behavior for the rest of us or as surrogates acting in ways that we wish we could” (Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978, p. ix). Their example necessarily extends to the ethical or moral realm, that is, how people ought to be treated in a social world. Eminent people are leaders in their field with consequent power of influence (Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978). Leaders must have well developed “conceptual and communication skills [and be able] to reflect on personal values and to align personal behavior with values” (Senge, 1990, p. 359).

The conceptions of morality of eminent people are important because eminent people are taken to be examples to others. With power of influence they serve as models for emulation and provide examples of a range of strategies for developing talent that may be more or less admirable. The influence of powerful groups within our culture affects determinations of eminence. The development of talent in educational institutions is prescribed by the values of dominant groups.

The identification and development of talent is socially and culturally determined, as is the identification of extraordinary talent. The talents of eminent individuals are admired and valued in our culture (Bloom, 1985; Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978). The values of powerful groups determine whose talents are nurtured in our culture.

The dominant model of talent development in the field of gifted education is Gagné’s differentiated model of giftedness and talent (Gagné 2000). I assume that Gagné’s model is a plausible account of the process of talent development, sufficient to
explain the emergence of such rarified levels of talent as those demonstrated by the eminent in our culture. This model, however, seems to underemphasize the dimension of culture. I also assume that while Gagné’s conception of talent development is not taken to be context free, he does not emphasize the fundamental basis for talent development which is morality. Proponents of this model do not seem to question the underlying assumptions that drive the model and which are culturally embedded.

I assume that morality constitutes the framework within which eminent people form their aims and goals (motivation) that sustain their extraordinary productivity. I believe that the core of motivation for talent development is morality. Talent development, as for all human activity, is a process of self-in-relation that is undergirded by values. Chief among them are values from which are derived assumptions about how human beings ought to be treated. The enactment of one’s values is impacted by social and cultural forces (Jack, 1991; Turiel, 2002).

Other Assumptions

The development of morality must account for relations between morality and culture (Turiel, 2002). Eminent people are rewarded for their contributions and, the fact of this reward reflects the dominant values in our culture. An examination of that which we admire reveals what is valued in our culture. The admiration and reward of eminent people reflect moral phenomena that are rooted in shared values that are embedded in a cultural context.

The fact that eminent people are admired and rewarded in our culture points to a way to begin to examine the influence of dominant values in our culture and the mode of their expression in relation to the development of talent within educational institutions.
As Charles Taylor has argued: “The social sciences cannot be value-free if they are to be able to understand the judgments of worth that comprise much of their subject-matter” (as cited in Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 81). The terms “morality,” “eminence,” “gifted,” “talent,” and “gifted education” are social constructions resting on notions of value. The meanings of these terms are culturally embedded. Gifted education, like all social science disciplines such as sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, and jurisprudence is founded on “a single social reality: human beings interacting with one another and with the natural world” (Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 80).

Standards for deciding who is gifted and who is not within our system of education are not free from notions of value that are culturally embedded. Goodenough (1971) has defined culture as follows:

Culture is that collection of behavior patterns and beliefs that constitutes standards for deciding what is, standards for deciding what can be, standards for deciding how one feels about it, standards for deciding what to do about it, and standards for deciding how to go about doing it. (pp. 21-22)

Values drive assumptions that determine which talents are admired, rewarded, and, therefore, cultivated within educational institutions. Similarly, determinations as to who is eminent in our culture are value-driven. Dominant groups that hold particular values and assumptions control access to resources for this purpose.

Values determine what is permissible in terms of the pursuit of self-interest or of communal interest. A talented human being within a cultural context must make choices about the extent to which he or she will pursue the development of talent over other
goods. This decision making activity is not free from cultural context and, therefore, institutional constraints.

Powerful groups dominate public policy that is administered through institutions. Institutions exist for the promotion of a public object. The selection of objectives is dependent upon systems of values. In our time, the enactment of traditional values is in large part prescribed by the dominant institution known as the “economy” particularly as manifested in the large corporation (Parks, 1993). Within social institutions, individual autonomy is proscribed.

Social ills are reflected in power structures within social institutions, such as educational institutions. When values are assumed and remain unexamined the goals of some people will be served over the goals of others. Within particular cultures, the values of dominant groups tend to be institutionalized. Social institutions, therefore, constrain the enactment of personal judgments about justice, welfare, and rights (Turiel, 2002). This state of affairs sets up opposition against which individuals must navigate a course via institutions in order to realize their talents. Insight as to the underlying values that drive social institutions in our culture may, therefore, be gained from talking to eminent people. Agger (1976) observed: “Each society needs critics and artists to idealize a higher order of freedom than that which has been actually attained” (p. 18). The ways in which eminent people respond to social arrangements in the pursuit of the development and expression of their talents is the problem for study.
Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to explore participants’ conceptions of morality to gain a deeper understanding of their personal experiences of the phenomenon in relation to their cultural context, and to discover the ways in which they enact these conceptions, given intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints.

The Goertzels (1978) have noted: “As the climate of the times changes, different people are chosen for eminence. Studying these changes gives us a way of assessing changes in American culture, changes in the values that make people worthy of social recognition [italics added]” (p. ix). This exploration of the conceptions of morality held by eminent people has provided us a deeper understanding of their personal experience of the phenomenon of morality and it simultaneously tells us “something important about what’s going on in society” (Patton, 2002, p. 46).

Traditional values make for order, but to whose advantage and at whose expense? Institutions uphold these values and, typically, these values remain assumed and unexamined (Scott & Harker, 1998), except by people in lesser positions on the social hierarchy (Turiel, 2002). This holds true in educational institutions. “Gifted education” is a social construction as is “eminence” and “talent development.” Within the institution known as “gifted education,” decisions about the identification of talent are grounded in normative conceptions of value.

While eminent people proceed to their positions of prominence via social institutions that embody societal arrangements, social norms, and cultural practices that dictate conceptions of morality and so, the ways in which people relate to each other, they also are talented individuals whose contributions to social life are admired and
rewarded. This study, therefore, fills a gap in the research in gifted education as indicated by Albert (1992a) who argued that eminence is more than the achievement of international recognition in a socially-valued domain. He identified the need for investigations of the differences among eminent people and the "contingent factors and developments" upon which these differences are based (p. xvii). How do eminent people reconcile personal values with traditional or normative values in a coherent fashion in order to achieve a sense of personal integrity and balance? How do they meet and negotiate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints as they move through the talent development process?

One of the assumptions underlying the Bloom (1985) study of eminent concert pianists, sculptors, research mathematicians, research neurologists, Olympic swimmers, and tennis champions is that information about talent development in the formative years, including patterns of development, can most readily be had by interviewing people who have attained extraordinary levels of achievement in specific domains. Coleman and Cross (2000) recommended research that focused on the personal experience of gifted people in order to better understand the social-emotional development of subgroups of gifted people. Colby and Damon (1992) conducted personal interviews with twenty-three men and women who lead morally outstanding lives to understand more fully "people who have shown long-standing commitment to moral purposes" (p. 27). The participants in their study varied in age, race, education, and area of influence. They included religious leaders, businessmen, physicians, teachers, charity workers, lawyers, and leaders of social movements (p. 33). I wanted to address the gap in research identified by Colby and Damon (1992) who suggested that their study of moral exemplars be followed,
for comparative purposes, with studies of “dedicated high-achievers in fields that are not morally oriented” (p. 325). I, therefore, invited a sample of eminent men and women to participate in a study that investigated their conceptions of morality as a potential source of their sustained productivity.

I also wanted to assist other gifted people by making available the results of a study of eminent men and women who have moved beyond expertise in a range of domains to a level of excellence that may be emulated. Identification with eminent people is possible when we discover aspects of their personalities, their behaviors, and their developmental paths that are similar to our own (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). Fulfillment of the human desire for a sense of personal value through meaningful contribution to our social world (Becker, 1973) can be assisted by inviting and documenting accounts of individuals who make extraordinary and valued contributions.

The following overarching research questions guided this study. They were formulated to explicate my theoretical assumptions and they indicated a tentative conceptual framework for this study.

1. What are the conceptions of morality that are held by eminent people?

2. (a) How do conceptions of morality orient the thought and actions of eminent people?

   (b) How do personal values sustain their contribution to their respective fields?

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How do eminent people meet and negotiate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints as they move through the talent development process?

Rationale

I argue that morality is the basis of talent development. This claim appears to be very broad and requires some explanation. Morality derives from the Latin *moralis* meaning custom. Essentially, morality is concerned with the ways in which self and other are customarily treated in the world. Fundamental attitudes about ways in which people should be treated in a social world govern an individual’s thinking and actions. Because individuals act more or less freely in a social world, the exercise of morality is more or less constrained. Traditional values within a particular culture embody notions of autonomy and freedom and, to a certain extent, individuals comply with or resist these constraints (Turiel, 2002). The process of talent development in the lives of gifted people, as with any human activity, requires decision-making on the part of individuals within a cultural context as to extent to which they will pursue the development of their talents over other goods. At the core, this decision-making activity has to do with choices in relation to self-interest or communal interests (Scott & Harker, 1998). This activity is largely unconscious. Choices about what is good and worthy of pursuit are dictated by an individual’s framework or worldview that is known as “morality.”

All human decisions have consequences and some of these consequences come into play in the lives of eminent people in virtue of the admiration and rewards they attract within a culture. Their contributions, that is, their products or performances, are admired and rewarded as a result of normative conceptions of value. As leaders in their
field, they have power of influence over others. People identify with them and they act as surrogates to the extent that we wish we could do what they do (Goertz, Goertz, & Goertz, 1978). Their influence is a consequence of their decision making activity over time within the context of the talent development process. This examination of their conceptions of morality not only revealed something about the broad social, cultural context within which they live but also something about the ways in which intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional factors have influenced the process of talent development in their lives.

At the intrapersonal level, individuals develop moral judgments that entail deep understandings about justice, welfare, and rights (Turiel, 2002). Individuals both preserve and critique morality. Since morality embodies social arrangements and cultural practices, including the activities of institutions that, by definition, exist to promote some public object, some people's interests will be served over others. Dominant groups within social institutions control access to power within social hierarchies. Individuals will both accept and oppose cultural arrangements that are based on traditional values. Opposition occurs in both organized and covert ways, and either formally or informally (Turiel, 2002).

Eminent people are emblematic of traditional values. Traditional or normative conceptions of value control who rightfully has access to power. This control is exercised in ways that constrain the enactment of individual conceptions of justice, welfare, and rights. What are the ways in which eminent people conceive of morality? What are their ultimate goals? How have they confronted obstacles to the attainment of these goals? By asking these and similar questions (see Appendix A) I hoped to learn more about the
phenomenon of morality as experienced by eminent people and about the process of
talent development in their lives.

Unlike at other times in our history, the dominant institution in our social world is
neither the church nor the state, but rather the institution known as the economy as
manifested by the large corporation (Parks, 1993). Gifted individuals must navigate a
course via social institutions in order to realize their talents. During the course of the
talent development process, what constraints have they encountered in the intrapersonal,
interpersonal, and institutional spheres?

Not only is “morality” a social construction, that is specific to cultural context
(Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Turiel, 2002), but so too are conceptions of
“giftedness,” “talent,” “eminence,” and “gifted education.” At its core, morality has to do
with ethically responsible action in a social world. Morality underpins constructed reality.
As Murphy and Ellis (1996) have observed: “Social reality has an ethical ingredient” (p. 83).
Because normative conceptions as to how to people ought to be treated (typically
those of the dominant or powerful groups) are embodied in social institutions such as
educational institutions, the education of gifted people, a vital influence in the talent
development process, reflects those values. Conceptions of value held by researchers and
practitioners within the field of gifted education direct decisions about whose gifts and
what gifts ought to be cultivated.

I acknowledge that values drive the talent development of an individual in our
society. Values drive social activities, such as the education of gifted students. If the
values that drive the practice of gifted education remain unacknowledged, there is no
motivation for questioning these values and their impacts. By acknowledging that
morality, based on traditional values, drives gifted education, an opening for the questioning of these values and priorities is created.

For most people, assumptions that rest on conceptions of value remain unquestioned and taken as real (Scott & Harker, 1998). Models of talent development guide research and practice and are not value-free. Nevertheless, they are treated as such in the field of gifted education. The dominant model of talent development in the field of gifted education is Gagné’s differentiated model of giftedness and talent (2000). This model underemphasizes the influence of normative conceptions of morality on the talent development process. The assumptions that underlie the dominant model of talent development in the field of gifted education have not been adequately examined, or critiqued. All human activity is motivated by values. Actors execute their activities within a cultural context that is socially, politically, and historically located. A more accurate model of talent development, therefore, properly locates values at its center. In this way can I make the claim that morality is the basis for talent development.

The elements of the Gagné model, therefore, may more properly be construed from a point of origination that is morality that, by definition, has the force of law. All aspects of the model are governed by this point of origin. All content and processes of the model are culturally, politically, and historically located and underpinned by established values. Therefore, it may properly be stated that the process of talent development is grounded in morality.

McLaughlin (1996) has argued: “The task of uncovering the cultural assumptions that dominate in a society...[is] the task of critical theory” (p. 4). Without such examination the self-questioning that is required for growth and improvement cannot take
place. The field of gifted education may benefit by explicitly acknowledging its assumptions because, as Davies (1976) has recognized: "All theory (whether it calls itself critical or not) has a vantage-point" (p. 59). It is from such a vantage-point that dominant interests typically are served over minority interests.

The professions constitute social institutions. By definition, professionals profess. They openly declare their values. Increasingly in our time professional bodies have been called upon to consciously articulate their systems of ethics so that they can be called to account for their activities (Kung & Kuschel, 1993). At the same time, the influence of globalization has meant that our increasing interdependence leaves us without the necessary institutional structures for interdependence (Parks, 1993). Convergence of opinion in the disciplines has it that an ethic of self-interest is inadequate for individuals in an interdependent world (Buber, 1970; Levinas, 1988; Parks, 1993; Scott & Harker, 1998; Turiel, 2002). An examination of the conceptions of morality held by eminent people may provide us with clues as to culturally adaptive transformations in ethical thinking and conduct.

Traditionally, artists have been viewed as embodying national consciousness (Barron, 1995). In our culture, the arts are not inviolate from the influence of dominant conceptions of value. In fact, increasingly, the activities of artists are constrained in our culture by dominant elites (King, 2005). Large corporations now control the means of cultural production. What have artists to say about this predicament in relation to their conceptions of morality? How do they persevere in the face of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints?
I aimed to address the lack of attention to eminence and morality that exists in the literature within the field of gifted education. This study has deepened our understanding of the phenomenon of morality as experienced by the eminent participants.

Summary of Methodology

I used a phenomenological approach in this qualitative inquiry to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002) of morality for the eminent participants. I adopted a unique case orientation to this inquiry and interviewed a sample of ten participants who were selected on the basis of eminence in their fields. I explored the conceptions of morality that are held by these eminent men and women and the ways in which these conceptions orient their development and continued productivity. I used a semi-structured interview format and asked questions that related to participants' definitions of morality, the course of their moral development, their greatest achievements, ultimate goals, and the ways in which they have overcome challenges. I developed and refined my interview protocol during a pilot study with eminent participants (see Appendix A).

In order to be appropriately sensitive to participants’ personal definitions of morality and of their moral development, as derived within a social and cultural context, I intended to listen to their responses and analyze the transcripts of interviews at three levels. This particular type of analysis was developed and successfully used by Anderson and Jack (1991). At the first level of analysis, I explored participants’ moral language, specifically, their moral self-evaluative statements. Secondly, I attended to the participant’s meta-statements. These are points in the interview where people spontaneously pause, reflect, and comment on their own thoughts or responses. Finally, I
analyzed participants' narratives for internal consistency or contradiction with respect to recurring themes and the way these themes relate to each other. By listening to the way in which participants link major statements about their experience of morality, I hoped to grow in understanding of the assumptions and beliefs that inform the logic and guide their interpretations of their experience (Anderson & Jack, 1991, pp. 20-22). Both individual and cross-case analyses were used.

**Limitations and Delimitations**

This investigation was limited to a sample of eminent people in a necessarily restricted number of domains. Time and funding limitations precluded the study of a larger sample, although, I will engage larger samples in future studies. Another potential limitation is the cross-sectional, rather than longitudinal, design of the study. The data were limited to participants' retrospective accounts of the talent development process in their lives. The study of intra-individual changes over time, as afforded by longitudinal studies, arguably, may yield richer and more immediate data than those that may be obtained through some cross-sectional designs (Subotnik & Arnold, 1994). A further limitation of the study was its reliance on a single interview with each participant. Many more questions pertaining to the conceptions of morality held by participants, the consequent decisions and actions of participants, and their social and emotional lives could have been asked, given the time to reflect on the initial data prior to the scheduling of follow-up interviews. An increase in time and funding for the study would also have allowed for data collection from family members and other significant people in the lives of the eminent participants.
My own background which is rooted in Jewish and Christian traditions limited the conceptions of morality against which I compared participant’s conceptions.

The ten participants were selected on the basis of eminence in varying fields of endeavor, that is, attainment of international recognition, given domain-specific criteria. The criteria for eminence vary across domains. The number of disciplines or fields represented by the eminent individuals is restricted. Data collection was circumscribed by the extent of responses to the interview questions.

Definitions of Related Terms

Some of the important terms that were used in this study include eminence, artist, creativity, giftedness, talent, morality, and wisdom. I chose to adopt preliminary definitions of these terms, as provided in the relevant literatures, as a basis from which to proceed and will now provide the meanings for each term as initially used in the study. The relevant constructs, however, were ultimately defined by participants during the process of this emergent research design.

Eminence

“Eminence” connotes extraordinary achievement in combination with societal recognition. This status is accorded people who possess the skills and qualities that are demanded at particular moments in history (Howe, 1999) by those who are expert and sufficiently experienced to recognize and appreciate outstanding products or performances (Albert, 1992a). Eminent people reflect the needs and values of a given society, or of groups within that society, and they act as models for emulation (Pleiss and Feldhusen, 1995).
Experts preserve achieved standards and attainments, while eminent people surpass them. They demonstrate “creative expertise” and attract recognition by transforming a field (Simonton, 1996). Simonton (1996) refers to eminent people as “eminent creators.” Their contributions to a field are held to be creative in that they are original, of exceptional quality, and transformative of a given field.

**Artist**

For this study, I adopted Barron’s (1995) usage of the term “artist.” He, firstly, quotes from Division 14 of the *Dictionary of Occupational Titles*, which refers to “Occupations in Art”:

> Occupations concerned with integrating personal expression, knowledge of subject matter, and art concepts, techniques, and processes to develop ideas and create environments, products and art works which elicit an emotional or aesthetic response” (as cited in Barron, 1995, p. 231). Barron continues: “Such options include the teaching of art, the performance of art, the exhibition of art in museums, and the making of art” (p. 231).

Barron (1995) elaborates his conception of the artist as follows:

> Being an artist is a matter of character as well as of interest or talent. Honesty, at whatever cost, is one of the traits of the artist in his or her art. (He or she may, of course, endorse, exhibit, or exercise a wide variety of moralities, amoralities, and immoralities in other matters.) But art is a creative act, and honesty is a structural requirement; one has no choice in the matter. Without honesty it is not art. No price is too high; one’s life is at stake in one’s art. (p. 232)
Creativity

For this study, I have accepted Abra’s (1997) conception of creativity: “creativity implies the achieving of tangible products such as works of art or science” (p. 13) He adds: “Any experiences and/or characteristics are creative that happen to be present when undeniably creative products result” (pp. 13-14). Two fundamental criteria are usually relied upon when judging a product to be creative, namely, originality and quality. Standards for the determination of originality and quality of a given product or performance are domain-specific and so, for this study, the acknowledgment of experts in the relevant domains were indirectly relied upon. Recognition may take a variety of forms such as awards and special honors; multiple recommendations from expert or established members of the domain or field; citations indices, and the awarding of research grants.

Giftedness

I have adopted relevant segments of Gagné’s (2000) definitions of giftedness and talent for this study.

Giftedness designates the possession and use of untrained and spontaneously expressed superior natural abilities (called aptitudes or gifts), in at least one ability domain...

Talent

Talent designates the superior mastery of systematically developed abilities (or skills) and knowledge in at least one field of human activity...

(Gagné, 2000)
Morality

The word ‘morality’ derives from the Latin moralis meaning “custom” and refers to a personal code of conduct that adheres to accepted beliefs about the constituents of a good life and of right behavior. Morality is founded on a sense of obligation to behave in accordance with one’s ideals and is marked by individual choice amongst possible courses of action (Phenix, 1964). The moral choice is characterized by the question, “What ought I to do in this situation?” (Phenix, 1964, p. 225). Morality is culturally embedded (Turiel 2002).

Literature in the domains of aesthetics, ethics, personal knowledge, and philosophy (Phenix, 1964) supports my formulation of the following generalizations about the concept of morality: (a) morality is a “way of life based on an internal hierarchy of values” (Silverman, 1994, p. 336), (b) morality presupposes self-knowledge, (c) morality is impervious to attack, (d) morality involves suffering, (e) morality affords meaning and purpose in life, and (f) morality is grounded in relationships.

Wisdom

The integrated definition of wisdom supplied by Pasupathi and Staudinger (2000) will be used in this study: Wisdom is conceived as a meta-talent; “an expert knowledge system in the fundamental pragmatics of life permitting exceptional insight, judgment, and advice involving complex and uncertain matters of the human condition” (p. 255).

In chapter two, I briefly explain relevant dimensions of the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Gagné, 2000). I then discuss some of the literature that has been generated on the concept of morality, morality and culture, moral exemplars, eminent people, and the effects of institutionalized values.
CHAPTER II

Review of the Related Literature

Introduction

Research in the field of gifted education is undertaken primarily to understand more fully the nature and needs of gifted people and of talented individuals, those whose gifts have been systematically developed, so that educational programs for gifted students may be improved. The improvement of educational programs for gifted people is dependent on the extent to which their natural abilities are cultivated to manifest as talent in a range of socially-valued domains. Dominant models of talent development are grounded in research, including research on eminent people. Recognition of eminent people is variable according to domain of talent. Sample selection for studies of eminent people is reliant on domain-specific criteria. These criteria tend to include

(a) targeted selection of domains of achievement according to time and budget limitations, implications for other fields, and representativeness of distinct areas of talent (Bloom, 1985);
(b) competitions, achievements, awards, special honors, and particular selection procedures;
(c) multiple recommendations from expert or established members of the domain or field;
(d) published anthologies of the accomplishments of renowned figures (Mockros, 1996; Zuckerman, 1977, 1992) including citations indices, and the awarding of research grants;
(e) biographies (Beard, 1874 as cited in Simonton, 1992; Piechowski, 1997; Vitz, 1999);
(f) measures, scores, ratings, stressful social situations and other real-life problem situations (MacKinnon, 1992);
(g) age criteria; and
(h) willingness to participate and availability of prospective participants.

The studies cited above, along with others, indicate that both intrapersonal and environmental catalysts or constraints necessarily come into play during the talent development process. Findings from studies of the intrapersonal and environmental catalysts of talent development converge: certain intrapersonal and environmental influences appear to be optimal, though not necessary, for exceptionally talented people to succeed in our culture; and certain intrapersonal and environmental characteristics have been found to consistently pose obstacles to talent development.

An individual’s values have been found to motivate talent development (Barron, 1963a and b; MacKinnon, 1992; Piechowski, 1997; Torrance, 1962). Sociopolitical context has also been found to guide educational policy and practice in gifted education (Gallagher, 1994), though policy makers have infrequently questioned the values that underlie policy and practice. No research in the field of gifted education combines the exploration of the values of eminent people in relation to values that influence sociocultural forces that impact the talent development process in their lives. The study of
moral exemplars comes closest to combining these goals (Colby & Damon, 1992; DeBenedetti, 1986). Yet, Colby and Damon (1992) present the case that further study of leaders in other than morally-oriented domains is needed.

The influence of dominant and institutionalized values on the lives of individuals is a current concern in the public arena. Studies of institutionalized forms of morality have been undertaken in order to raise awareness of the injustices embedded in these views in relation to the adverse treatment of women in our culture (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Jack, 1984, 1993) and specifically in the profession of law (Jack & Jack, 1989). I have found only one study that discusses the implications of institutionalized values for the education of potential leaders within our dominant institutions (Parks, 1993). I have not found any systematic research that investigates the conceptions of morality held by artists, nor have I found any research that has explored the values of eminent people in relation to institutionalized constraints to talent development. These constraints reflect particular values.

Following an explanation of relevant dimensions of the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (Gagné, 2000), I will briefly discuss some of the literature that has been generated on the concept of morality within the disciplines of philosophy and theology. I will then proceed to a discussion of research on morality and culture, studies of moral exemplars, studies of eminent people, and studies that relate to the effects of institutionalized values. Only works that pertain to the questions of this study will be reviewed here.
Talent Development

The dominant model of talent development in the field of gifted education is Gagné’s differentiated model of giftedness and talent. One of the assumptions that underpin Gagné’s model of talent development is that giftedness (natural abilities that exist prior to the influence of learning, training, and practice) is necessary to the manifestation of talent. Talents progressively emerge as giftedness is transformed into systematically developed skills characteristic of a particular field of human activity or performance.

Gagné (2000) has noted that the development of talent may be enhanced or impeded by the action of positive or negative intrapersonal catalysts, which, in turn, are affected by environmental catalysts, and thus are susceptible to informal and formal learning and practice. Without the requisite physical and psychological catalysts, which are subdivisions of the intrapersonal dimension of the model, the realization of giftedness in a domain or domains may be compromised. Physical well-being affects the likely trajectory of talent development, and motivation, volition, self-management, and personality constitute the psychological catalysts that come into play when talent is developed.

Gagné (2000) has briefly illustrated the importance of the psychological catalysts for the process of talent development. He has found that motivation and volition are critical to the initiation of the process and that they direct and support an individual through many challenges. This idea is reminiscent of Piechowski’s (1997) notion of deliberate will. One of the intrapersonal catalysts to talent development that Gagné has identified is an individual’s values. The core of motivation is values.
Gagné's (2000) model also accounts for the influence of the environment on the development of the gifted individual. The environment may exercise a positive or negative impact on an individual through the *milieu*, through other people, through provisions such as programs or activities, and through particular events (Gagné, 2000). Chance may be added to the list of environmental causal factors, but is more accurately recognized as a characteristic of the other four environmental catalysts, namely, *milieu*, persons, provisions, and events. Chance is also a determinant of genetic endowment and hence of the manifestation of superior natural ability. Gagné (2000) maintains that the lack of any one of the intrapersonal or environmental catalysts in sufficient degree may hinder talent development, just as the presence of these catalysts in optimal degree may facilitate the development of talent.

Conceptions of Morality

There is significant convergence of opinion amongst researchers and philosophers within the disciplines as to the essence of the phenomenon of morality. Jewish existential philosopher Martin Buber has argued that morality is essentially relational (Buber, 1970). For this study, I accept the notions of human nature propounded by Buber. According to his formulation, the essential human choice is not simply to be or not to be (Abra, 1997), but rather, to be for the other (I-Thou) or to reject this fundamental human demand (I-It).

Walter Kaufmann, one of the translators of Buber's classic philosophical work *I and Thou*, has clarified Buber's thesis that there are many ways of living in right relationship to other people:

There are many modes of I-You. Kant told men always to treat humanity, in our person as well as that of others, as an end also and never only as a means. This is
one way of setting off I-You from I-It. And when he is correctly quoted and the “also” and the “only” are not omitted, as they all too often are, one may well marvel at his moral wisdom. (Kaufmann, in Buber, 1970, p. 16).

Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas (1988) has supported Buber’s contention that the fundamental human imperative is not simply to be in the world but to be for the other. Ethics precedes ontology in Levinas’ conception of human nature: “With the appearance of the human - and this is my entire philosophy - there is something more important than my life, and that is the life of the other. That is unreasonable. Man is an unreasonable animal” (Levinas, 1988, p. 172).

According to these philosophers, morality is, in essence, a fundamental human disposition regarding the way in which people ought to be treated that guides an individual’s actions in a social world. Morality concerns how we ought to relate to one another. Morality is grounded in relationships.

Perhaps a more familiar articulation of this imperative is to be found in the Declaration of the Parliament of the World’s Religions (1993). This body sought to determine what is essentially common to the religions of the world. Representatives from all the world’s major religions met to deliberate and to present a declaration toward a global ethic:

A global ethic seeks to work out what is already common to the religions of the world now despite all their differences over human conduct, moral values and basic moral convictions. In other words, a global ethic does not reduce the religions to an ethical minimalism but represents the minimum of what the religions of the world already have in common now in the ethical sphere. (pp. 7-8)
These leaders articulated their conception of a global ethic:

By a global ethic we mean a fundamental consensus on binding values, irrevocable standards, and personal attitudes. Without such a fundamental consensus on an ethic, sooner or later every community will be threatened by chaos or dictatorship, and individuals will despair. (p. 21)

According to this body, morality is constituted by a hierarchy of values at the core of which is a fundamental disposition towards other people.

There is a principle which is found and has persisted in many religious and ethical traditions of humankind for thousands of years: What you do not wish done to yourself, do not do to others! Or in positive terms: What you wish done to yourself, do to others! (p. 23)

Philosophers and religious leaders have converged in their opinion that morality guides thinking and actions and that morality is grounded in relationships. In disciplines such as theology and sociology, differing facets of the concept of morality are emphasized in more or less comprehensive fashion, yet, the same fundamental idea is expressed: Morality is an essentially relational phenomenon.

Murphy and Ellis (1996) have argued that the essence of human morality is “a ‘kenotic’ or self-renunciatory ethic, according to which one must renounce self-interest for the sake of the other, no matter what the cost to oneself” (p. xv).

Morality is the framework or worldview that encompasses an internal system of values according to which hierarchies of goals are formulated (Murphy & Ellis, 1996). “These goals may be based on an implicit or explicit credo” and they guide our thinking and actions (p. 77). Ultimate values guide and direct social activity. Within social...
organizations, the highest-level goals are imbued with value and meaning (Murphy & Ellis, 1996). Murphy and Ellis have argued that effective fulfillment of social roles within institutions rests on the belief that our goals and consequent activities are meaningful and of value. Robert Nozick has clarified the distinction between values and meaning in the following way:

> Values involve something being integrated within its own boundaries, while meaning involves its having some connection beyond those boundaries. The problem of meaning is raised by the presence of limits...To seek to give life meaning is to transcend the limits of one’s individual life.” (as cited in Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 77).

Analyses of the goal-directed activities of individuals and groups lead to “considerations belonging to ethics” (Murphy & Ellis, 1996, p. 78). Murphy and Ellis have argued that clues to social reality may be found by analyzing the steps by which individuals choose goals and that “some of these factors have an ethical character” (p. 83), adding: “Social reality has an ethical ingredient” (p. 83).

Abbott (2001) considers the possibility that morality defines social space. He departs from a “classical approach to handling value differences [that] flows from the political theory of imperium” (p. 225) and conceives of morality “as fundamentally local, as being about the actor, the time, the place—in short as being grounded in the real content of actual social relations” (p. 221). From this view he turns to “the overall distribution of moral action [or justice] in the whole social space” (p. 223). For justice is “an emergent property that results from the ensemble of moral action (corporate and personal) in a society” (p. 223). His thinking allows “for moral action at many scales, even if always
following the same formal rule.” (pp. 223-224). His position is one of focus on the differing consequences of “the overall distribution of moral actors in the [social] space” (p. 221).

Like Murphy and Ellis (1996) and Turiel (2002), Abbott’s formulation of the conception of morality takes into account social, cultural, and historical context. Justice is the overall result of the many different moral actions of individuals. Abbott borrows the conception of reenactment from Collingwood (1946, pp. 282-302, as cited in Abbott, 1996, p. 221) in whose translation Kant’s categorical imperative becomes “so act that the maxim of your will could always hold as a law for a reasonable human reenacting your experience in your time and place” (p. 221). Abbott’s conception of morality, therefore, allows for some form of “the moral rule” which generates the local decisions of moral actors in social space and which “doesn’t have to be Kant’s categorical imperative, but could be some other reenactment rule” (p. 224). Abbott’s conception of morality also aims to “extend the Enlightenment view by giving us a way to have both a universal aspect [the moral rule] and a particular aspect to moral action” (p. 224).

Morality and Culture

“Morality” derives from the Latin moralis, meaning custom: fundamentally how people are customarily treated – that is, established or traditional values in action. Moral action within Abbott’s (2001) social world includes the notions of moral contents, the form of moral actions, and the zone of relevance. Moral contents are constituted by values. The essence of the form of moral action is some form of moral rule that is undergirded by values and which is continually reenacted by individuals within a zone of relevance, the perceived size of the situation. Morality is learned and enacted in a social
and cultural context, though not through the simple process of transmission of traditional values (Turiel, 2002).

Drawing on work from diverse cultures, Turiel's research has shown that generalizations about the cultural sources of morality in traditions and general orientations such as individualism and collectivism mask the heterogeneous nature of people's judgments and social interactions. In his analysis, Turiel (2002) has shown that succeeding generations have lamented the decline of morality. Typical characterizations of moral decline involve "stereotyping, nostalgia for times past, and a failure to recognize the moral viewpoint of those who challenge traditions." Individual moral judgments may both preserve and critique society's traditions and accepted practices. Individuals will cooperate with established practices to the extent that these do not infringe upon their conceptions of morality (Turiel, 2002). Oppositions to social and cultural arrangements may be either organized or covert and are usually expressed by members of groups who are in positions of lesser power in institutionalized social hierarchies that are based on, for example, social class, racial groups, and gender. This opposition is often misinterpreted as a lack of commitment to society or community.

Turiel (2002) has argued that accurate analysis of the moral and social problems faced in many societies requires recognition of people's multiple moral, social, and personal goals and of the ways social arrangements rouse opposition. He has presented original positions on moral development, social justice, and culture and has shown how social interactions and social practices involve dynamic processes of participation in culture and efforts at transforming traditions and cultural practices. He has synthesized research on the psychology of social and moral development and has also drawn from the
disciplines of philosophy, anthropology, and sociology, as well as from journalistic accounts of social and political struggles in many cultures.

Studies of Moral Exemplars

Colby and Damon (1992) interviewed twenty-three Americans who have provided exemplary moral leadership. Some of the findings from their study are listed below.

1. Participants demonstrated a passionate belief in what they were doing and had a firm conviction that they were pursuing a proper course of action. Their beliefs were often grounded in religious ideals.

2. Participants were overwhelmingly positive in attitude. Setbacks were construed as temporary or part of larger plan.

3. Participants did not perceive their activities as special, on the assumption that anyone in their position would behave in a like manner.

4. Their scores on standard tests of moral reasoning were unexceptional and Colby and Damon concluded that “the capacity to behave in a caring way” differed from the capacity for acute reasoning about moral dilemmas.

5. Their remarkably selfless behaviors and attitudes are best explained from a developmental perspective. These people established habits that led them to serve others and to conceive of service to others as an aspect of their own personal growth.

DeBenedetti (1986) presented an edited volume on the lives of eight American peace leaders. Features common to the profiles included largely middle-class origins and aspirations, yet these leaders pursued their “peace concerns so determinedly as to force
them to break away from...many middle-class values. Some defied almost every middle-class standard of right behavior” (p. 263). Most of these people chose to adhere to a system of personal values so determinedly that they chose to break what they considered to be unjust laws. These people were “deeply motivated by a religious or humanitarian commitment in general and by the Social Gospel in particular” (p. 264). Their concerns encompassed not only peace activism, but also other social reforms (p. 264). DeBenedetti (1986) noted that these moral exemplars were (a) unusually sensitive to social wrongdoing, (b) unusually intolerant of war, and (c) unusually determined to search for alternatives for settling disputes. They had an unusual capacity for leadership that entailed an unqualified conviction of the rightness of the cause and a willingness to make great personal sacrifices for it. Leadership meant an ability to live with tensions and through crises. It meant an ability to share a vision with the larger public, to stir people to action in quest of their vision, and to discount any failure as a temporary setback in the ongoing cause whose victory would be a triumph for humanity itself. It meant, above all, the ability to work both as a persuasive master and dedicated servant, leading and following in the realization of the new way. (p. 265)

Each of these people endured suffering and sacrifice and some of them were plagued with constant self-doubt.

_Eminence_

“Eminence” connotes extraordinary achievement in combination with societal recognition. This status is accorded people who possess the skills and qualities that are demanded at particular moments in history (Howe, 1999) by those who are expert and
sufficiently experienced to recognize and appreciate outstanding products or performances (Albert, 1992a).

High levels of expertise, however, do not necessarily lead to eminence. Ericsson, Krampe, and Tesch-Romer (1993) have argued that high-level expertise is attainable given the environmental conditions that permit the requisite hours of deliberate practice directed towards improvement and begun at the optimum age. They have found that many features of expert performers that once were attributed to innate capacity more accurately reflect differences in practice regimens. Sternberg (1996), however, has cautioned against the minimization of innate abilities as an explanatory variable when attempting to understand extraordinary achievement.

Ericsson et al. (1993) and Simonton (1996) are in agreement that expert status is acquired upon mastery of existing knowledge and techniques within a domain. Experts preserve achieved standards and attainments, while eminent people demonstrate “creative expertise” and attract recognition by transforming a field (Simonton, 1996).

Eminent people serve as “cultural heroes” who reflect the needs and values of a given society, or of groups within that society, and they act as models for emulation (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). The effectiveness of heroic figures is dependent on their perceived ability to instigate significant societal change in combination with their ordinary qualities that allow people to identify with them (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). The hero or heroine acts as a “constellating image” that counters the tendency to divisiveness within a society and draws its members towards unity of intention (Campbell, 1988 as cited in Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). Heroes and heroines thus
“become an essential part of the moral fabric that each society weaves” (Brodbelt & Wall, 1985, as cited in Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995, p. 164).

Simonton (1994) has alerted us to the subtle form of heroism that typically is displayed by eminent people: “The world of creative achievements is also a realm of heroic acts” (p. 255). Eminent creators are often perceived in mythical terms, as “infallible agents.” Simonton (1994) has argued: “This commonplace image is pure myth. Creative geniuses stumble; they trip; they make horrible mistakes. Their highest and most acclaimed successes are constructed on the low rubble of humiliating failures” (p. 255). Examination of the qualities of “notable risk takers” allows us to view them “as heroes who echo the legendary ancients” (Simonton, 1994, p. 257) and who, therefore, show us the path to heroism in our own lives.

Studies of Eminent People

I have used the elements of Gagné’s model of talent development to organize a brief discussion of existing research on eminent people.

**Intrapersonal catalysts.** Cox (1926, 1992) compiled a trait profile of 100 youthful geniuses who later became eminent men and examined their character attributes. She concluded that “high but not the highest intelligence, combined with the greatest degree of persistence, will achieve greater eminence than the highest degree of intelligence with somewhat less persistence” (1992, p. 271). Cox (1992) also concluded that the appearance of the following traits and trait elements in childhood and youth are diagnostic of future eminence:

- an unusual degree of persistence — *tendency not to be changeable, tenacity of purpose,* and *perseverance in the face of obstacles* — combined with *intellective*
energy —... mental work bestowed on special interests, ... profoundness of apprehension, and ... originality of ideas — and the vigorous ambition expressed by the possession to the highest degree of ... desire to excel.” (p. 55)

She found that youths who attain eminence typically have (a) a heredity above the average and (b) superior advantages in early environment. They are “distinguished in childhood by behavior which indicates an unusually high IQ” and are “characterized not only by high intellectual traits, but also by persistence of motive and effort, confidence in their abilities, and great strength or force of character” (pp. 56-58). Exceptional findings for emotional traits included “absence of an occasional liability to extreme depression” and “absence of the liability of anger”; for negative self traits, “absence of eagerness for the admiration of the crowd”; and for social traits, “conventionality” (p. 53).

The concept of eminence encompasses the notion of degree. In an effort to grapple with the idea of a sliding scale of eminence, researchers have focused on attributes of certain eminent people, such as degree of effectiveness, creativity, genius, or extraordinariness. Like Cox (1992), MacKinnon and his colleagues (1992) found two variables to be “centrally determinative of effective functioning: (a) emotional stability or personal soundness, and (b) originality or creativity of thought and action” (p. 185).

When discussing the findings from studies of highly effective people, MacKinnon (1992) observed:

The truly creative person has an image of himself as a responsible person with a sense of destiny about himself as a human being. This includes a degree of resoluteness and almost inevitably a measure of egotism. But over and above these there is a belief in the foregone certainty of the worth and validity of one’s
creative efforts. This is not to say that our creative subjects have been spared
periods of frustration and depression when blocked in their creative striving, but
only that over-riding these moods has been an unquestioning commitment to their
creative endeavor. (p. 189)

Levinas has described the “dark and chaotic indeterminacy that precedes all
creativity and goodness” (as cited in Peperzak, Critchley, & Bernasconi, 1996, p. ix).
This experience is also noted by Csikszentmihalyi (1990) when discussing “The People
of Flow.” They are said to possess an autotelic personality (i.e., a self with self-contained
goals) and so tend to survive adverse circumstances “by finding ways to turn bleak
objective conditions into subjectively controllable experience” (p. 90). Csikszentmihalyi
(1990) refers to Logan’s analysis of the writings of survivors of extreme adversity. The
most important aspect of the autotelic personality appears to be “a ‘nonselfconscious
individualism,’ or a strongly directed purpose that is not self-seeking. People who have
that quality are bent on doing their best in all circumstances, yet they are not concerned
primarily with advancing their own interests” (p. 92). The purposive element of creativity
has also been noted by Keen (1992). He too has argued that the creative process involves
the will to become the best that one can be rather than the desire to best others. This
attribute seems to be central to the “enlargement of human experience” (Arieti, 1976, p.
4) that is accessible to the creative person.

The distinctive experience of eminent creators includes a sense of freedom from
confinement, a directedness, and the sense that one is a conduit for a higher will or
power. Jung (1989) reflected on the experience of this condition:
I have had much trouble getting along with my ideas. There was a *daimon* in me, and in the end its presence proved decisive. It overpowered me, and if I was at times ruthless it was because I was in the grip of the *daimon*. I could never stop at anything once attained. I had to hasten on, to catch up with my vision. Since my contemporaries, understandably, could not perceive my vision, they saw only a fool rushing ahead.

I have offended many people, for as soon as I saw that they did not understand me, that was the end of the matter so far as I was concerned. I had to move on. I had no patience with people - aside from my patients. I had to obey an inner law which was imposed on me and left me no freedom of choice. Of course I did not always obey it. How can anyone live without inconsistency? (pp. 356-357)

The personality, intellectual, and motivational antecedents of eminence that were identified by Cox, reappear in findings from other studies of eminent people (see for example Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962; Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978). Researchers focusing on eminent people have identified common personality, intellectual, and motivational characteristics.

Eminent people often exhibit “inner direction, independence in thought and action, perceptiveness, high energy, preference for novel pursuits, openness of attitude, self-sufficiency, and the ability to view the familiar in unfamiliar ways” (Rubin, 1985), along with “a temperamental orientation toward unexpected and original response” (Richards, 1996, p. 69).
Along with psychological complexity, Csikszentmihalyi’s work (1990) also emphasized the importance of persistence to the realization of talent in the lives of creative people. Essential to perseverance is motivation, which in turn issues from an individual’s beliefs, attitudes, and values.

Eminent people are characterized by differences in ability, motivation, and persistence. They are able to withstand adversity by tapping motivation, or, at least, they are able to revivify motivation when it flags. They have distinctive purposes and engage in activity that they perceive to be intrinsically rewarding (Abra, 1997). Their life histories tend to be “marked by severe frustrations, deprivations, and traumatic experiences” (MacKinnon, 1992, p. 181). The nature of the relationship between these traumatic experiences and the personal characteristics of eminent people has not been fully explored. Abra (1997) synthesized analyses of the personal characteristics that typify eminent people:

(a) singleminded persistence in the face of adversity;
(b) ability to conceive of unusual, original possibilities;
(c) rare, innate ability;
(d) confidence and an ego strength that seems to border on arrogance;
(e) the loyalty of followers;
(f) preference for solitude;
(g) strong enthusiasm for sharing their gifts with others; and
(h) naïveté that includes “spontaneity and impulsiveness; directness, honesty, and lack of discretion; unquenchable enthusiasm for one’s calling; a penchant for emotional display and temperament; [and] an impractical streak” (pp. 45-47).
Abra (1997) has also noted the seemingly contradictory finding that eminent people also experience a substantial personal insecurity that is comprised of anxiety and self-doubt. He has identified the sources of anxiety to include the risk of failure and, of self-doubt, perfectionism that seems to stem from elevated personal standards instilled by parents.

Ideal conditions for talent development are rarely met. In the absence of congenial family, educational, or emotionally supportive environments, however, some eminent individuals continue to develop and express their talents (Mockros, 1996; Piechowski, 1997). The will to contribute to the attainment of a worthwhile purpose seems to carry a motive power that overcomes deprivation or deficiencies in the recognized conditions for talent development (Piechowski, 1997).

When comparing models of talent development, Piechowski (1997) approved Feldman’s conception that the gifted individual is located at the point where domain, culture, and human evolution coincide. Piechowski (1997) believes that the idea that the individual is at the center of intersecting intrapersonal, social, historical, cultural, and biological forces, and that the individual both acts and is acted upon by those forces, “saves us from seeing great achievements as an outcome automatically determined by the necessary conditions. Instead, the person’s initiative, preferences, choices, will, and psychological makeup come to the fore” (p. 3).

Piechowski (1997) investigated intrapersonal dynamics in the lives of eminent historical and contemporary women to demonstrate the ways in which talent may flourish in the absence of a supportive environment. The lives of his sample of highly gifted women have shown that the foundation for outstanding achievement is intrapersonal strength, including strength of will, rather than drive, along with the readiness to receive
help from others. His distinction between will and drive connotes sustained control exerted by deliberate purpose over impulse in relation to one's choice of action. Over half of the women in his sample had to surmount serious obstacles and Piechowski believes that their extraordinary achievement consisted in the depth of their fulfillment and self-actualization. Findings from his study indicate that "strong environmental odds are overcome by the sheer magnitude of a person's inner strengths" (p. 5). He says: "The current models do not account for these exceptions, but they do describe the synergistic effect of chance (opportunity) and a person's readiness to seize it" (p. 5).

Emergent themes in the lives of these extraordinary women included

(a) high energy level;
(b) drive for autonomy, competence, and the development of their own powers;
(c) patterns of growth: readiness to capitalize on opportunities and help offered;
(d) sense of self: high self-esteem and a deeply satisfying way of life;
(e) the ability to let go of relationships and experiences without devaluing; and
(f) altruism.


In a work called Extraordinary Minds, Gardner (1997) studied parallels in the lives of four extraordinary individuals (Woolf, Gandhi, Mozart, and Freud). From this study he concluded:

1. Individuals may behave morally, immorally, or amorally in any domain of activity that they master (p. 132).
2. The "moral exemplar" is most singular in the extent to which he sacrifices his personal goals for those of his family, the broader community, or even world society. Knowledge of self or other, interests in a domain of knowledge or skill, are harnessed to a broader concern: the improvement of life conditions for those other than oneself. (p. 132)

3. With the invaluable opportunity to use one’s mind and resources freely, there should come a concomitant responsibility to use them well and humanely. (p. 159)

4. Unless individuals of talent and promise—indeed, unless all individuals—have the opportunity to encounter living exemplars of humane extraordinariness, they will neither take…[responsibility for one’s creations] seriously nor know how to strive for it in their own lives. (p. 160)

Gardener (1997) also concluded that there are three primary features of effective accomplishment: an ability to reflect and draw wisdom from the events in one’s own life; the capacity to identify and exploit one’s strengths; and the ability to reframe setbacks and to turn them to one’s advantage. He defines reflecting as the “capacity to assume distance on oneself and one’s experiences,” and the “sine qua non of effective accomplishment”:

Reflection typically proceeds in two directions: first, towards an examination of one’s own strengths and liabilities; second, toward an examination of the lessons from daily experiences. Sometimes that examination is explicit, but sometimes it occurs implicitly, as an internalized habit of mind. Indeed, when one becomes
conscious of one's own framing or leveraging, one is engaging in a reflective endeavor. (p. 152)

The second feature of effective accomplishment is “leveraging.” Here, Gardner refers to “the capacity of certain individuals to ignore areas of weakness and, in effect, to ask: “In which ways can I use my own strengths in order to gain a competitive advantage in the domain in which I have chosen to work?” (p. 148). He has found that there are idiosyncratic ways of approaching this task. “Framing,” the third feature of effective accomplishment is described as “the capacity to identify one’s deviance and to convert it into competitive advantage.” This ability includes “the capacity to construe experiences in a way that is positive, in a way that allows one to draw apt lessons and, thus freshly energized, to proceed with one’s life” (p. 149).

Eminent people possess wisdom about the sustained development and expression of talent. Albert (1992b) observed: “Individually, and in the aggregate, persons achieving eminence...demonstrate that people can and do influence their environments and by doing so enhance their own and others’ survival and humanity” (p. xvii). Their attempts to “make sense of it all” aid our own (Albert, 1992b, p. xviii). This behavior implies a reflexive capacity that is necessary for the development of wisdom (Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2000). Some gifted people are acknowledged to be uncommonly wise (Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2000):

Wisdom is often seen as knowledge about the human condition at its boundaries, knowledge about the most difficult questions of the meaning and conduct of life, and knowledge about life’s uncertainties. Commonalities in psychological definitions have emphasized the search for a moderate course between extremes, a
dynamic between knowledge and doubt, sufficient detachment from the problem
at hand, and a well-balanced coordination of emotion, motivation, and thought. (p.
254)

Wisdom has been described as a meta-talent (Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2000), a
type of expertise that "allows individuals to maximize their own gifts or to give insightful
advice to others about how to do so" (p. 262). Expertise-specific factors in the
development of wisdom include
access to relevant experiences, extensive practice, mentorship for making use of
such experiences, and the motivation to excel at knowledge and judgment about
life. Individual differences in motivation and access to relevant experience are
expected to be critical in terms of who becomes wise and who does not. (pp. 256-
257)

Wisdom involves an exceptional capacity for integrating knowledge and abilities in many
other domains and for planning, managing, and reviewing life experiences (Pasupathi &
Staudinger, 2000). The development of wisdom is reliant on the possession of a profile of
characteristics that include heightened intellectual capacity, particular personality
attributes, social skills, and creativity (Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2000).

Wisdom has an evaluative component that is exercised during reflection or
reminiscence. Pasupathi and Staudinger (2000) have reviewed literature on wisdom-
related knowledge and judgment and have examined the importance of reflection for
extracting wisdom from one's experiences. Some of their conclusions are provided
below:
1. The experience of events and reflecting upon integrating such experiences appear necessary for extracting wisdom-related knowledge and judgment.

2. The processes of extracting meaning, in the case of traumatic events, may have implications for later well-being. Extracting benefits from a loss, rather than simply making sense of a loss in terms of what one already knows, seems crucial for adaptation over the longer-term. (p. 260)

3. The ways in which people reflect on their experiences may be a function of personality, cognitive style, intellectual ability, and motivation, as well as a function of the social contexts in which they perform such reflections. (p. 260)

Webster (1994) found that people who are very open to experience tend to reminisce differently and more frequently than those who are low on this personality dimension and also consider more philosophically weighty issues in their thinking. One implication of these differences is that personality influences the way people think about and make sense of their past experiences which may in turn "have consequences for the amount and quality of knowledge and insight individuals extract" (p. 260).

Pasupathi and Staudinger (2000) have emphasized the importance of future research that focuses on identifying and understanding the ways in which people construct meaning and knowledge from their life experiences (p. 260).

Environmental Catalysts and Constraints

Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen (1997) identified psychological complexity to be the primary characteristic of talented individuals. The capacity for differentiation and reintegration, and the perseverance needed to sustain the process, marks the talented youth and his or her family system. This intrapersonal dimension of
talent development is enhanced by environmental resources, especially familial and educational, that are supplied at critical junctures or moments of readiness in the personal talent development process (Bloom, 1985). When the families of gifted children devote time, emotional support, financial resources, and when they seek out appropriate educational resources, talent development persists (Bloom, 1985).

Robinson and Noble (1991) synthesized research on the family lives of people who have attained eminence in a variety of domains. They report a high level of parental expectation and commitment and “stressful maturity demands,” such as being a first-born or only child and the early loss of a parent (Albert, 1978, 1980; Albert & Runco, 1986; VanTassel-Baska, 1989). A stable home tends to mark the lives of eminent people, however, tension within these homes is high (Albert, 1978; Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962). At least one parent (Bloom, 1985) or grandparent (Sheldon, 1954) seems to have dedicated time towards providing emotional support to the growing child and to have maintained high expectations. Kerr (1985) studied eminent women and found that “many had at least one ineffectual, absent, deceased, or irresponsible parent” and that the eminent person’s giftedness was overlooked in childhood (p. 83 as cited in Robinson & Noble, 1991, p. 60).

In a work called Faith of the Fatherless, Vitz (1999) indirectly supports the assertion that loss or separation forms the basis for creative production, since he finds it to be a distinctive factor in the shaping of the productive lives of eminent atheists. His “Defective Father Hypothesis” relies on biographical evidence that suggests that separation from their fathers dominates the intellectual life and consequent productions of
famous atheists. Such loss or separation tends to occur through death, abandonment, the experience of abuse, or the perception that one’s father is otherwise unworthy of respect.

A high proportion of eminent people have been home tutored and exposed to adult company, rather than the company of peers (Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962; McCurdy, 1960 as cited in Robinson & Noble, 1991). Bloom (1985) studied young adults who achieved international recognition as swimmers, tennis players, mathematicians, research neurologists, sculptors, and pianists. He primarily gathered data from teachers and parents. The families of these young people were generally stable and cohesive, and focused resources on the gifted child. Parents also tended to move the gifted child through appropriate educational paths with successively more demanding and accomplished teachers. The talents that were nurtured tended to coincide with the interests of other family members (Robinson & Noble, 1991).

Mockros (1996) examined social contexts in the lives of eminent creators in the Natural Sciences, Social Science, the Arts and Humanities, Business, and Media and Politics. She found that participants experienced a wide range of home environments. Participants from supportive families were guided by parents who modeled valued attitudes and who provided appropriate expectations and educational resources. These parents communicated the importance of achievement and learning for its own sake, as well as providing more general types of personal support and encouragement. In time, family attitudes and behaviors became the cornerstone of commitment to intellectual pursuits for the eminent individuals even when they were confronted with challenges. In the absence of supportive and encouraging environments, the drive and motivation of individual participants promoted the development of their talents.
Gender influences. Eminence is not simply attributable to innate ability but also dependent on socio-cultural forces (Bloom, 1985; Simonton, 1994) (see also Feldman, 1986; Howe, 1999). Simonton (1994) argued: “Countless socio-cultural forces calibrate the tools by which an individual gains distinction” (p. 35). As we are well aware, these forces do not favor men and women in equal measure. Approved social roles, gender stereotypes, and discrimination against women in familial, educational, and vocational settings influence the types of opportunities that are afforded talented men and women and prove to be major barriers to the attainment of eminence for women (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation, 1995; Simonton, 1994).

Major barriers to the attainment of eminence for women arise in the familial, educational, and occupational environments. Within the family, boys typically are “socialized toward independence and achievement, whereas girls are trained to center their lives around family and relationships” (Simonton, 1994, p. 35). A report contracted by the American Association of University Women Educational Foundation (1995) indicated that teachers, administrators, and counselors were unprepared to provide the differential educational experiences required by girls; that the experience of girls was underrepresented in school curricula; and that gender stereotypes continue to act against the participation of girls in the study of, and employment in, the areas of mathematics and science. Women continue to confront the choice between marriage and family and the pursuit of career excellence (Piirto, 1991; Simonton, 1994). Discrimination in educational and vocational settings and the unyielding influence of certain religious and philosophical systems also deny women the opportunities for achievement that are more freely available to men (Simonton, 1994). Not only do social forces determine the types of
talent that will be developed or neglected, but also the standards of excellence within a society (Bloom, 1985).

**Mentors.** Subotnik and Arnold (1994) summarized the conditions necessary to talent development, as gleaned from the studies in their volume. One of the conditions they highlighted was a relationship with a suitable mentor (see also Bloom, 1985; Zuckerman, 1977). Mentors fulfilled the following responsibilities: role model, emotional support, intellectual sparring partner, and professional networker. Subotnik and Arnold (1994) concluded: “Differential experiences with mentors is a rich area for future exploration in longitudinal research, and a significant component of schooling that is missing from too many educational programs for gifted students” (p. 439). Mentors not only provide models for excellence and sources of graduated expert teaching (Bloom, 1985) but also the emotional support and personal encouragement required by the gifted aspirants (Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1997; Mockros, 1996; Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995).

Mockros (1996) examined the social dynamics (including the family life and mentor-apprenticeship relationships) in the lives of 92 eminent creators. During young adulthood, mentor-apprenticeship relationships were valued for the tacit and explicit information that mentors imparted that was relevant to becoming established and successful within a domain (Bloom, 1985; John-Steiner, 1985; Zuckerman, 1977, 1983 as cited in Mockros, 1996). For the participants in Mockros’ (1996) study, learning a particular style of thinking became more important than the domain-specific knowledge a mentor was able to impart. Participants frequently discussed the importance and value of working with a mentor. Sixty to seventy percent of participants reported working with a
significant mentor, and the majority of those who did not have mentors were women. A mentor's support included intellectual guidance and the provision of advantageous opportunities. Mentors also demonstrated much enthusiasm for learning and working within a field. The eminent creators valued their mentor's recognition of their ability and the association with someone who was dedicated to their nurture and to their goals. The transformation that took place as a result of the mentor's influence involved a change in the young person's perception of self, including enhanced evaluations of personal potential. The apprentice typically enjoyed a new sense of possibility; alleviation of the sense of marginality and unconnectedness; growth through combined challenge and respect for their mentor; a broader way of thinking; and he or she tended to appreciate exposure to the "methods, values, and meaning characteristic of a particular way of life" (Mockros, 1996, p. 24).

Mentors embodied particular intellectual orientations, work habits, and personal and professional ethics that were cherished and later assimilated by their apprentices. The qualities of mentors that were most valued were "professional honesty, integrity, humanity, generosity, and humility" (Mockros, 1996, p. 25). Participants stressed the importance of attention from their mentors and of being treated like a colleague.

Mockros (1996) noted that "eminence is catalyzed by a self-referential system that more readily facilitates the professional development of men" (p. 28). One eminent woman in her sample commented: "At some level the system is a type of self-fulfilling prophecy since the people you give the opportunities to are the ones who will develop....We really don't know how to judge people's potential at all" (p. 28).
Findings from selected longitudinal studies of gifted and talented people (Arnold & Subotnik, 1994) support the idea that “seeing is believing” when it comes to the identification of gifted children and youth. Without conspicuous and consistent achievement in the academic setting or other talent domain, the likelihood of accessing opportunities conducive to talent development is very poor. Achievement and opportunity, whether educational or occupational, seem to go hand in hand, unless one happens to be a gifted girl, in which case, a series of barriers related to gender arise (Arnold & Subotnik, 1994; Kerr, 1985; Mockros, 1996). The most serious of these barriers is the limited opportunities for gifted females to access the mentor relationship as compared with those opportunities available for gifted males. Systemic support in educational and vocational settings is more readily available to gifted males (Mockros, 1996).

A relationship with a confidant seems to enhance the development of creative potential (Gardner, 1993). Gardner (1993) has isolated two important dimensions to the relationship: “an affective dimension, in which the creator is buoyed with unconditional support; and a cognitive dimension, where the supporter seeks to understand, and to provide useful feedback on the nature of the breakthrough” (p. 385). Another significant finding to emerge from Gardner’s (1993) research on the lives of eminent creators was that each appeared to strike some form of Faustian bargain. The consequences of such a bargain typically included the deliberate sacrifice of normal interpersonal relationships in order to continue the creative work. Jung’s (1989) reflections illustrate this point:

Knowledge of processes in the background early shaped my relationship to the world. Basically, that relationship was the same in my childhood as it is to this
day. As a child I felt myself to be alone, and I am still, because I know things and must hint at things which others apparently know nothing of, and for the most part do not want to know. Loneliness does not come from having no people about one, but from being unable to communicate the things that seem important to oneself, or from holding certain views which others find inadmissible.... If a man knows more than others, he becomes lonely. But loneliness is not necessarily inimical to companionship, for no one is more sensitive to companionship than the lonely man, and companionship thrives only when each individual remembers his individuality and does not identify himself with others. (p. 356)

*Studies that Relate to the Effects of Institutionalized Values*

Research has been undertaken on the differing conceptions of morality that order the experience of women and men in relation to interactions among social institutions, social roles, and women’s consciousness (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Jack & Jack, 1989; Jack, 1993). In a study of moral reasoning among practicing attorneys, Jack and Jack (1989) found a distinction between the well-articulated ethics of the legal profession and the personal morality of those who engage in the profession as lawyers. They discovered from interviews with male and female lawyers a disjuncture between the values that drive the profession and those that drive the personal lives of women lawyers.

In making their case, these researchers rely on the words of participants. They also give a theoretical point of departure for the study in terms of a conception of morality that is typical of women and distinct from that conception of morality that is typically held by men. The authors acknowledged the pioneering work of Carol Gilligan
(1982; see also Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988), who argued that since Kohlberg had relied on interviews with male participants for his theory of moral development, he may have discovered precisely what was available to him, and no more; a conception of morality that typified males. Gilligan’s studies with female participants, however, led to different conclusions than those that Kohlberg had made.

Jack and Jack (1989) summarize the findings of the earlier studies that show that the value system of men tends to center on rights and justice. For women in general, however, morality is conceived as essentially a relational phenomenon. People with a rights orientation can be threatened by intimacy and interdependence because these states seem to threaten “the right to be free, autonomous individuals” (p. 8). The separate individual, rather than “the individual in social connection is the primary point of reference. Social rules in fact guard against too much interaction; both morality and justice are defined in terms of rights” (Jack & Jack, 1989, p. 8). People with a moral orientation of care, however, perceive themselves to be interdependent and they are “committed to the responsibility of safeguarding each other. Each new situation must be understood in its own terms and evaluated to determine how the community...will be protected....Each person gains value by relationship to the group. Achievement occurs through community success” (Jack & Jack, 1989, p. 10).

Jack and Jack (1989) clarify these findings:

When we describe a care or a rights perspective, we are not talking about clear dichotomies but about tendencies, in both how a person is likely to think and which gender is more likely to think that way. These moral perspectives take many forms. Rather than designating a homogeneous point of view, the labels are merely
shorthand for a propensity to adhere to certain values and assumptions and for a
prominence of certain ways of assimilating and assessing experience. Each
individual reflects a special blend of moral understanding which is affected by
culture, ethnicity, social and economic class, and historical experience. (pp. 10-11)

Their study demonstrated that the values and goals that shape institutional roles were a
source of conflict for women in the profession of law. They concluded that this tension
constitutes a dilemma for the individual and puts pressure on institutional structures.
They also concluded that the attainment of moral maturity for both men and women is
dependent on integrating and achieving a balance between the care and rights
perspectives “with the balance struck for each person a function of cultural experience
rather than gender. The need for integration and balance comes from a search for identity
both through autonomous individualism and through being part of a community.” (p. 12)

In a later work, *Silencing the Self* (1993), Jack uses the same theoretical
framework to discuss findings of a longitudinal study of thirteen clinically depressed
women (Jack, 1984). She further contributed to an understanding of women’s
conceptions of morality by identifying the source of depression for these women to be the
perceived inability to achieve a sense of self-in-relation. Jack commented that her
analysis of this study revealed the ways in which “women use the language of culture to
deny what, on another level, they value and desire” (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 20).
Interview data from these thirteen women repeatedly supported the notion that their
personal identity is dependent on the expression and appreciation of their emotional
sensitivity and ability to form healthy relationships. A sense of having failed to achieve
connection, including the apparent lack of occasion for the expression of their emotional
responsiveness, had prevented these women from achieving a sense of integration. Jack reported that the women repeatedly used specifically moral language to articulate their predicament.

Parks (1993) also examined the individual's vulnerability to social institutions as a motivating factor. She identified the dominant social institution of our time to be the economy and its most definitive form to be the large corporation. As part of an effort to address the issues of leadership, ethics, and corporate responsibility, Parks (1993) undertook a study of highly motivated and talented MBA students across three schools. Preliminary findings from this study included a relationship between three related phenomena: (a) apparently vacuous credos, (b) a desire not to hurt, and (c) balance. The apparently vacuous credos of these students signaled to Parks "that these young adults have been upwardly mobile in a culture that is both individualistic and pluralistic" (p. 184). Therefore,

"doing one's personal best" or "achieving one's own goals" are individually oriented values which are both socially confirmed and socially inoffensive in a pluralistic context, while articulating the full substance of one's value commitments might create tensions which would inhibit the upward flow of success. (pp. 184-185).

The young adults in her sample seemed, in fact, to value integrity and working for social causes, but lacked "a comfortable language, whereby they might forthrightly and gracefully articulate those commitments" (p. 185). Parks identified an implication of this finding:
Without an adequate public language, ethical commitments tend to remain a matter of personal morality and are thus rendered impotent for social and corporate transformation. The public world becomes shaped by an ideology of competitive individualism and a superficial pragmatism and sheared off from a private, personal domain of care and responsibility. (p. 185)

The dominance of an individual or privatized sense of morality was evident also in the second cluster of findings that were categorized as “desire not to hurt.” While the young leaders-in-training seemed to have a strong sense of interpersonal accountability (p. 186), they were “limited in their apprehension of the role of the individual, even the good individual, in systemic hurt and injustice” (p. 186). The individuals in the sample also projected a failure of balance in terms of “equilibrium between values marking career success...and values signifying a quality of personal life.” (p. 187) Parks elaborated on this finding:

Further conversation reveals that this expectation of the defeat of one’s hopes for balance is rooted in the imagination of isolated individualism. The need for balance is conceived primarily as an individual, personal challenge....There is little recognition that what is experienced as a point of personal anxiety is a matter of systemic, public pain. (p. 187)

She continued:

“To put it more sharply, business students are on their way to becoming architects of the economic and social structures to which they feel they will be so uncomfortably vulnerable. Constrained by the limits of an imagination dominated by individual, interpersonal virtue, they are unprepared to recognize systemic
stress. Nor do they perceive their collective potential to compose and practice public virtues by means of which their own personal lives as well as the lives of others could be emancipated. (p. 189)

One of the most significant constraints to individual autonomy in our social world is the influence of large corporations (Parks, 1993). Institutionalized values, as articulated in ethical standards for particular professions, and enacted by the most powerful groups within these bodies, are critical in terms of the quality of our social lives. The values of powerful groups influence institutional systems of reward, including attainment of eminence, for talented individuals in our culture. Artists are not immune from the influence of large corporations that, in effect, own the means of cultural production (King, 2005). When discussing contemporary culture, King (2005) has argued:

Cultural goods and services of the American cultural industries are not unique outputs of historically creative genius and talent. Much as they may be appreciated, imitated, and adopted, they remain the by-products of a particular set of institutional arrangements. Market control of creativity and symbolic production has developed unevenly since the beginning of capitalism; nonetheless some creative fields possess special features or offer greater resistance to their commercial appropriation than others. By the close of the twentieth century, in highly developed market economies at least, most symbolic production and human creativity have been captured by and subjected to market relations. By this I am referring to books, films, and all forms of visual culture. Private ownership of the cultural means of production and the sale of the outputs for profit has been
the customary characteristics....The concept of non-market controlled creative work is becoming extinct. (p. 2)

King (2005) has observed that the ethical criterion of this age reflects a society, whose social values and norms are in flux, conforming to market pressure. What is especially notable about our time is the entrance of the profit motive into fields that for different reasons historically had escaped this now pervasive force. These actions have occurred at unprecedented rates in different locations. (p. 3)

Parks (1993) located her findings in relation to curriculum for leaders in the professions and stressed the need for curriculum that strengthens and enlarges the moral imagination through the “initiation into complexity and ambiguity” within our global and increasingly interdependent world.

Conclusion

Some of the abovementioned research has focused on the psychological and personal characteristics of eminent people, including a small number of studies that address motivational factors in the lives of eminent people. Other studies have focused on environmental influences in the lives of eminent people in an effort to explain their extraordinary talents and rise to prominence. I have combined discussion of these studies with findings from research on the lives of moral exemplars. While the influence of socio-cultural factors is acknowledged in these studies, there is no research in the field of gifted education on the values and standards that underlie these influences.

Another strand of research that I have mentioned in relation to the problem under study has focused on the differing conceptions of morality that are held by men and
women and the ways that institutionalized conceptions of morality adversely affect women. Jack and Jack (1989) have found that institutional constraints in the professions affect the enactment of personal morality for women. Parks (1993) discussed the implications of normative conceptions of morality that appear to limit the moral imagination of potential leaders in the professions.

Again, despite the apparent institutional hold over cultural productions in our time (King, 2005), I have not found any systematic studies on the conceptions of morality held by artists within the field of gifted education.

Perhaps one way of making sense of this potentially confusing array of studies is to note what is absent. It is apparent that exemplary individuals at particular periods in our history have been admired and valued for their intrapersonal strengths (in the face of environmental constraints) and for the contributions they have made to society. Yet there are no studies of eminent people in our time of dazzling technological advance and interdependence through globalization to which we might refer for direction in our own lives.

The lack of mentors and role models of the caliber to which highly gifted children may realistically aspire (Feldhusen & Gassin, 1991; Moon & Feldhusen, 1994) warrants the further study of eminent people in whom these children may find a source of inspiration (Pleiss & Feldhusen, 1995). A deeper understanding of the sources of motivation in the lives of eminent men and women will have implications for future research in the field of gifted education and for curriculum design and program development for gifted students.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

Purpose and Research Questions

In keeping with the purposes of this study, I chose a research methodology that would enable me to explore participants' conceptions of morality to gain a deeper understanding of their personal experiences of the phenomenon in relation to their cultural context, and to discover the ways in which they enacted these conceptions, given intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints. The following overarching research questions guided this study.

1. What are the conceptions of morality that are held by eminent people?

2. (a) How do conceptions of morality orient the thought and actions of eminent people?
   (b) How do personal values sustain their contribution to their respective fields?
   (c) How do eminent people meet and negotiate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints as they move through the talent development process?
Conceptual Framework

Schwandt (2001) poses the question: How do I want to live the life of a social inquirer? (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 135). As a social inquirer, I wish to understand "what people value and the meanings they attach to experiences, from their own personal and cultural perspectives" (Patton, 2002, p. 147), and so I wish to live the life of a qualitative or naturalistic inquirer. I acknowledge that the concepts I bring to bear on this study convey embedded messages about what and who is important," (Patton, 2002, p. 130) and so I have been as explicit as possible about my conceptual framework for this study.

My conceptual framework is essentially Constructivist. From a Constructivist perspective, I expected that different participants would have different experiences and perceptions of morality, all of which would be experienced as real. I attempted to discover these different perspectives through semi-structures interviews and examined the implications of these multiple "realities." None of these perspectives were considered to be more "true" or more "real" than any other. I considered participants' conceptions of morality to be framing or embodying their social realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, p. 50). My orientation as a Constructivist researcher is grounded in the following assumptions.

1. "Truth" is a matter of consensus among informed and sophisticated constructors, not of correspondence with objective reality.
2. "Facts" have no meaning except within some value framework, hence there cannot be "objective" assessment of any proposition.
3. "Causes" and effects do not exist except by imputation.

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4. Phenomena can only be understood within the context in which they are studied; findings from one context cannot be generalized to another; neither problems nor solutions can be generalized from one setting to another.

5. Data derived from constructivist inquiry have neither special status nor legitimation; they represent simply another construction to be taken into account in the move toward consensus. (Guba & Lincoln, 1989, pp. 44-45)

The constructivist perspective emphasizes the socially constructed nature of reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1990). Social Construction and Constructivism share the same foundational questions: "How have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, "truths," explanations, beliefs, and worldview? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviors and for those with whom they interact?" (Patton, 2002, p. 96)

Social constructionism "refers to constructing knowledge about reality, not constructing reality itself" (Shadish, 1995, p. 67). Constructionists commonly assume that "all of our understandings are contextually embedded, interpersonally forged, and necessarily limited" (Neimeyer, 1993, 1-2). The terms "constructionism" and "constructivism" are often used interchangeably" (Patton, 2002, p. 97). Michael Crotty (1998) has made a distinction between these terms:

Constructivism...points out the unique experience of each of us. It suggests that each one's way of making sense of the world is as valid and worthy of respect as any other.... On the other hand, social constructionism emphasizes the hold our culture has on us: it shapes the way in which we see things (even the way in
which we feel things!) and gives us a quite definite view of the world.” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 97)

He added:

It is not just our thoughts that are constructed for us. We have to reckon with the social construction of emotions. Moreover, constructionism embraces the whole gamut of meaningful reality. All reality, as meaningful reality, is socially constructed. There is no exception. (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 97)

An important component of this perspective in relation to my study is that “Constructionism” embodies notions of power:

As views of reality are socially constructed and culturally embedded, those views dominant at any time and place will serve the interests and perspectives of those who exercise the most power in a particular culture. By exercising control over language, and therefore control over the very categories of reality that are opened to consciousness, those in power are served. (Patton, 2002, p. 100)

While some forms of constructivism appear to deny reality, I am among the qualitative researchers who acknowledge a commonsense realist ontology that is, they take seriously the existence of things, events, structures, people, meanings, and so forth in the environment as independent in some way from their experience with them. And they regard society, institutions, feelings, intelligence, poverty, disability, and so on as being just as “real” as the toes on their feet and the sun in the sky.” (Thomas Schwandt, 1997, p. 134)

Social Constructionists and Constructivists emphasize
1. capturing and honoring multiple perspectives;
2. attending to the ways in which language as a social and cultural construction shapes, distorts, and structures understandings;
3. acknowledging that methods determine findings;
4. and the importance of thinking about the relationship between the investigator and the investigated, especially the effects of inequitable power dynamics—and how that relationship affects what is found. (Patton, 2002, pp. 102-103)

My central theoretical orientation is phenomenological and so I wanted to explore the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of morality for the eminent people under study (Patton, 2002, p. 104). There is convergence of opinion amongst philosophers (Buber, 1970; Findlay, 1966; Levinas, 1988; Murphy & Ellis, 1996) theologians (Kung & Kuschel, 1993), applied psychologists (Scott & Harker, 1998), and social psychologists (Turiel, 2002) that the phenomenon of morality concerns how we ought to relate to others.

The social essence of the human experience has been described by British philosopher J. N. Findlay (1966). Findlay has claimed that for all human beings, “everything we experience, however tinged with the anguish of isolation, is given as something which anyone might experience” (p. 34). He argued:

There is an apartness of people’s inner lives, as there is a necessary commonness in most of the things they recognize and deal with practically... The world for us, we may say, is an assemblage of contrasting privacies converging upon a common zone of publicity. The apartness of people’s interior states does not, however, preclude basic similarity and analogy, but in fact demands it, every
phase or passage in anyone’s experience being potentially a phase or passage in anyone else’s, a possibility we perfectly understand though it neither requires nor is capable of direct illustration. (p. 29)

What do eminent people have to say about their human predicament? This study has illuminated the variety of human experience (Goertzel, Goertzel, & Goertzel, 1978) by exploring the perceptions of morality held by gifted people who have attained eminence. Some gifted people have been found to be uncommonly wise (Albert, 1994; Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2000; Sternberg, 1990). Pasupathi and Staudinger (2000) have conceptualized wisdom in the following way:

Wisdom is often seen as knowledge about the human condition at its boundaries, knowledge about the most difficult questions of the meaning and conduct of life, and knowledge about life’s uncertainties. Commonalities in psychological definitions have emphasized the search for a moderate course between extremes, a dynamic between knowledge and doubt, sufficient detachment from the problem at hand, and a well-balanced coordination of emotion, motivation, and thought. (p. 254)

Since an integrated life signifies wisdom, one of the key components for investigation in the present study was the manner in which the eminent participants were able to achieve and sustain balance in their lives so that their continued contributions were not jeopardized. This study was an opportunity for the eminent participants to communicate something of their accumulated wisdom to us.

The core assumption of the phenomenological perspective is that there is an essence or essences to shared experience (Van Manen, 1990): “These essences are the
core meanings mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced " (Van Manen 1990, p. 10) given the individual’s unique set of experiences.

Phenomenologists assume a commonality in human experiences “for members of a culture or all human beings and search... for those commonalities” (Eichelberger, 1989, p. 6).

Murphy and Ellis (1996) have argued: “The very fact that most people in most cultures, in most historical periods have some sense of moral obligation, and to some extent to live accordingly, is an important fact about the world that needs to be explained” (p. 225).

Phenomenologists seek to understand the nature of a phenomenon, “that which makes a some-‘thing’ what it is—and without which it could not be what it is” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 10). In this study, I explored the essence of the concept of morality for the eminent participants.

Research Design

My methods decisions flowed from my purpose and conceptual framework, the questions being asked, the way the data were to be analyzed, and the resources available (Patton, 2002). Qualitative inquiry cultivates the capacity to learn (Jack, 1984; Patton, 2002). I used a phenomenological approach in this qualitative inquiry to gain a deeper understanding of the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of the phenomenon (Patton, 2002) of morality for eminent people. My research methodology was collaborative in nature, for it was based on the perceptions of individuals who were not the object of study but who were considered to be researchers in their own right and who shared the outcomes of their life-long research with another researcher in a formal
sense. I studied the perceptions of people who have public prominence, a practice that has a strong heritage (Josselson & Lieblich, 1993, p. xiii). The group of eminent participants served as my unit of analysis.

The assumption of the cultural embeddedness of the concept of morality (Turiel, 2002) led to my general concern that decisions about the types of talent that are cultivated in educational institutions are influenced by the values of dominant groups in our culture. The fact that "culture" is a sensitizing concept in this study indicates the influence of the theoretical orientation known as ethnography on this study.

I also drew on the feminist orientation to qualitative inquiry in my selection of subject for study, and therefore, my data collection and analysis procedures. Findlay’s (1966) assumption of the shared nature of human beings out of which we enact our values within our many private spheres and within an increasingly common public sphere is important for this study. Yet, philosopher Elizabeth Minnich (1990) has observed the effects of powerful people upon our core assumptions about what it means to be human. She has argued that the reach of a “dominant few” extends to control of assumptions about the ways in which people other than those who are like them are to be viewed. These assumptions underpin our historical, cultural, and political lives and “continue to shape our thinking through the very language and categories available to us” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 129).

The root problem reappears in different guises in all fields and throughout the dominant tradition. It is, simply, that while the majority of humankind was excluded from education and the making of what has been called knowledge, the dominant few not only defined themselves as the inclusive kind of human but also
as the norm and the ideal. A few privileged men defined themselves as constituting mankind/humankind and simultaneously saw themselves as akin to what mankind/humankind ought to be in fundamental ways that distinguished them from all others. Thus, at the same time they removed women and nonprivileged men within their culture and other cultures from “mankind,” they justified that exclusion on the grounds that the excluded were by nature and culture “lesser” people (if they even thought of the others as having “cultures”). Their notion of who was properly human was both exclusive and hierarchical with regard to those they took to be properly subject to them—women in all roles; men who worked with their hands; male servants and slaves; women and men from many other cultures.

Thus, they created root definitions of what it means to be human that, with the concepts and theories that flowed from and reinforced those definitions, made it difficult to think well about, or in the mode of, anyone other than themselves, just as they made it difficult to think honestly about the defining few. (Minnich, 1990, pp. 37-38 as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 130)

In this qualitative research design, I asked people who are considered to be important in their culture about their conceptions of morality. I assumed that investigation of their descriptions of morality would tell us something important about the way in which people in our culture ought to be treated. I also assumed that the insight gained from participants in this study would have important implications for the field of gifted education. Educational policy and practice flow from conceptions about what is just and right, and so about what kinds of service or what kinds of neglect of certain
groups of people are justifiable within our educational system and in the larger culture. It is important for educators within the field of gifted education to adopt a critical stance towards their activities so that the dominant assumptions that govern policy and practice within the field may be uncovered. Who is included and who is excluded from gifted education programs and what should the content of gifted education programs be given our cultural and historical context? What are the embedded messages that are being transmitted to children by the valorization of certain people or achievements in our culture over others? What are the dominant assumptions that operate in our culture in relation to acceptable treatment of people who differ from the norm? Who do we consciously and unconsciously exclude in relation to educational policy and practice?

The subject of this research necessitated a naturalistic inquiry to explore the meaning, structure, and essence of the phenomenon of morality for the eminent participants. I, therefore, approached this study from a phenomenological perspective. Accordingly, my focus was the essence of the phenomenon of morality as experienced by the participants in this study. The generalizations about the essence of morality that I initially generated represented my perspective on the phenomenon and provided an initial focus for the study. While I anticipated that these generalizations about essential elements of the phenomenon of morality would emerge in the participants’ reflections and responses to the guiding interview questions, the generalizations were held to be provisional. The assumption that participants’ conceptions of morality motivate and direct their creative productivity in their personal and professional lives was also initially held to be provisional. The naturalistic and inductive nature of this study made it “both impossible and inappropriate to specify operational variables, state testable hypotheses,
or finalize either instrumentation or sampling schemes. A naturalistic design unfolds or emerges as fieldwork unfolds.” (Patton, 2002, p. 44) The emergent design of this study included my openness to adapting the inquiry as my understanding deepened and as new discoveries were made (Patton, 2002).

Patton (2002) advocates the selection and negotiation of dissertation research questions that relate to some passion or interest in one’s professional life (p. 35). I have done so. Georges and Jones (1980) have observed that “research can be rooted in a deep concern with society” (p. 41). I conducted my research out of this concern.

Sample

The goal of my sampling strategy was to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of morality in the lives of talented people who have attained eminence in their fields. In this study, the sample proved to be instructive because the people who participated are unusual, they are outstanding examples in terms of the process of talent development and, therefore, a “good source of lessons learned” (Patton, 2002, p. 7).

The participants are eminent people in the fields of management education, psychology, philosophy, biology, the visual and performing arts, journalism and literature, labor relations and theology. The ten participants were selected on the basis of attainment of international recognition, given domain-specific criteria and on the basis of their willingness to participate in the study. The five women who participated in the study included a poet, a visual artist, a labor organizer, a journalist, and a theologian and priest. The male participants included an author and educator, a pianist, an experimental scientist, a psychologist, and a philosopher. The participants’ ages ranged from approximately thirty-five to seventy-five years. Eight of the participants are US citizens
and two were Australian citizens. Of the female participants, three are Caucasian, and two are women of color. All of the male participants are Caucasian.

In this study, the recognition accorded the eminent participants included awards, special honors, and titles in recognition of unprecedented achievement in their fields; international recognition for artistic works and concert performances; representation of works on citation indices; and best-selling works.

Participants' many awards and special honors include the Nobel Prize, Distinguished alumni awards, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Sydney Hillman Award for Journalism, the MacArthur Foundation grant for research and writing, and awards from various foundations such as the Ford Foundation. Among the female participants are recipients of Woman of the Year awards from a variety of sources. One female participant has achieved this distinction repeatedly and from numerous sources. She has also been awarded many honorary doctorates and other awards including the US Senate Certificate of Commendation.

Participants’ diverse achievements include the founding of a prominent workers union and successful lobbying for unprecedented laws that improve working conditions for laborers, the development of an original theory of personality, and the rehabilitation of a lost branch of ethics.

Two of the participants have attracted international recognition for artistic works including concert performances. Both the visual and performing artists in this sample continually attract critical acclaim for individual works or performances and for their body of work. The visual artist is constantly exhibiting and selling her work internationally. Her work is original and evocative and turnover from sales is in the
millions of dollars. She is also an author and poet. The performing artist is a piano prodigy who has performed with almost every major symphony orchestra in the world at celebrated venues and in collaboration with many musical giants of our time.

Seven of the participants are prolific writers whose works are represented on, for instance, citation indices in philosophy, psychology, medicine, and theology. One female participant, for example, has written sixteen books and her archived papers extend to twenty-two lineal feet. Another female participant, an award-winning essayist and renowned social critic, has written over a dozen books, one of which is a best-selling work. The majority of participants are invited speakers and lecturers internationally.

Instrumentation

As a qualitative inquirer, I was the instrument. Patton (2002) noted:

The credibility of qualitative methods, therefore, hinges to a great extent on the skill, competence, and rigor of the person doing the fieldwork— as well as things going on in a person’s life that might prove a distraction….’ But this loss in rigor is more than offset by the flexibility, insight, and ability to build on tacit knowledge that is the peculiar province of the human instrument.’ (p. 14)

I developed and refined the interview questions that were used in this study during a pilot study with eminent participants. I used a semi-structured interview format and asked questions that focused on the participants’ definitions of morality, the course of their moral development, their greatest achievements and ultimate goals, and the greatest challenges they had faced. The interview questions specifically targeted responses that would provide deeper understanding about the participants’ experiences in relation to the
overarching research questions for study. The correspondence between the interview questions and the research questions may be viewed in Appendix A.

Data Collection

With the purposes of the study in mind, I formulated a preliminary list of eminent women and men from a range of fields that were not morally-oriented and made initial telephone contact to invite their participation in the study. I then sent a letter to the men and women who had agreed to participate. This letter described the nature and purpose of the study (see Appendix B). Telephone interviews were scheduled and conducted once approval for the study had been granted by the Education Internal Review Committee. According to the approved protocol, participants' verbal or written agreement to the interviews constituted informed consent.

Data collection was circumscribed by the extent of participants' responses to interview questions and relied solely on the interviews. Face-to-face interviews were conducted, where possible, however, telephone interviews proved most efficient for the majority of participants, due to their crowded schedules and to my limited time and financial resources. The interviews were recorded with the participants' permission and later transcribed. The typical duration of each interview was 20-45 minutes. Transcripts of personal interviews were made available to interested participants.

Since qualitative data were the primary focus in this naturalistic inquiry, I obtained interview data from the participants. As Patton (2002) has argued: “Qualitative data describe.... They capture and communicate someone else's experience of the world in his or her own words. Qualitative data tell a story” (Patton, 2002, p. 47). The value of detailed, descriptive data is that they provided a deeper understanding of the meanings.
attached to the phenomenon of morality for the participants in the sample. I wanted to understand the social phenomenon of morality from the participants’ perspectives. Since the process of the production of meaning is “a structure of constraints” (Watson & Goulet, 1998, p. 97), I also wanted to gain an understanding of the types of constraints that the eminent people in this sample encounter.

My inquiry was people-oriented. I proceeded with the understanding that I share a common humanity with participants (Buber, 1970; Findlay, 1966; Scott & Harker, 1998), which is a necessary prerequisite for successful qualitative research (Georges & Jones, 1980). I was aware that I was bringing my own insights about the phenomenon of morality as derived from my experiences to this study. I wanted to obtain participants’ first-hand accounts of their experience of the phenomenon and so the choice for semi-structured interviews was appropriate. Participants’ direct quotations provided the source of raw data in this inquiry. Through these data I explored participants’ perceptions and experiences with them as they recounted “the ways they have organized their world, their thoughts about what is happening, their experiences, and their basic perceptions” (Patton, 2002, p. 21). During the interviews, I aimed at providing a framework within which they could respond in a way that accurately and thoroughly represented their points of view about the phenomenon of morality.

The phenomenological focus of this study meant that descriptions of what participants experience and how they experience what they experience were essential data. As Josselson and Lieblich (1993) have observed: “Life story is the interface between life as lived and the social times; like Erikson’s concept of identity, life narrative
interweaves individual experience with historical reality and thus interfaces with approaches in sociology, anthropology, and the burgeoning field of oral history” (p.xiii).

My method, intensive interviewing, is a primary method in qualitative research. I focused on interactive process, rather than on information gathering (Anderson & Jack, 1991). This focus presupposed an awareness that:

(1) actions, things, and events are accompanied by subjective emotional experience that gives them meaning;

(2) some of the feelings uncovered may exceed the boundaries of acceptable or expected... behavior; and

(3) individuals can and must explain what they mean in their own terms (Anderson & Jack, 1991, pp. 23-24).

During the interviews and while analyzing interview data, I aimed to approach the state that Patton (2002) has described as “empathic neutrality.” This stance followed from my belief in a shared identity with participants in virtue of our common humanity.

“Empathic neutrality” suggests that “there is a middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgment, and remaining too distant, which can reduce understanding” (Patton, 2002, p. 50). The empathic stance of the interviewer “communicates understanding, interest, and caring,” and offers a nonjudgmental position regarding participants’ “thoughts, emotions, and behaviors” so as to “facilitate rapport” (Patton, 2002, p. 53).

Since I believe that skillful interviewing involves much more than just asking questions (Patton, 2002), I attempted to be sensitive to participants’ privacy while, at the same time, offering them the freedom to express their own thoughts and experiences. I
listened to their stories with an awareness of the feelings and thoughts that lie behind them. This type of listening is an approach recommended by Anderson and Jack (1991) that includes, listening to the participants’ moral language; attending to their meta-statements; and observing the logic of their narratives (Anderson & Jack, 1991). My object was to “remain suspended and attentive on a fine line between accomplishing… research goals and letting the subject be in charge of the material in the interview” (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 24). My attitude was “one of receptivity to learn rather than to prove preexisting ideas that are brought into the interview” (Anderson & Jack, 1991, pp. 11-12). I was aware of the need to be attentive in cases where I appeared to share a similar background with the participant, because this perceived connection may have included “norms for conversation and interaction” that could potentially mask the participant’s meaning (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 14).

In accordance with Anderson and Jack’s (1991) recommendation, I listened for meaning during the interviews and the search for participants’ meaning also characterized my approach to analysis of the interview transcripts. I share Anderson and Jack’s (1991) assumption that “a person’s self-reflection is not just a private, subjective act,” but is reflection originating in a cultural context. “Thus,” they have argued, “an exploration of the language and the meanings … use[d] to articulate their own experience leads to an awareness of the conflicting social forces and institutions affecting…[people’s]… consciousness” (p. 18).

As an active participant in qualitative research, I assumed that my presence during the interviews with participants would affect the way the inquiry unfolded. However, I attempted to immerse myself in the interview to understand the person’s story from his or
her vantage point (Anderson & Jack, 1991). I initially employed three ways of listening in order to understand each participant’s point of view. This method was recommended by Anderson and Jack (1991) and included listening to the participant’s moral self-evaluative statements.

Moral self-evaluative statements allow us to examine the relationship between self-concept and cultural norms, between what we value and what others value, between how we are told to act and how we feel ourselves when we do or do not act that way. (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 20)

Moral self-evaluative statements would potentially provide insight as to the normative standards participants used to judge the self.

Secondly, I attended to participants’ meta-statements. These are points in the interview where people spontaneously pause, reflect, and comment on their own thoughts or responses. For example, Anderson and Jack (1991) noted the comments made by a woman who participated in their lawyer study in response to the question “What does morality mean to you?”

[I]t seems to me anything that raises to mind hurting other people or taking things away from other people or some sort of monetary gain for oneself….And I suppose just how we interact with each other, if there’s a contentiousness or bad feelings or bad blood between some people, that raises some moral issues because I guess I see us all having a bit of moral obligation to be nice to each other and to get along. So—do I sound much like a litigator? (pp. 21-22)

Anderson and Jack emphasized the meta-statement made by this participant and have defined this type of statement as follows:
Meta-statements alert us to the individual’s awareness of a discrepancy within the self—or between what is expected and what is being said. They inform the interviewer about what categories the individual is using to monitor her thoughts, and allow observation of how the person socializes feelings or thoughts according to certain norms. (p. 22)

This activity indicates that people are “watching” their own thinking.

Finally, I attempted to analyze the participants’ narratives for internal consistency or contradiction with respect to recurring themes and the way these themes related to each other. By listening to the way in which participants link major statements about their experience of morality, I expected that I would grow in understanding of the assumptions and beliefs that informed the logic and guided their interpretations of their experience (Anderson & Jack, 1991, pp. 20-22).

Data Analysis

As Lofland (1971) puts it: “To capture participants ‘in their own terms’ one must learn their categories for rendering explicable and coherent the flux of raw reality. That, indeed, is the first principle of qualitative analysis” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 21 emphasis added). As Patton (2002) recommended, I proposed a method of data analysis before collecting the data. I adopted a unique case orientation to this exploration of the conceptions of morality held by a group of eminent people.

In order to be appropriately sensitive to participants’ personal definitions of morality and of their social and moral development, the three modes of listening that I used during interviews with participants also guided the initial analysis of the interview data (see Data Collection).
At the first level of analysis, I searched for participants' moral self-evaluative statements. Secondly, I searched for participant's meta-statements. Finally, I analyzed the data for internal consistency or contradictions in relation to recurring themes and the way these themes related to each other (Anderson & Jack, 1991, pp. 20-22). I used both individual and cross-case analyses.

After initially approaching data analysis according to the guidelines supplied by Anderson and Jack (1991), I discovered that this approach to content analysis did not prove to be effective in relation to the interview data obtained. In the first place, participants in this study did not make moral self-evaluative statements, that is statements about their self-concept in relation to cultural norms, "between how we are told to act and how we feel... when we do not act that way" (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 20). The participants in Anderson and Jack's study tended to report ways in which they perceived they had fallen short of the ideal their values supported. Their data also showed connections between these apparent compromises and participants' subsequent admonishment of self as expressed in moral self-evaluative statements.

The participants in my study tended to report experiences about ways of thinking and behaving that involved the maintenance of self-approval because they monitored their thinking and actions so as to continually align them with core values. These core values appeared to have been internalized through a process of ongoing critical inquiry. Participants in my study did not appear to use normative standards to judge the self. They valued justice to a high degree, including its enactment towards the self. They seemed to share normative standards, yet strongly disapprove of the ways that conceptions of morality are currently enacted in the public sphere.
Similarly, meta-statements did not typically punctuate the interview data. These statements are said to alert the interviewer “to a discrepancy within the self or between what is expected and what is being said” (Anderson & Jack, 1991, p. 22). For certain questions, participants sometimes asked for clarification as to my meaning before replying or they qualified their answers in relation to their perception of my meaning.

Finally, in relation to the logic of their narratives, participants’ replies seemed to be free of inconsistency across the individual interviews, so free of inconsistency in fact, that attempts to analyze the data along this dimension proved unhelpful beyond establishing the consistency in their reports.

Therefore, I sought a more useful way of analyzing the data, in keeping with the purpose of the study and the nature of phenomenological inquiry in general. I found such a method in McCracken’s (1988) five-stage method of interview analysis. This method proved to match the method for analysis of phenomenological data recommended by Patton (2002). McCracken has briefly summarized the object of this analysis.

The object of analysis is to determine the categories, relationships, and assumptions that informs the respondent’s view of the world in general and the topic in particular. The investigator comes to this undertaking with a sense of what the literature says ought to be there, a sense of how the topic at issue is constituted in his or her own experience, and a glancing sense of what took place in the interview itself. The investigator must be prepared to use all of this material as a guide to what exists there, but he or she must also be prepared to ignore all of this material to see what none of it anticipates. If the full powers of discovery inherent in the qualitative interview are to be fully exploited, the investigator must
be prepared to glimpse and systematically reconstruct a view of the world that
bears no relation to his or her own view or the one evident in the literature. (p. 42)

The five-stage analytical process involved progression towards higher levels of
generality. In the first stage of analysis I focused on the intensive relations of each
utterance in each interview transcript, and so deliberately ignored its relationship to other
parts of the text. I formulated an observation for each useful utterance. The second stage
involved development of each observation in relation to implications and possibilities in
isolation, in relation to evidence in the transcript, and in relation to the literature review.
The third stage of analysis required examination of the second-level observations across
the entire interview transcript “to confirm or discourage developing possibilities”
(McCracken, 1988, p. 45). The fourth stage involved taking the observations generated at
all previous levels of analysis and comparing them across interviews to identify themes.
The final stage of analysis involved scrutinizing the themes that emerged in the previous
stage and bringing them together in ways that expressed general properties of thought and
action across the group of participants.

Implications of the phenomenological assumption of shared essence for data
analysis included the expectation that there would be convergence among participants’
responses to the interview questions. The search for the essence of morality from the
point of view of participants indicated the need for a process of inductive analysis during
which the thing to be explained is taken apart, the contained parts are explained, and,
finally, knowledge of the parts is aggregated into knowledge of the whole by means of
creative synthesis (Patton, 2002).
I combined the phenomenological perspective with assumptions drawn from the theoretical perspective known as Narratology or Narrative Analysis. The focus of this perspective is analysis of the narratives or stories of participants to gain an understanding of their lives and the culture in which they live. Narratology, or narrative analysis, extends the idea of the study of written text to include in-depth interview transcripts of participants’ stories that will reveal something about social and cultural meanings. This perspective is influenced by phenomenology’s emphasis on understanding lived experience and perceptions of experience (Patton, 2002).

My focus, therefore, was an exploration of the ways in which participants made sense of experience in relation to shared meanings that are culturally derived. This focus necessitated describing the ways in which participants experience and interpret the phenomenon of morality. Inductive analysis was applied to the interview data and I began with specific observations and progressed toward general patterns. Categories or dimensions of analysis emerged from their observations as I discovered patterns that existed in participants’ descriptions of their conceptions of morality. Emergent patterns in responses were of primary importance. I explored the interrelationships among dimensions that emerged from the data without the prior constraint of hypotheses about operationalized variables. Categories that emerged from the data were not imposed in advance of the interviews with participants. I firstly explored the data obtained from individual interviews before comparing and contrasting responses across interviews. Cross-case analysis was applied to the data to find patterns and themes that cut across individual experiences. Emergent categories and discovered patterns were grounded in specific cases and their contexts (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). My analytical process was
"data driven" (Patton, 2002, p. 58). As I analyzed the data, I sought a holistic perspective on the phenomenon of morality as provided by participants. The challenge was “to seek the essence of the life of the observed, to sum up, to find a central unifying principle” (Bruyn, 1966, p. 316).

I organized the interview data according to major themes, categories, and illustrative examples during content analysis and searched for themes, patterns, understandings, and insights that emerged from the interview data (Patton, 2002). Noting Patton’s (2002) argument that “content analysis requires considerably more than just reading to see what’s there,” (p. 5) I looked for similarities and differences in the data and grouped similar responses and stories together in categories that best captured what I found. I honored the diverse points of view I found while “seeking patterns across, stories, experiences, and perspectives” (Patton, 2002, pp. 5-6).

The sensitizing notion of culture, borrowed from the tradition of ethnography, also guided my analysis of the interview transcripts:

In these texts, concrete action, dialogue, emotion, embodiment, spirituality, and self-consciousness are featured, appearing as relational and institutional stories affected by history, social structure, and culture, which themselves are dialectically revealed through action, feeling, thought, and language. (Bochner, 2000, as cited in Patton, 2002, p.86)

Language is the medium of culture. By examining the language and the particular meanings of important words that participants used to describe their experiences, I gained an understanding of the ways in which they have adapted to the culture within which we live (Anderson & Jack, 1991).
Gilligan has found that women and men tend to use differing moral frameworks to guide their perception and resolution of moral problems (Gilligan 1982; Gilligan & Attanucci, 1988; Jack, 1984, 1993; Jack & Jack, 1989). These differing frameworks are found by listening to and analyzing the language of participants. I assumed, as do proponents of oral history interviews (see Josselson & Liebich, 1993), that the language of participants would reveal something about their social, political, and historical context. Since words convey values, I wondered what core values would be in evidence within the interview data. Would the values of these eminent people reveal something about values in our culture?

My own perspective was “part of the context for the findings” since I was the instrument of this qualitative method. Self-awareness was thus important throughout the data collection and analysis phases of this study. My professional training includes a Master’s of Education with a specialization in interpersonal relationships education. I have interviewed many people in organizational and educational settings for the purpose of facilitating organizational change through self-aware and ethical practices of employment and education. An emphasis on psycho-social dynamics in my professional training and extensive interviewing experience in educational and business settings, along with long hours of data analysis from evaluations of work and educational programs, equipped me to undertake this study with fair-mindedness. My personal experiences added to the value and credibility of this inquiry. I knew that judgments about the significance of findings would be inevitably connected to my credibility, competence, thoroughness, and integrity as researcher (Patton, 2002).
I have reported the findings and interpretations from this study in the first-person consistent with my belief that “active voice communicates the inquirer’s self-aware role in the inquiry” (Patton, 2002, p. 65). I aimed for “rich description, thoughtful sequencing, appropriate use of quotes, and contextual clarity so that the reader joins the inquirer in the search for meaning” (Patton, 2002, p. 65). I also aimed for balance in reporting the findings and fidelity to the participants’ words.

**Ethical Considerations**

The following ethical safeguards were used in the pilot phase of this project and for this phase of the study. A letter describing the nature and purpose of the study was sent to participants in advance (see Appendix B). This letter followed a telephone call inviting participation in the study. In the letter I repeated my guarantee of confidentiality of the information obtained. Participants were informed that they should feel free to refuse to respond to particular questions and that they could terminate participation at any time. The participants granted me permission to tape the interviews for later transcription. Participants were also informed that the tapes would be kept in a locked cabinet, and that pseudonyms would be used in reporting the findings of the study. Verbal or written response to this letter constituted informed consent, in keeping with the protocol as approved by the Education Internal Review Committee. Transcripts of personal interviews were made available to interested participants.
CHAPTER IV

Findings

Introduction

"But here it is my individual consciousness that provides the ground on which the lives of these people are figures."


I undertook the content analysis of the interview data with the purposes of this study firmly in mind. I wished to explore participants’ conceptions of morality, to gain a deeper understanding of their personal experiences of the phenomenon in relation to our cultural context, and to discover the ways in which they enacted these conceptions, given intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints.

The content analysis revealed patterns in participants’ descriptions of their experience of the phenomenon of morality that led to the identification of major themes. The themes evident in their patterns of response permeate every level of their descriptions of their experience of the phenomenon of morality. This finding was consistent whether participants were describing their conceptions of morality, their moral development, the essential thinking and actions that enable them to enact their core values so as to maintain personal integrity and promote the collective good, or the nature of the challenges or constraints they experience as they strive to develop and express their
talents. The essence of the phenomenon of morality for the participants in this study was one of constraints in relation to an ideal and was typified by the following themes:

(a) cultivation vs. waste,
(b) connectedness vs. separation,
(c) movement vs. stasis,
(d) awareness vs. ignorance, and
(e) effectiveness vs. apathy.

Towards the close of the process of data analysis, I applied descriptive terms to name participants and to represent particular conceptions of morality that were reported by them during the interviews. I was guided by participants' responses in the formulation of these terms. These descriptive terms are metaphors and so they are not literally applicable but representative only in that they seemed to capture essential features of each participant's type of conception of morality. The descriptive terms were an aid to data management and reporting, they served as an introduction to the participants and preserved their anonymity (see Table 1.).

This chapter is organized according to findings for each of the overarching research questions and I have provided a summary of findings at the close of the chapter.

Findings Related to Research Question 1

What are the conceptions of morality that are held by eminent people?

A phenomenon is defined by its relation to other things (Patton, 2002). The phenomenon known as “morality” was defined by participants in this study in terms of its relation to other things and the purpose of the analysis was to discover what the participants experience and how they experience it. In Table 1, I have provided
descriptive terms that represent the participants’ conceptions of morality. Sample comments from each participant are also provided.

Table 1

*Metaphors for Conceptions of Morality held by Participants with Sample Comments*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female Participants</th>
<th>Sample Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poet-Servant (PS)</td>
<td>“And I always saw morality in the light of how we approach each other, how we handle our responsibilities to each other.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abolitionist (A)</td>
<td>“Slavery was an economic system that was absolutely bound up in The American Dream like capitalism is today. You cannot have this unfettered drive for profit and money and not have underclasses and not have slaves or their equivalent.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Organizer (CO)</td>
<td>“We have to realize that materialism and the pursuit of just money... puts economic chains on you. And so that really it doesn’t free you up to... do a work for social good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrior (W)</td>
<td>“Things that I want for the world... the issues of justice and all condemn me to being a warrior, in some sense, a fighter.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-Evangelist (EE)</td>
<td>“My ultimate goals are to... remind our next generation that they are as much spiritual beings as physical beings... that it’s often the simplest things that bring us pleasure and make us happy.... [that] it’s to have a purpose in life which makes us fulfilled, and... to ignite their imaginations... the home of original thought... through [which]... we will find the solutions that we need to undo the damage that’s been done.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuation of Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disciple (D)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The moment I commit to that law of God, I discover another law, which is what I call the law of the members, or the law of the body, which fights me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Monk/ (CM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;You learn as much through your commitment to work on real issues and help real people as you do from your sitting meditation. So, you need a practice context. You need a place where you're engaged in trying to have an impact.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge (J)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can’t, basically, behave in a fundamentally unethical way.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;I can’t lie and I’m rather too direct at times. And that’s just the way one is.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Intellectual (CI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;It turns out that I have lots of ideas. I find ideas easy to come by and some of them, actually, I think are rather important and significant. I don’t want to brag or anything, but I figure we’re supposed to work them out. But it’s not bragging. It’s a burden frankly.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stoic (S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The moral question is, what ought we to do or be, all things considered?....not if we want to be prudent or not if we want to be good men or good women,...but, what ought we to do and be, period? That’s the point that we’re all interested in achieving anyway.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the eminent people who participated in this study, morality was defined as a disposition or state of being in right relation with others that necessitates a self-conscious and, hence, purposeful movement towards an ideal that guides thinking and action. This disposition is the principle or motive, or ground, the vantage (the moral point of view) from which to regard and, hence, constrain human thought and action in a social world. Conceptions of morality specify right relation, how one positions oneself in relation to others, and these conceptions, therefore, regulate thinking and actions towards self and others, the natural world, and characterizations of the supernatural. Participants’ conceptions of morality were expressed in relation to their social and cultural context. Excerpts from participants’ definitions of morality may be found in Appendix C.

**Essence of Morality**

The essence of the phenomenon of morality for all participants in this study was reported to be a state of being in right relation with others (see Table 2 and Appendix C). I am indebted to the participant referred to as “Abolitionist” for the term “right relation” which encompassed all participants’ definitions of morality. I will continue to use her term throughout the analysis and discussion of findings.

[Morality]...has to do with our struggle to make right relation with one another and to live in that struggle. It’s not simply sort of a static way of being but it really is an active moving and usually, it should be known, it is a struggle for us to know how it is we live together with others both collectively... in the larger world as well as in the more intimate parts of our lives in ways that enhance mutuality... which to me is what right relation is all about - the making of mutual
relation which is not sameness but relationship in which everybody benefits.

There’s no loser. (A)

All participants, whether avowedly religious (CI, D, A, CO) or avowedly not religious (W, EE), described a state of being in right relation with others that included characterizations such as being loving, responsible, purposeful, truthful, excellent, and respectful.

Elements of a loving disposition included the continual search for understanding in relation to the expression of love, and acknowledgement of our intimate connection to others and of the consequences of that interdependence.

I guess I see, psychologically speaking, the big struggle - also spiritually - is between love and hate, and, therefore, the Christian focus on love is obviously central. And what does it entail? How is it to be expressed? (CI)

Human morality is something that we make up, that we create in the face of a chaotic and amoral universe. And central to it is, just the ability to put yourself in somebody else’s place, the power of empathy. And the kind of love that develops from that: love for other people – I’m not talking about, you know, sexual love or romantic love, but...— a deep feeling of connectedness to other humans and all the consequences of that which are so enormous. (W)

A loving disposition also incorporates notions of responsibility that include living in alignment with one’s core values, refraining from doing harm to others, and refraining from judging others.
Doing what one knows is right even if it means giving up one’s most passionate and prurient desires. (D)

Cleaning up your messes. We all make messes in the world, intentional and, particularly, unintentional. And to what extent are we open to see the messes we make, and to what extent do we assume responsibility for cleaning them up? And then,...you might say, in a more abstract or deeper level: I do think that morality is related to our kind of life purpose: To what extent are we living in line with our reason for being, our deepest sense of value or what matters to us? (CM)

I think it’s doing the best that we can. And I always saw morality in the light of how we approach each other, how we handle our responsibilities to each other. (PS)

“Morality” would be, do anything you like, anything, as long as you don’t do any harm to anyone else....So, “morality” would be, to be your own example, to really act responsibly in your own back yard, before you go out beyond that back yard. I just very much believe in the power of example. And not in harming other people. But also being allowed to be governed by one’s free will. I think not judging others is a really good thing to do, almost as impossible as that is. (EE)

A state of being truthful was also linked to being responsible and to notions of excellence and respect.

“Morality” is basically, being truthful. And facing the consequences of one’s actions. (J)
We also ought to rehabilitate the traditional approach to this and think of the moral point of view simply as the most inclusive, action-guiding point of view that human beings can achieve. So that the moral question is, what ought we to do or be, all things considered? What ought we to be or do, period? Not if we want to be prudent or not if we want to be good men or good women, or whatever, but, what ought we to do and be, period? That’s the point that we’re all interested in achieving anyway. (S)

I think morality is when you think of the social conditions of people. I think poverty is a moral issue. You know, the fact that people do not have – I mean things like education and health care are a human right. They shouldn’t be exclusive just for those who can afford it....That’s what real morality is, respecting other people in terms of what they choose to do with their lives. (CO)
Table 2

*Conceptions of Morality held by Eminent Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essence of Morality</th>
<th>Female (N=5)</th>
<th>Male (N=5)</th>
<th>Total (N=10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A state of being in right relation with others</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Structure of Morality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aspiration towards an ideal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implied standards</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement towards the ideal – meaningful and purposeful</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values – constrain conception of the ideal and thinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and actions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals – underpinned by values</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing awareness actuated by conflicting values, reflection, critical and/or creative thinking</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice in relation to goal selection and perceived goal attainment</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Context – values enacted within a context</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The term “right relation” was used by the participant referred to as “Abolitionist.” Her description encompassed all participants’ definitions of morality.
Structure of Morality

Conceptions of morality as “right relation” or an essential disposition in relation to self and other were, in turn, expressed in relation to a structure of constraints (see Table 2). The structure of the phenomenon of morality for the participants in this study was one of constraints in relation to an ideal. The major themes, a) cultivation vs. waste, b) connectedness vs. separation, c) movement vs. stasis, d) awareness vs. ignorance, and e) effectiveness vs. apathy consistently emerged as participants described their moral development.

The structure apparent in participants’ conceptions of morality included (a) aspiration towards an ideal; (b) implied standards on which rested conceptions of right relation; (c) movement towards the ideal – pursuit of the ideal is active, meaningful, and purposeful; (d) values that constrain or limit one’s conception of the ideal and constrain one’s thinking and actions; (e) goals that are underpinned by values; (f) awareness - growth of which is developmental, actuated by conflicting values, and reflection, critical and/or creative thinking, including deliberation of alternatives; (g) choice in relation to goal selection and perceived goal attainment; and (h) context – values are enacted within a context and encompass perceived rewards.

Aspiration towards an ideal. Conceptions of the ideal as expressed in the definitions of morality by participants in this study included the recognition that “the ideal,” by definition, is never fully realizable. The ideal of being in right relation with
others is approached progressively. Progress or development towards an ideal disposition in relation to self and others is guided by conceptions of human perfectibility (e.g., excellence, the perfection of rational agency, the laws of God, becoming all that one admires) and involves doing the best that one can in relation to the ideal all things considered.

A conception of the ideal as a specified disposition or attitude in relation to others rested on the essential ability to put yourself in somebody else's place, the power of empathy. Awareness of the consequences of this disposition were acknowledged by some participants and were estimated in relation to perceived intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints. Individual participants also acknowledged personal gifts or strengths of personality that were not in themselves deemed merit-worthy but which served to support progress towards the ideal.

Aspiration towards the ideal was sustained, in part, by the recognition that right relation could never be perfectly achieved, or thoroughly learned, or fully developed in relation to one's conception of excellence. Aspiration appeared to be influenced by and limited by implied standards, experience, and consequent levels of awareness in relation to the ideal.

**Implied standards.** Participants' conception of the ideal of right relation seemed to initially derive from standards received from parents and grandparents, religious institutions (Protestant, Roman Catholic, "the laws of God"), "tradition," and other formative experience such as reading and the influence of admirable people (e.g., "be all that you admire" EE).
Well, yes. I mean, my parents. They get some of the credit. They were liberals in the old blue collar Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt sense of liberal....Although they were atheists. They were quite militant atheists. So it was – There was never in my mind any thought of some kind of linkage between ethics – personal ethics and morality and a divine being. Never entered my mind. (W)

The Poet-Servant, for example, seems to have taken on her grandmother's assumption that social change is necessary. She also assumes that what is moral, and therefore, what is not moral, may be seen in the light of how we approach each other and how we handle our responsibilities towards each other. Her grandmother was a living example.

Well, I think that I was very much influenced by my grandmother, first of all. And she was committed to social change. And I always saw morality in the light of how we approach each other, how we handle our responsibilities to each other. And that's how I look at it. (PS)

Received standards seemed to dictate an essential disposition towards others and associated values, in accordance with reason, or correct principles, or the opinions, beliefs or customs of admired others. Received standards imply certain attributes, an habitual way of behaving, such as truthfulness, responsibility, and integrity. Received standards provided the boundaries within which participants formulated their conceptions of morality and as such were a means for accurately shaping individual conceptions of morality and aligning their thinking and actions with those conceptions.

An important finding in relation to participants' descriptions of their moral development was that though the standards for being in a social world were received,
they then were more fully internalized and articulated through a process that seemed to involve initial acceptance or approval of received values, re-evaluation of these values, rejection of or deeper identification with these values, and renewed commitment by the moral agent.

Movement towards the ideal: Passage of development. For the participants in this study, the essence of morality also includes conceptions of movement or passage towards an ideal. The experience of development towards the ideal was expressed in relation to characteristic struggles or challenges or constraints of various kinds. Participants indicated that this movement towards the ideal of right relation is inherently antagonistic, that is, morality is essentially dynamic and involves struggle during development towards the ideal in relation to intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints. Movement away from received values typically occurred as a result of conflict that prompted questioning, reflection, and re-assessment of these values on the grounds of their sufficiency or adequacy in relation to the ideal and in relation to problems or challenges that have been confronted in the pursuit of the ideal.

The resultant movement can be identified as a type of “conversion” in the lives of three of the five male participants in the study, though not in the descriptions of the female participants. When asked to characterize the course of their moral development, three male participants reported a movement away from the received ways in which their values were enacted. The essence of morality as right relation is evident in the comments of the following participants.

Well, very briefly, I was born and raised as a kind of liberal Protestant - a fairly weak form of it, went to college and became an atheist for roughly twenty years -
you know, read Bertrand Russell in my sophomore year, so to speak, and then
became really an atheist skeptic for twenty years - a psychologist, if you will.

And then, in the early 70s, much to my surprise, I came back to
Christianity, first through an Anglo-Catholic Episcopal Church, and then became
a Roman Catholic. And so that changed my entire understanding of psychology
and my entire relationship to my professional activities.

The same thing happened - a sort of double wonder - in the case of my
wife who also had been raised in the Mid-West as a sort of vaguely, liberal
Protestant, had also become an atheist, and was more of an atheist than I, and
more militant when we married. And she also came back on the same path. And
in the process we also had six children. So, my marriage, my family, and my
conversion are all intertwined and represent the core of my emotional, moral, and
intellectual life. (CI)

I was brought up in a stable family setting and I was – early on I was exposed a
lot to the Methodist Church....So, a lot of my morality comes from Judeo-
Christian teaching, though, I'm not a church-going person now. I mean, I find
certain difficulties, more with attitudes of the religious communities. And I find
some of it unbelievable anyway. So, I guess the basic ethics and morality that
most of us have...are really Judeo-Christian ethics, even though the societies –
though, not so much the US, but Australia and Britain have very much moved on
beyond the religious-belief phase in most cases.... I think into a sort of
humanism, ...based on correct dealing with people. (J)
I believe that I have thought my way to where I am in the context of some significant challenges. One challenge is in coping with a wonderful and devout religious father and mother – my father was a clergyman – and coming to realize that while all of the religious experiences that I have had, and continue to have, occur within the context of Protestant Christianity, oddly enough, if I'm honest about it, they have nothing to do with the figure of Jesus. They are not “Christ-centered,” as my father would put it. None of the religious experiences have had anything to do with that. I can distinguish them from aesthetic experience, and I can certainly sort out the ones that are some kind of wish-fulfillment or – that obviously call for some sort of psychological explanation, and what I’m left with is some quite colorful religious experience, but of a sort that has nothing to do with any particular religion – except of the great religions. So that was one big hurdle. (S)

Pursuit of the ideal of right relation was described as a journey, common to all e.g., the “Hero’s journey.” This journey was perceived by the participant described as the Disciple to be a “personal, spiritual journey.” He characterized the movement towards right relation as one from innocence or ignorance, through a deadening of sensibility to truth, and return through an awakening of sensibility to truth as revealed in the Laws of God. His account of his moral development as journey involved a passage away and a return to and deepening of received values.

It has been said that the history of the Jewish people is the history of each Jewish human being. They all go through a release from the Egypt and the Pharaoh in
their head, sojourn forty years in the desert, before they find the Promised Land. Morality, therefore, becomes the absolute necessity to abide by – even though the world does not live that any longer – abide by these standards ["The laws of God."]. (D)

The journey of moral development was described by the remaining male participant as one from ignorance to awareness or cultivation. Cultivation or wisdom is dependent on awareness. One must cultivate an attitude of awareness of and respect for the sensitivities of others. The notion of sin is implicated in moral development. Three of the participants referred to awareness in relation to ignorance or sin.

Well, like anyone, I think it's tied to awareness. We can only clean up the messes we're aware of and so I think life is a process of building awareness.

In Confucian philosophy it's considered a sin to be ignorant. Now, in the West, we tend to look at ignorance as something you kind of want to – You know, you want to do your best to understand what's going on, but it's actually considered a sin. Now, sin has a little different meaning than it would in a kind of Calvinist Western tradition. But, to be unaware is a state that is shameful. You know, if I do something and somebody reacts and I think their reaction is totally off the wall, OK? I say, "Well, it's not my fault. This person is over-reacting entirely." OK? But then, a Confucian would say – And this is not the kind of contemporary, but the kind of traditional Confucian would say, "Ah yes, but you knew that person was there. There's something about that person that you were unaware of. They were sensitive to things that you really either didn't pay attention to or chose not to pay attention to. So, in a sense, you have complete
responsibility in the matter, even though you might say that 'I wouldn't have reacted the way they reacted,' still you knew the person and you could have known that they were going to be really sensitive to these points. So, you know, ignorance. You know, "Ignorance is bliss." Well, it is, of course, because life is a lot simpler. You can ignore all these things. So, you might say, "How do you characterize your development?" Well, life gets more and more tricky. (CM)

This account (CM) was similar in nature to that of the Disciple (D) in its focus on inner dynamics in relation to the external world.

Descriptions of moral development by the female participants in this study were not characterized by either a movement away from received values, or a movement away and return to received values, but rather by a deepening of received values that occurred as a result of continual reflection on their relevance in the context of their lives. The deepening identification with received values was itself a developmental process that characterized their moral development. The social and historical relevance of their values was examined, especially as necessitated by the experience of perceived injustice in the public arena. Reflection on accounts of historical figures and events and their consequences as well as contemporary social events and their consequences for right relation in a social world was also essential to this process.

So, you know, that would not occur to a child. But so it's really been through the events that - of - world events and national events in the sixty years I've been alive, as well as also now looking back and looking at history somewhat differently and understanding that even the great men in our nation who were
considered the best heroes like Lincoln and Washington and whatever – You know, they’ve also been idealized, that these people were human beings and they had feet of clay and they stood for some of these same – they had the same blind spots and they were buying the same illusions I was. (A)

I was you know a typical solipsistic teenager. Atypical in that I was just a total nerd and reader – You know an obsessive reader. But I was not particularly concerned with other humans. And somewhere along the line, probably in my twenties, that all changed. And I made this leap to saying, “Yes. Each other person is as much a center of the universe as I am, as full of feelings as I am.” And that is an astounding thing when you come to that. (W)

Whether through disillusionment or a shift to a new inner condition via a “leap of faith” in relation to our essential connectedness as human beings, movement towards maturity or cultivation for these women was brought about by questioning received values as embodied in social institutions, critical reflection in relation to the enactment of personal values in particular contexts, and growing awareness of the implications of their deepest values.

This pattern of continual reflection on one’s core values was also evident in the male participants’ accounts of their moral development.

You know, it's really important to be reflective. And it's really important to keep asking in that reflection: So, what's really essential to me, what do I care deeply about? (CM)
I think we have huge, deep, almost imponderable problems in the world and things are going to get worse not better. So, I guess, if my life is dedicated to something it's my own personal learning in service of what will help humankind learn to live together better. We're not too good at it right now and we're not too good at living in a way that supports life in general. (CM)

Well, I had a stunning experience in...the rehabilitation hospital....An older man who was quadriplegic and in his late 20's had a young family, and he said “Well, I can’t keep the wolf away from the door anymore, but I can make myself easy to love.” And that drove me into a considerable depression. But there is some truth to that. The truth that I have taken from it has to do with the recognition of the equal importance of me and the others with whom I live my life. (S)

Another focus of participants' reflections was human nature itself and of the struggling self in relation to the human condition. The nature of the human condition was identified as one of struggle and uncertainty. Moral development occurred within this context. The types of struggle participants identified were psychological, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional struggle in relation to constraints of various kinds. This personal struggle necessitated a particular type of thinking in relation to their experience that was variously described as questioning, life-long learning, reflection, and consequent growth in awareness.

Goal setting and perception of goal attainment. For some participants, conceptions of meaningful choice were formed in the light of notions of free will (e.g., EE, S). Participants' choices in relation to the ideal seemed to rest on the criteria of
meaningfulness and purposefulness. Goal setting and perceptions of goal attainment rested chiefly on criteria such as effectiveness and sufficiency in the face of overwhelming responsibility, which was perceived to be a consequence of our essential connectedness as human beings and in relation to the natural, and supernatural world. Reflection, examination, assessment, and/or refinement of values occurred in relation to conflict or struggle to remain effective within given contexts in relation to perceived responsibility to others. Participants' goals and thinking and actions towards those goals were perceived to be meaningful and purposeful to the extent that they made effective progress towards their ideal. Assessments of worthy goals and effective progress towards their attainment were made in relation to the contexts of participants' lives. Purposeful progress towards goals entailed decision making in alignment with core values as enacted within particular contexts.

*Personal effectiveness.* The men and women in this study stressed the need for choice in relation to personal effectiveness, for instance, in relation to the maintenance and growth of intimate relationships; an awareness of overwhelming suffering, the consequences of empathy; the management of their personal resources, such as intellectual, emotional, and spiritual energy in relation to the constraint of time; and the conservation of one's energies in the face of the effects of capitalism and materialism that necessitated the goals of fighting economic injustice and discrimination.

Well, you can't do everything. So, you have to say, "What can I do today? What can I most effectively do? (W)"
I think one's always constrained by the need to... back off on issues because they're not practical, that they're not going anywhere. You can’t carry some things through. You know, there are things wrong with society and there are things wrong with institutions within society but if you fight too many battles, you’ll find yourself doing the Don Quixote act and that doesn’t – that’s not effective. (J)

I have so much to do that I have to pray because what it does is allow you to drop off the fifty percent of the things that really don’t matter. So it turns out that, ironically, it’s a great efficiency device. (CI)

*Enactment within a context.* Participants’ conceptions of morality included the notion of enactment of being “a living example” (EE) within a context. Effective action in the direction of one’s goals requires that one’s words and actions must be in alignment. In the course of their thought and activities the theme of struggle vs. apathy once more emerged in participants’ responses. One must struggle to attain one’s ideal of right relation. Consciousness of human suffering comes with empathy, not apathy, and so not without struggle. In a sense this struggle is hazardous, it implies risk and consequences.

You know, we all make messes in the world, intentional and, particularly, unintentional. And to what extent are we open to see the messes we make, and to what extent do we assume responsibility for cleaning them up? OK? So, that’s really immediate, and if that isn't there, I think everything else that we might say about our beliefs about ethics or morality have the potential of being a lot of bullshit – a lot of good ideas but, you know, where's the action? (CM)
Maybe that's why people don't make that leap. Of course, they will say that they believe that other people are independent centers of the universe and conscious beings but if they really, really believed that, I mean how can you get through a day or a half an hour without being overpowered by all the needless human suffering there is and looking for ways to do something about that? (W)

Participants reported that the enactment of one's values as framed by one's conception of morality must occur within both the private and the public spheres and conflicts in enactment of values in these spheres of their experience were in evidence. The experience of observation of this conflict between enactment of values in the personal and public spheres could render them ineffective if they let it, chiefly through the depletion of personal energy or resources.

Sources of conflict within the private sphere included the demands of loving, committed relationships, and time constraints in relation to the fulfillment of personal goals. Sources of conflict in the public arena included discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, age, and sexual identity; and political decisions made by those in governance in relation to domestic and foreign policy.

To me, being a citizen of the United States in these times is just so challenging because I think our nation is embodying the antithesis of morality in terms of foreign policy and in terms of domestic policy. And it just breaks my heart. (A)

A preoccupation with the enactment of values within the public sphere characterized the descriptions of four of five of the female participants, though their occupational pursuits were diverse and included that of the theologian and the poet. This

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tendency was not exclusive of the personal sphere for these participants nor was it exclusive of some aspects of the male participants’ descriptions of their experience.

I think that people so frequently want to make morality a personal decision. And I think that that’s – It’s so incorrect and backwards. I think that the area of morality lies in our public lives. You know, I think if you’re a cannibal that that’s not only a moral [issue], but it’s an illegal [issue], and a bad idea. I don’t mean it like that. Or, a paedophile. You know. You prosecute these people. But I’m thinking we as a nation are – We are an immoral nation right now. Because - We’re in an illegal and unnecessary war. We’re killing people and we’re torturing people and we’re setting back the human experience. And so the morality of the President of the United States does not rest in the faithfulness to his wife which is none of our business. But it rests in his faithfulness to his duty to the people of the United States, which is not to make us safe, but to prepare us for life’s uncertainties. Because nothing can be safe. (PS)

A strong finding in this study was the tendency of the male participants to focus on the enactment of their goals towards the ideal of right relation within the personal sphere, in the sense of an intensely focused inner world. These preoccupations took the form of intense pursuit of knowledge, for instance, in relation to the inner dynamics of relationships.

It’s a strange thing because my goal in the moment is to escape life. Yes, to just escape the external world because I have been out there and it’s been lonely. It’s the wasteland for me. I did not seek fame or career status. I have found those are pyrrhic emptinesses; that they offer very little, if any, pleasure. There is a
wonderful self-gratification at having done a really wonderful job and feeling an audience that has been moved. Then there is a oneness and one knows one is not alone....I can honestly say that I have abandoned the rat-race and I have encouraged those I love...to abandon it also. It's then the question of how one survives in the world. And there it's very clear in the Buddhist tradition that one has a station in life where one has to be a warrior which is you do your duty but put no attachment on to the results. And be out there harnessing the funds or the position necessary to sustain one's life but your work is endlessly to let go of any attachment to the outside world so that you can go inward. (D)

I would like to find and show and illuminate the identical ascetic spiritual demands of all of the spiritual systems – the Buddhist, the Hindu, the Shamanic, the mystical-Judaic, the mystical-Christian, the Sufic, the Five Thousand Indigenous, that they are all speaking of precisely the same inner, fluid dynamics of being human. (D)

The male participants' occupational pursuits were also intensely focused on inner relational dynamics such as those that occupy the musician, the focus on the web of relationships that forms an individual's personality, an intense pursuit of knowledge in relation to biology and in relation to the perfection of rational agency for human beings.
Findings Related to Research Question 2a

How do conceptions of morality orient the thought and actions of eminent people?

In order to deepen understanding about the ways in which participants’ conceptions of morality oriented their thought and actions, I asked them the following questions: What do you believe to be your greatest achievement? What are your ultimate goals?

Remembering that a phenomenon is defined in relation to other things, and that the phenomenon of “morality” itself had been expressed by participants as a disposition of right relation, I wondered whether there would be consistency or discrepancy between the phenomenon as described, and their perceptions of their greatest achievements (goals attained) and descriptions of their ultimate goals. Would there be a match or mismatch between their assessments of their greatest achievements and their descriptions of their ultimate goals? Consistency between descriptions of the phenomenon of morality as right relation and their greatest achievements and ultimate goals would potentially uncover information about their values. Discrepancy between these accounts would potentially do the same.

The content analysis revealed patterns in participants’ descriptions of their greatest achievements and ultimate goals. The major themes that were generated in relation to the essence of their experience of the phenomenon of morality persisted across participants’ reports about their greatest achievements and ultimate goals. The persistence of these themes rested on patterns across participants’ responses:

(a) cultivation vs. waste.

(b) connectedness vs. separation,
(c) movement vs. stasis,
(d) awareness vs. ignorance, and
(e) effectiveness vs. apathy.

Participants' Assessments of their Greatest Achievements

Some participants' assessments of their greatest achievements were initially hampered by their inability to adequately determine the impact of those achievements and by the apparent necessity to evaluate incommensurables. They typically resolved this difficulty by firstly approaching the question about their greatest achievements by referring to a criteria such as immediacy, i.e., accessibility through direct experience, and recency, i.e., the achievements they care about most at a recent point in time. They also typically distinguished between achievements in their personal lives and in their professional lives (see Table 3 and Table 4).

The conception of morality as essentially as disposition towards right relation once again seemed to orient their responses. A match between participant’s reported achievements and stated goals seemed evident.
Table 3

Participants' Reported Greatest Achievements and Ultimate Goals by Domain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest achievements</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N=5)</td>
<td>(N=5)</td>
<td>(N=10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and professional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ultimate Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ultimate Goals</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N=5)</td>
<td>(N=5)</td>
<td>(N=10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal and professional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Participants' Greatest Achievements and Ultimate Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greatest achievements</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N=5)</td>
<td>(N=5)</td>
<td>(N=10)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having nurtured children who are possessed of</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>admirable qualities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage, family, and conversion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long, rewarding marriage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with severe, physical handicap</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Possession of attributes such as curiosity,</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>willingness to take risks, openness to learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuation of Table 4.

| Professional | | | |
|--------------|--|--|
| Achievement of what one set out to do | 1 | 1 |
| Original contributions to field (including development of leadership capacities of others; participation in movements for social change; improvement of conditions for under-served groups; positive effects of original art works) | 3 | 3 | 6 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ultimate Goals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued effort towards spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within loving, committed relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued enjoyment of life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued engagement in professional work to have an impact in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued work for change within social institutions at theoretical and practical levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued effort towards achievement of moral and political goals for social change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continued participation in movements for social change towards greater justice, compassion, and peace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuation of Table 4.
Continued experimentation towards scientific discovery | 1 | 1

Personal Achievements and Goals

Three participants reported that their greatest achievements were in the personal domain.

My greatest achievement is having nurtured three young boys into men who are creative, gentle, sensitive, caring, loving, tender, not afraid to share the depth of their emotional and spiritual beings. (D)

In my personal life it would be my marriage and family. My most important other sort of - I guess you would say - intellectual and spiritual and moral life would be - my conversion. So, my marriage, my family, and my conversion are all intertwined and represent the core of my emotional, moral, and intellectual life. Expressions of that have come out in the academic world in some of the publications that I have done, but these could be considered accomplishments, I guess, but they’re really derivative of that central core. (CI)

Well, you know, honestly? My kids. They are both brilliant, gifted, kind, funny, you know. I guess that would be – yes. That’s the first answer that comes to my mind. (W)
Their ultimate goals included continued effort towards spiritual development as expressed through loving, committed relationships (D, Cl) and continued effort towards the achievement of moral and political goals that related to bringing about “social change in the direction of greater equality and peace” (W). Conceptions of right relation seemed to orient perceptions of achievement and orient ultimate goals.

**Personal and Professional Achievements and Goals**

Two participants acknowledged achievements in both the personal and profession spheres (CM, S). For the first of these, the experience of achievement in the personal domain was qualified.

But then, it's very hard to talk about accomplishments because when you look close to home it's very humbling because you always see all these things that you've screwed up. (CM)

This participant’s assessments of achievement in the professional domain were qualified by the inability to effectively determine the extent of his impact. He therefore, expressed achievement in terms of personal attributes that he valued.

Well, let's see. I think I am – I love learning. I have a lot of both curiosity and willingness to try things..... So – This is something I often talk to our oldest son about. I think a lot of people have a kind of implicit notion that "I go to school and that's when I do my learning. And then I go to the rest of my life."

And I look at a lot of people I admire and if they're influential on me, one thing that always seems to be a common denominator is these people have a tremendous appetite to continue to learn their whole life, that they are always in a
developmental mode. They are always open to finding out that they're wrong and changing their mind and developing capacities they didn't have before. (CM)

The other male participant expressed his achievement in the following way.

In my personal life, for example, I suppose it would have to be 33 or 34 years now of a wonderful marriage that I think of as an achievement in the sense that it takes a good deal of work, but it is extraordinarily rewarding. Second, would probably be in my personal life again – dealing with a fairly severe physical handicap... and that’s a continual problem. And then everything else in the way of personal achievements probably falls off pretty steeply after those two things. (S)

Achievement in the professional sphere was stated in terms of original contribution to his field.

The ultimate goals of these participants were expressed with reference to the professional sphere that was integrally related to both their enjoyment of their work and the significance or usefulness of their work for the public sphere. The first participant aimed to continue work on a theory of good emotions in relation to proposing a cosmopolitan morality in which we are to think of ourselves as citizens of the world and not citizens of some particular city or state or nation... and so Stoic politics... is useful. And the connection is there to...establishing some cosmopolitan, cross-culturally valid standards for a theory of human rights, or a theory of distributive justice [which] comes from the Stoic contention that the right thing to do – and if there’s only one thing that’s worth pursuing and that’s what they call virtue – and virtue turns out to be identical to human psychological...
health. And then human psychological health, of course, is dependent on a certain amount of physical health, and that's dependent, in turn, on a reasonably favorable environment and supportive social institutions, including education. (S)

I'm really kind of always oriented towards what's the next step for me and us? I mean, my orientation for as long as I can remember has been, "You know, well so what's really needed and wanted in the world?" So, I guess, if my life is dedicated to something it's my own personal learning in service of what will help, you know, humankind learn to live together better. We're not too good at it right now and we're not too good at living in a way that supports life in general. I think that, on the one hand, none of us can know what impact we have, but, on the other hand, I can't see any other thing more important in my life than having a real impact. (CM)

Well, to have a good time and to help what I perceive as a huge transition in human affairs. I think that we're at the end of the line. And I can't imagine – I don't have a crystal ball that's any better than anybody else's. So, none of us have really too much of a clue, at least I don't, of what the future holds. But the one thing I'm pretty confident of is we won't have to keep living the way we're living. I don't believe it's a sustainable way of living and I think that we really can't be too proud of the world we're leaving to our grandkids at the moment. So, yeah, that's, you know, my greatest hope would be to contribute to a degree of sanity and sustainability that we don't have today. (CM)
Professional Achievements and Goals

The majority of participants acknowledged achievements and goals in the professional sphere. Their achievements were expressed in terms of impact or contribution and included:

(a) unprecedented achievements in their fields or professional lives as indicated by social recognition such as the Nobel prize, and other awards;
(b) the achievement of doing what one set out to do, such as quality writing;
(c) participation in movements for social change and unprecedented strides in the improvement of social conditions for underserved groups in our culture; and
(d) the effects brought about by communicating the messages contained in original paintings.

The last of these achievements was expressed as follows.

The one that immediately springs to mind is my body of paintings. So, my original works which are inspired – basically, they come to me in my dreams....The greatest achievement, therefore, is the reaction that I get to that which is an opening up of other people. It’s really as much as the writing [her poetry] makes the invisible parts of the painting visible it also introduces people to that invisible part of themselves that is innately theirs but is so ignored.... So the greatest achievement is the effect that my work has on its audience. (EE)

Each of these participants expressed their ultimate goals in relation to the continuation of their work in order to have an impact in the world.

Well, my ultimate goals are to participate as long as I live in helping create a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world so that – That’s always been my –
The pinnacle of my aspiration would be somehow continuing in that kind of involvement. And that continues to be true though my interests have varied. (A)

To do what I'm doing. Ultimately, I enjoy writing. And I enjoy publishing. And I – there are some ideas that I hope change the way people look at things. I hope that I have an influence on the world.... I mean every writer does and anything else they tell you is not true. (PS)

Participants comments about their greatest achievements and ultimate goals consistently emphasized the importance of having an impact on others, whether through spiritual development as expressed within loving committed relationships, continued work on emotions and politics as related to cosmopolitan morality, or the establishment of right relation in the larger world through participation in movements for social change or effecting social change through other creative contributions.

Participants' achievements and goals rested on the value of loving and other admirable attributes within human beings that appear necessary to right relation, and the value of making an impact or contribution towards right relation in the public sphere. Engagement in meaningful, purposeful, or worthy pursuits was of value as was engagement in exciting, enjoyable, and rewarding pursuits. Reward for strenuous, persistent, and time-consuming effort was important to them.

Findings Related to Research Question 2b

How do personal values sustain their contribution to their respective fields?

In order to uncover the core of their motivation to sustain their activities in their respective fields, I firstly asked the participants what motivated them to put one foot in
front of the other day after day. I then asked them to describe the ways in which their thinking and actions had been instrumental in sustaining personal integrity and promoting the collective good.

In relation to their motivation to continue their activities, participants described a context for sustained contribution that was essentially relational. Within the context of their experience of life as essentially relational, they described intrapersonal experience and interpersonal experience in relation to their experience of engagement in their professional or vocational activities and in relation to broader social and environmental conditions.

For some participants, their intrapersonal experience was marked by pain, grief, despair, and spiritual and emotional struggle, against which they sought meaningful ways to remain motivated to sustain their contributions.

I don't always get so motivated. To push through the periodic pain barrier, emptiness, manic depression, is an unquestioned belief that it doesn't always have to be dark and negative; that I, as we all do, create our own difficulties, and that even while undergoing them, can find a certain interest, if not fascination, in how they operate. (D)

Participants were typically motivated by

(a) intellectual interest and the excitement of discovery including fascination with our nature as social beings:

You mean, why do I get up in the morning and go ahead? I suppose the most immediate one that comes to mind is the love of my wife and children. The other is my love of Christ and my belief that I have something I'm supposed to be
doing. And the third is intellectual interest. I would say it's the last of those because I do have... lots of ideas. I find ideas easy to come by and some of them, actually, I think are rather important and significant....They sort of haunt me when they're not out there. Then once I've published them, then I forget them. It's almost as though - it's like, you know, they irritate you as long as they're un-said, unprinted, uncommunicated. Once they're communicated, I tend to forget them because there are other ideas suddenly clamoring for their denouement. I have to get them out almost as a form of escape from a kind of extraordinarily unpleasant tension. (CI)

It's sort of exciting. In experimental science at the level that I do it, we make discoveries. We make – Sometimes we make a big discovery, like the one that won the Nobel Prize. But we tend also to make a lot of little discoveries. But, when you get these results, when you see them coming off the counter, or you see them in the results that your young colleague hands to you after doing the experiments, you realize you're seeing something that nobody in the history of the human species has ever seen before. And maybe you understand something that nobody's ever understood before. It may not be a big thing and you might be the only person that cares about it but it's something quite novel. So, the experience of an experimental scientist is very different, say, from the experience of a – someone who studies a literary figure or something like that because you're not going over old material, you're constantly looking at novelty. (J)

(b) hope, love, passion, devotion, joy, and a sense of purpose:
Hope that it really does matter what we do, that we’re not – that this is not a futile existence, this is not meaningless, purposeless, that we really – we, and I’m thinking of myself as a human now, are here with a purpose and that as long as there is life in my body and as long as I have most of my senses I hope that I can live each day in that kind of purposeful way. (A)

Oh, it’s just a lot of fun. I mean, I really do enjoy what I do. I mean, I go through lots of emotional swings, like any of us, but I’ve been very fortunate in my life....I’ve never thought, or worried, or concerned myself much about how I fit in or whether or not I’d make enough money, or, you know, would I be accepted, or anything. All those things were a given to me....I’ve always just been concerned about really two things, you know: what’s really important – what do I really deeply enjoy doing? And what’s needed in the world? And it seems to me those two questions are all the guidance that anybody needs. (CM)

(c) the possibility of acting effectively: and

(d) a sense of responsibility.

I think it’s the possibility of achieving something – not achieving something – the possibility of acting effectively. What is most discouraging and damaging for me is passivity, and the prospect of continued passivity. (S)

So, I think that’s the key to it for me. And it doesn’t take any more than....I don’t have to have some hot iron in the fire, so to speak. I have to have some structure in my life, and I have to have some serenity because they’re conditions that make
activity possible, but I don't have to have externally imposed deadlines or projects. (S)

Oh well, just knowing that one can achieve major breakthroughs if we teach people how to work together and how to organize. That's the main thing. And how to take direct action. But first of all people have to take responsibility and not think that somebody's going to do this for them. That they have to do it for themselves. (CO)

*How do Personal Values Sustain Participants' Contribution to their Respective Fields?*

I asked the participants to describe how their thinking and actions had been instrumental in sustaining personal integrity and promoting the collective good. Their contributions to their respective fields are the expression of their talents. These contributions seem to be underpinned by values that are components of their conceptions of morality. Participants' responses indicate that by aligning their thinking and actions with their values they are able to sustain their contributions. Alignment of their thoughts and actions with their values seems essential to their *fitness* for sustaining their contributions. The values that were essential to sustaining their contributions were numerous. As I examined these across the group of participants, common values emerged from the data and these included justice, love, responsibility, cooperation, sensibility or awareness, wisdom or cultivation, joy, compassion, efficacy or effectiveness, and, naturally, integrity. Table 5 indicates a conception of value that includes the principle, the standard, and the qualities expressed.
Table 5

*Common Values Expressed by Participants in this Study*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Right relation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>excellence</td>
<td>meaningfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>generativity</td>
<td>purposefulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>integrity</td>
<td>awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maturity, cultivation, wisdom</td>
<td>contemplation/interdependence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>justice</td>
<td>reflectiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>love</td>
<td>reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>faith</td>
<td>industry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Quality                                  |                                     |
|------------------------------------------|                                     |
| justice                                  | devotion                            |
| compassion                               | faith                               |
| hope                                     | reflectiveness                       |
| purposefulness                           | awareness                           |
| meaningfulness                           | reason                              |
| joy                                      | integrity                           |
| love                                     | sincerity                           |

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The examples that the participants provided improved my understanding of their conceptions of morality, i.e., what they experience, in relation to how they essentially experience them.

Aspiration towards the ideal of right relation seems to rest on perceptions of free will (SW, LB) which implicates choice in relation to goal formation and associated decision making (DH, CH). An automaticity seems to be implied in relation to choices as to the enactment of core values (BE) in specific situations. Perceptions of choice are also dependent on perceived constraints in relation to the enactment of core values. One of these constraints was identified as individual levels of awareness in relation to recognition of and application of core values in the face of specific challenges or problems. In these instances, levels of awareness directed, and were increased by, reflection upon experience in the personal and public spheres, whether direct personal experience or vicarious experience. Reflection, critical and creative thinking, and deliberation on the potential consequences of their actions and of potential alternative courses of action led to decision making in relation to their personal and professional lives that demonstrated discernment.

Conflict as to the enactment of values in the personal and public spheres necessitated a prioritizing of values in relation to specific situations or contexts (e.g., the value of serenity in service of the core value justice). Perceived conflict in relation to the enactment of participants' values seemed to interrupt the automaticity of their thoughts and consequent actions. The examples related by participants demonstrated typical instances of perceived conflict in relation to enactment of their core values. Non-
examples or perceived exceptions to "the Rule" provided further insight about how they experience the phenomenon of morality.

*Examples of the Ways in which Values Sustain Participants' Contributions*

In the following section I have provided examples of the ways in which participants' core values support and sustain the expression of their talents, their contributions to their fields, by maintaining personal integrity and promoting the common good. The following examples demonstrate the ways in which core values sustain personal integrity for the participants in this study.

*Poet-Servant.* The conception of the poet as servant is indicative of this participant's value of service. She believes that the right relation of a poet to his or her craft is that of a servant. She assumes that all writers should adopt this attitude to their craft. The core value service, among others, sustains her contribution to her field because she attempts to consistently direct her thinking and actions in alignment with this value. The consequences of not recognizing that you, as a writer, are a servant include beginning to censor yourself and beginning to think you are important in relation to other people. Censorship and pride interrupt what she perceives to be the mission of the writer. Censorship of one's work and pride are kept at bay by assuming the attitude of a servant that incorporates, for example, humility.

She remarks that talent development is itself all about service. The attitude of a servant facilitates the right course of talent development as expressed in her sustained contribution while pride impedes the craft of a writer.

The core value integrity is also sustained by the pleasure she derives from the fact that she has never compromised her integrity (i.e., She has never done anything that she
thought she should not do, despite the fact that she has not always done everything that she wanted to do). She derives pleasure in relation to these decisions because it has not been easy to maintain her integrity. In fact, it has been demanding and difficult to do so.

Her thought and actions are oriented by conceptions of morality i.e., doing the best that she can, approaching people in the right way (i.e., respectfully) and handling her responsibilities to others in the right way – in the knowledge that we are no longer separate as we once were. In relation to this ideal, she derives pleasure from the fact that while enactment of her values has meant confronting difficulty such as the loss of her job and the loss of friends, she has continued to enact her values.

For this participant, integrity demands that she refrain from taking part in actions that affront her values. She cannot envision any circumstances that would see her acting out of alignment with her values, no matter what the price: “Because there are just some things you know that you won’t let yourself do.” She is aware that other people engage in what she perceives to be immoral acts such as torture. This knowledge is gained by vicarious experience and while her values have not been tested by what she considers to be “big decisions” as she moves towards her ideal of right relation, she has reflected on or given consideration to what could possibly make other people do things like take part in torture.

*Abolitionist.* The thinking and actions of this participant help to sustain personal integrity which is fed by her awareness of the ways in which values apply and should be enacted in different types of contexts, whether familiar of unfamiliar.

Well, as far back as I can remember sort of thinking about these matters, I have made *conscious* [italics added] efforts to sort of hook up with and align myself
with people and movements that stand for something that I really believe in, believing that my integrity requires it. And not to be silent, for example, when somebody needs to speak up about some injustice. (A)

The core values justice and integrity sustain her contribution by prompting her to align herself with movements established to enact values in a particular manner. She finds consensus as to the enactment of her values in these contexts.

For the Abolitionist, the value of justice lends her courage to speak out in face of perceived injustice. She describes the example of not being silent in the face of injustice as arising in the presence of perceived hypocrisy, an affront to integrity and justice, within self and within other professed Christians, specifically when belief and action appeared to be at cross purposes. Apparent injustice in relation to others presents a conflict that demands a prioritizing of values and action or enactment. Part of her moral development involved standing up and speaking out for people who were being treated unjustly. She had always believed that speaking up on behalf of others in the face of injustice was the right thing to do, not to do so transgressed her standards. Her personal history of choosing to speak out against injustice enables her to do so repeatedly as a way of life and helps to sustain her contributions.

I mean, when I was sixteen I had gotten into an argument with the Episcopal bishop of the diocese of North Carolina about such a matter....about race when he had insisted that we, the kids who were at the time on the Youth Commission which was the leadership council of the young people of the diocese...could not use the church camp for a meeting because a black child had been elected to the Youth Commission and the camp was not integrated.
And I was the president of the Youth Commission at the time. And this bishop said, “Well, you know, we can’t do anything about it. It’s just the way it is, that the – This camp…is segregated by charter for white people only. And…I wasn’t but sixteen but I was well old enough to know this was absurd and so my teenage colleagues and I, went to see the bishop and said, “We cannot accept this. This is wrong. This is not what Jesus would want. This has nothing to do with love or justice or Christianity or anything.” And he said, “Well you’re right but we can’t do anything about it.” I tell you that because it’s just an example of that kind of pushing and speaking even though nothing seems to be happening. It’s like, “Well, you can’t just sit back and be silent in the face of this kind of wrong.” (A)

The core values of integrity, justice, and wisdom or cultivation demanded that she act in certain ways so as not to be hypocritical. Aspiration towards right relation is supported by the core values justice and integrity that demands that beliefs and actions “somehow mesh and not be at total cross purposes” (A). Her awareness of the incongruity between the values that she shared with the bishop and his actions in relation to the issue at hand contrasts with his dullness or deafness or lack of awareness, which she describes as “absurdity.”

She believes that even if one cannot know the impact of one’s actions and even if problems seem insurmountable, one must continue in the attempt to have an impact in line with one’s values. A “wrong” application, or failure to apply, the principle and standard of morality demands that she speak out “in the face of injustice and wrong” and not “look the other way or play it safe” (A). She learned this value and its interpretation from her parents. Subsequent experience in relation to modes of enactment of her
principles and standards, including how to interpret the cases for application, occurred throughout her moral development, a continual growth towards the ideal of personal integrity in relations with others.

There appears to be a reciprocal influence among core values that direct thinking and actions while thinking and actions are supported by core values.

*Community Organizer.* Personal integrity is supported by adherence to one’s values that are formed within the framework of morality, or right relation. For this participant, values underlie her thinking and actions and, in turn, help her sustain personal integrity, for instance, when making decisions. She considers the long-range consequences of her decisions, especially in relation to the ways they may affect other people. She describes aspects of this decision making process.

Well, I think one of the things is that when you have to make decisions...you base your decisions on what will make a difference fifty years from now....You know, when you have to make choices. And to make choices in terms of how they affect other people. (CO)

This mode of decision making not only sustains personal integrity but also promotes the collective good.

*Warrior.* The thinking and actions of participants in this study seem to rely on core values that serve to shape assessments of, for instance, what to do about the needless suffering of others. For one participant, her conception of morality as the principle of right relation seems to be a motive force that is supported by core values such as justice, compassion, and empathy, that give rise to the desire to alleviate the suffering of others. She assumes that with the understanding that others are independently conscious beings
like herself comes an automatic desire to do something about being overpowered by the suffering of others and the desire to do something to alleviate that suffering. This is how her conception of morality orients her thought and actions. If she did not do something about these things she would be overpowered and, therefore, unable to sustain her contribution.

Her comments describe alignment of her thinking and actions, and incorporate sensitivity to the contexts that demand enactment of the principle as supported by her values.

*Other Examples.* Three participants perceived that their contributions were not ego-based. This approach to the expression of their talents tended to sustain their contributions in the service of, among others, the core value integrity.

The less you think of yourself the better. I mean it. And I don’t mean that in a self-denying, puritanical way. I mean it in – the less you are self-regarding the less you are self-conscious...kind of the better. (W)

OK. Easy. The work is absolutely not ego-based. The work is a gift that falls into our lap that I feel a responsibility to take care of but never do I feel like I own my work. My work belongs to everybody and that makes it really easy because it keeps – it keeps it separate. (EE)

I mean, I think, as I said, if it were up to just me and my narcissistic, autonomous ego and nothing else than it, I would have probably crashed and burned. I would
have probably gotten addicted or gotten weirder and weirder in my relationships with other people. I don’t even want to think about it. (CI)

The generativity that underpins their contributions, the expression of their talents, is founded on core values such as love, generosity, gratitude, responsibility, and the value of cooperation.

For instance, the participant whose thinking is represented in the first of these examples, treats her paintings as a gift that is not based on merit and by doing so she maintains personal integrity. The core value integrity supports her thinking and actions as do other values such as gratitude, humility, generosity, and responsibility. Her thinking and actions are underpinned by these values which sustain her contribution to her field.

She believes that her work is a gift that requires her to share it and that she not seek to own or possess it. She has a sense of responsibility to care for the gift. She is morally accountable for care of the gift which she believes belongs to everybody. Her approach to her activities as an artist as one who has been given a particular gift includes sharing it.

I think this whole business of ownership is very dangerous. You know, to own a person, to own a piece of this world, to own a painting. To own anything that is life force I think is very... It must come out of fear and want. (EE)

So it really is a case of, “All right, this gift has fallen into my lap.” I think that the point of being grateful and acting on that...is really important to keep it sustainable. (EE)
She also sustains her contribution to her field in service of the value trust rather than fear. She is generous with her income in relation to global problems and she also volunteers in schools. She is generous to the extent that there is personal cost involved. Her thinking and actions are oriented by a conception of morality that is underpinned by values.

*Disciple.* Punishment looms large in the Disciple’s accounts of sustaining personal integrity. Pain and loss of control torment him and ecstatic experience is rewarding. His conception of morality as right relation in accordance with the laws of God sustains his contribution to his field. The consequences of the alternative, which includes acting in an unloving or judgmental way towards others, includes the punishment of self-created pain. Values conflict arises in his description when he perceives that his values and actions are out of alignment. He expresses the nature of right relation as a disposition towards others that rests on the core value love. His relationships with others must be loving and so lacking in shortness or meanness, lacking in a perspective or treatment that indicates that others are not similarly important as himself, and characterized by charity, generosity, empathy, and patience. He believes that to the extent that we act otherwise “we are creating our own torment.”

The core value love and related values charity, generosity, empathy, patience, justice, humility, kindness, and sobriety underpin his thinking and actions. He seems to be dutiful with respect to these core values because the alternative is painful. His aspiration towards right relation as supported by these values sustains the expression of his talents, that is his contribution as a musician. For instance, the core value integrity or
balance demands, among other qualities sobriety and love in one's thinking and actions towards others or he will experience pain.

So, being out there and having gone through times when I have lost control of passages on the stage, when the music will run faster and faster and faster and faster, and knowing the horror of that, that keeps one very sober. (D)

City Monk/ Country Monk. This participant describes his thinking and actions as having been instrumental in sustaining personal integrity. He values utility, helpfulness, cooperation, and discernment – and so reflectiveness, awareness, vision, and cultivation or wisdom – development, effectiveness, care, legitimacy, worthiness, and responsibility. He, therefore, teaches others about these qualities that he believes to be integral to human cultivation. This activity he deems to be of value. It is thinking and activity in alignment with a worth purpose. He values wisdom, or cultivation and tries to teach other people about what is required to attain it. Since he aspires to wisdom or cultivation, he engages in activities that he believes are helpful and useful to others in their development towards wisdom. He teaches what he values as wisdom. He emphasizes the goals of expanding or improving one's personal vision and striving for personal development as worthy. He believes that the growth of personal vision and that personal development is very important because we are social beings within a particular culture at a particular time in history. He also believes that it is important to distinguish what we experience from some objective reality (truth) and to recognize that we all are constructing our experience all the time.

Wisdom or cultivation requires awareness. Reflectiveness and developing our awareness of our own thinking and feelings are important for the individual and for the
collective welfare. Reflectiveness and developing our awareness of our own thinking and feelings leads to discernment as described in the ability to distinguish what we experience from some objective reality.

You know, it's really important to be reflective. And it's really important to keep asking in that reflection: So, what's really essential to me, what do I care deeply about? (CM)

He identifies a connection between personal integrity and the common good. The development of the individual aids the collective. Deep reflection on one’s core values, the values that matter most to us, is very important because it leads to discernment in relation to enacting these values. This, in turn has consequences for self and for the collective. Aligning our thoughts and actions with our most prized values sustains personal integrity and promotes the common good.

For instance, he believes that the aspiration to maturity, cultivation, or wisdom has implications for conceptions of authority and so for the activities of people who rise to positions of authority. When wisdom is lacking in those who have risen to positions of power, we all suffer. He believes that the concept of authority is inseparable from our cultivation as human beings. One's cultivation or maturity as a human being is an essential preoccupation and area for fostering for leaders and for people in general. This preoccupation sustains his contribution to his field.

Judge. For the experimental scientist, personal integrity is sustained by upholding “the absolute standard for any experimental scientist [which] is integrity.” This participant adheres to this standard in his professional life. His thinking and his consequent actions facilitate the continued expression of his talents.
Conceptions of meaningfulness, effectiveness, truthfulness, and integrity in relation to his contributions help him to sustain them, in part, because he focuses on his purpose and directs his energy fully to that purpose (i.e., the value of effectiveness demands purposeful activity and not wasteful activity).

He identifies an inherent conflict in relation to where to direct his energies given his awareness of the time and effort required to continue to practice effective science and his awareness of problems within social institutions. He resolves this conflict in service of the value effectiveness which seems to be related to the core value integrity. As he engages in choice regarding the practicality of the resolution of particular problems within society, he maintains personal integrity, though he chooses apparent compromise for the sake of personal effectiveness. His thinking and actions sustain his contribution to his field as he seeks to maintain movement towards his purpose.

So, in the end analysis, one compromises to - to be effective. You can fight some battles but there’s not much point in fighting battles you’re going to lose. I’m not sure that so much reflects on integrity as on - as on, just limitation. (J)

*Christian Intellectual.* For the Christian Intellectual, personal integrity is facilitated by his core value-love. Balance or integration of the facets of his life is dependent on resolving the tension between desire to express love in his intimate relationships and effective use of time. Absence of involvement in his loving relationships has negative consequences to his mind. He, therefore, prioritizes the expression of loving relationships within his family over the competing desire for fulfillment of his intellectual passions.
I mean, I could have easily committed suicide. In other words, I would have been torn apart by the ideas and by the depression of not being able to fulfill them - if it were just up to me. I mean if it were up to my own mind and my own motivations. I really feel I could have crashed and burned and - I don’t know about suicide - but I would have crashed and burned some years ago. I had a lot of energy and a lot of ambition. You know? I was really wound up as a secular thinker and I pushed very hard on that and I don’t think I would have crashed and burned until middle age. (CI)

Because the inability to have completed the ideas doesn’t become pressing until your time span suddenly seems more finite. You know? When you’re twenty-five, you’ve got a future in front of you and so even though things are going more slowly than you would like, in terms of the development of ideas and so forth, you still think you can, you know, you can pull it all out of the fire with a terrific two-minute drill, in the football sense of the term - in the last two minutes, but, as you get older, you begin to realize, "Uh-uh," and that there are things that are going to be lost that you thought - I mean, there won’t be time for them. And, you know, I would have increasingly found it very frustrating and painful. And also... you see family takes a lot of time - an enormous amount of time - one’s wife and family, but I’m convinced that I would have wasted the time if it hadn’t been for them. (CI)

Stoic. The remaining participant is sustained in his contribution to his field of philosophy by his conception of morality as supported by his core values. He especially
values truth. He aspires to truth and excellence which are inseparable from his conception of morality as right relation. In his life, integrity or balance is maintained by thinking and actions that focus on self-knowledge and perspective, that is knowledge of what actually is going on. His thoughts and actions sustain balance which in turn sustain his contribution. He believes that moral development requires “thinking things through” as does stability in one’s life.

I believe that I have thought my way to where I am in the context of some significant challenges. (S)

By forcing himself to think about the truth of what is happening at a given point in his life, he becomes more aware, that is, he gains knowledge of what is really going on, which helps him to maintain perspective and sustain his contribution. He believes that thinking about the truth brings one’s affect back into alignment with his core values.

But the idea is to force yourself to think about the truth, and that really does have consequences for your affect, or your motivation. And I guess I’ve been a Stoic all along because as I said, I think my moral development is largely a product of thinking things through; and so is the stability. (S)

Thinking about the truth sustains his motivation and the resultant self-knowledge assists the process. This method of coping with difficulties, whether physiological, such as anxiety and weariness or, for instance, managing disappointment when one’s efforts fall short of the ideal of excellence, may also extend to getting help from other people. These activities are supported by his value of excellence and sustain his contribution. The way to cope is to think about the truth, which is to get the disappointment in perspective, that
is, to take a reasonable approach to the disappointment. His value of reason also sustains his contribution.

And these things—I mean, the matter of balance there is in getting that in perspective, not in such a sort of cosmic perspective that you no longer care about it, but at least so that it doesn’t dominate your thought. But, actually that’s all I mean, if I think about it, as balance, as a perspective, as self-knowledge and as knowledge of what actually is going on. (S)

The activity of teaching talented undergraduates in seminars supports his value of reason, truth, integrity, and excellence. These values guide his thinking and actions and sustain his personal and professional activities.

Collective Good

Participants in this study believe that their thinking and actions not only sustain their personal integrity but also promote the collective good. The two seem to be related and to link the personal and public spheres.

And I think those two do go together somehow. I mean, we often don’t see how they fit but they do somehow belong together in the life journey, the larger and the smaller, the more personal and the more public, and things that seem to be sort of unrelated really aren’t. (A)

The ideal of right relation seemed to be the point of conflict between participants’ experiences in the personal sphere as against their experiences of the affront to their core values that seemed to characterize our culture within the public sphere. The conflict between participants’ core values as enacted in the private sphere and the perceived
failure of their enactment in the public sphere lead them to seek particular kinds of
resolutions to the experience of conflict.

One participant, for example, seeks solace and this orients her towards spending
time with horses and other animals as a means of negotiating the affront to her core value
justice in the public arena. She said that the animals give her hope and play and
refreshment and down time from the struggle to fight perceived social injustice. They
help alleviate her depression and prevent her from becoming too burnt out. In this way
she is able to sustain her contributions as a theologian and teacher and leader in
movements for social justice.

All participants described directing their energies into professional activities that
sustained both personal integrity and promoted the collective good.

Well, as a writer, of course, I’m always trying to put ideas out there.

And that’s all you can do. I wouldn’t fool myself to say that anybody listens to me
because I don’t think people listen to poets. But I really think that we have an
obligation to talk about the issues that are important. And to write about them. I
mean, I do. And hopefully, you know, it helps somebody. I don’t know. Well, you
can’t, you know, you can’t write hoping that you’re influencing people. Because
then it becomes an ideology and that’s something different. You can only write to
present another way of looking at it. (PS)

The Poet-Servant’s thinking and actions rest on the core values responsibility, integrity,
hope, respect. These values sustain her contribution to her field, in part, because they
promote the collective good. Knowing the extent of her obligation as a writer aids her
effectiveness. She values always trying to put ideas out there, even though she believes
that nobody listens to poets. She is also sustained in her productivity by the hope that by putting her ideas out there she may be helping somebody. She mentioned that a perceived constraint to sustained productivity is attempting to write in the hope that you are influencing somebody. In relation to the core value respect she commented:

I think human beings need to respect each other a whole lot more. And, you know, it's way too late in the day for wars. I mean, it's disgraceful that the United States is in Iraq, but more than disgraceful, it's old-fashioned and out-of-date. (PS)

This participant believes that relationships between human beings ought to be characterized by respect and maturity. Her value of respect and cultivation or maturity prompts her to comment about the lack of respect and cultivation evident in current foreign policy. War represents a prior condition or level of development that she perceives to be out of keeping with the potential of human beings. Morality arises in the presence of conflict (B. Harrison, personal communication, December 13, 2005). Her contribution is sustained by the value of peace in relation to the institutional constraint of war. She is concerned by the affront to her values that is evident in the public sphere, which she believes to be the sphere of morality.

The Warrior discussed the value of personal effectiveness and justice in relation to perceived injustice in the public sphere. Without belief in being effective in the face of economic injustice she believes that she would be overwhelmed. Her core values sustain her contribution to her field as she speaks and writes about economic injustice. She believes that the ways that she contributes to the collective good through her speaking and writing are insufficient in relation to the grave problems we confront as a collective.
She expressed her thinking in relation to institutional constraints in the public sphere and their intrapersonal effects.

Well, not enough. Nowhere near enough. I mean it's just so frustrating. You know. Now I go up and down all the time....I was the last couple of days thinking about this hawkish congressman who spoke out against the war and also being happy that congress rejected this evil Bush budget. I – You think, “Oh. Oh. Maybe now something’s changing.” And then other times I’m just – feel like, you know, just completely that we’re losing ground and we’re – we’re – And I become totally pessimistic. When I say “totally,” I worry about the future of the species. I mean I – I think of extinction. (W)

The Warrior’s conception of morality encompasses moral and political goals towards the ideal of right relation and notions of evil. She reflects on the consequences of political decisions. She believes that we are so intimately connected that the consequences of “evil” decisions by political leaders in our culture will bring us as a collective to the point of extinction. For this participant, pessimism about our fate as a collective is constantly with her.

Well, it's always there. I mean it's always there in the background. That this is you know not just you know in some very cosmic sense not just a fight for you know more egalitarian social order but – but for the survival of our species. (W)

She believes that the fight for an egalitarian social order is a worthy goal that sustains her contributions and also that her contributions are insufficient given the state of our world.

The Community Organizer expressed the value of awareness and the
responsibility that this awareness brings. Her thinking and actions are supported by this value and she promotes the collective good in a very strong and obvious way.

I mean we try to base what we do, our actions, on how they are going to affect others, and not only in the short-term but in the long run. (CO)

The Eco-Evangelist’s thinking and actions seem to be clearly guided by her values as she actively seeks to promote the collective good. Children identify with and are transformed by her paintings and by her explanations of them. The paintings open them up to the hidden parts of themselves which she believes are of the nature of good. Her contributions are aimed at promoting healing in people, especially children, by sharing her gifts. She is vitally concerned for the good of children and encourages them to use art as a way of expressing themselves. She experiences reward for her contributions as children begin to express for example, their deepest sadness and fears, and their experiences of abuse. Her values prompt her thinking and actions as she touches children through her paintings and by talking about her paintings and theirs. Sharing is essential to her experience of morality. She shares her gift as an artist and poet and she describes her core values such as generosity, humility, and gratitude to be instrumental in keeping her productivity sustainable. She believes that by sharing her gifts she helps overcome intrapersonal and interpersonal and institutional constraints within herself and within others.

And I was talking to the children about how their imaginations, again, are the home of original thought and how, no matter how sad our lives can be or how scary the world can be, if we imagine a better world then it’s the most useful thing that we can do because it’s the first step in a better world happening. (EE)
For some participants, wisdom implies cultivation or maturity, the highly developed human being. Participants have indicated that, unfortunately, for the collective well-being, some people rise to positions of authority that exceed their wisdom. (CM) The desire to serve is considered by these participants to be a component of wisdom and a necessary component of authority. One participant commented that we live in especially dangerous times because people seek and attain power of position but their motivation and activities are not grounded in the value of service.

The Judge qualified his remarks about his contributions to the collective good by expressing the belief that while there are some sorts of ethical judgments that should rightly be applied to science, in general, ethical judgment should not be applied to a scientific discovery itself but to the application of the science.

It's always very hard to know how a scientific discovery affects the collective good. The reason for that is that you have no idea where a scientific discovery goes. And, as a consequence of that, you can't really make ethical judgments about the discovery itself. If I can illustrate that for you? Lord Rutherford, the famous nuclear physicist believed that no practical use would ever be made of the knowledge that you could split the atom. And, of course, he was totally wrong. And, of course, again, Alfred Nobel believed that dynamite, because it was such a terrible explosive, would end war because no one would use it. And so, I think, at different levels, it's not really the science itself but it's the application of the science that requires the ethical judgment that should be applied. (J)
Findings Related to Research Question 2c

How do eminent people meet and negotiate intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints as they move through the talent development process?

The experience of the phenomenon of morality for the eminent people in this study is dependent on the context in which their thinking and actions occur. With that context in mind, I asked them to describe the greatest challenge they had faced in their lives and the ways they had overcome it. Participants described encountering and managing particular constraints that I have identified by type as intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints to talent development (see Table 6).
### Table 6

**Examples of Constraints Experienced by Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Constraint</th>
<th>Female (N=5)</th>
<th>Male (N=5)</th>
<th>Total (N=10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intrapersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physiological, spiritual, intellectual, emotional</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interpersonal</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining committed, loving relationships</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal of trust by business partners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing the creative and business aspects of work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consequences of maintaining personal integrity</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of awareness of the impact of their activities</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness in relationships including awareness of injustice</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy and its consequences</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining effectiveness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of right relation of leaders in government and others in authority to their constituents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Continuation of Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>5</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalized injustice including discrimination on the basis of class, race, gender, age, and sexual identity; and the mismanagement of natural resources</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsupportive educational institutions</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participants in this study identified morality itself as a structure of constraints that rested on what they ought to do or be and how they ought to effectively live those conceptions as social beings, given the circumstances or context of their lives. The challenges they confront are numerous and include intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional challenges. The nature of the challenges they identified to be constant and, therefore, continually necessitating thinking and actions that enable them to be effective in relation to these challenges.

**Intrapersonal Constraints**

Intrapersonal challenges included, for example, single motherhood, the death of family and friends, personal disability or illness such as breast cancer, and physiological, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional struggles. Emotional struggle related to spiritual concerns, interpersonal relationships, professional activities, environmental degradation, and perceived institutional injustices such as discrimination on the basis of race, gender, economic status, and sexual identity. Some of the challenging emotions experienced by
participants included grief, anger, indignation, frustration, disillusionment, despair, and pessimism.

Essentially I was confronted with morality as having a central significance and with the problem of how to cope with a central morality. And some of that is still involved in my life in a very tense intellectual-emotional battle. Today I'm quite interested in the virtues and in character formation. I'm concerned with the good moral life as it relates to the expression of love in people's lives, that is: What does love mean in family life, and with children, and so on? But, I guess the one very intense living issue right now for me is the whole question of love and violence. And under what conditions is violence capable of a Christian rationale? And so that's the central issue now, and - I mean, it's not like I have an immediate problem in my life, but it's a major issue because it has an enormous amount to do with a lot of loyalties that people, me included, have, such as loyalties to nations. (CI)

Well, I think the biggest challenge, I'm in it right now.....and I have been for some time. And it's at a personal level, but it's also a communal level and that has to do with – with friends and family becoming ill and dying and – or becoming simply ill and not dying. I mean, either way it's so hard. And what I have discovered now already three or four times with the loss of colleagues and friends of mine who were more or less my own generation is that, particularly – I'm talking now about single women who don't really have immediate family or partners even and they have – I have been close to them and have wound up being
the person who most obviously would need to kind of organize with them and all of our other friends ways in which taking care of them becomes a priority: providing communities of care. (A)

And, you know, Biology is very primitive if you compare it, say, with nuclear physics, which becomes almost philosophical. And, I guess, dissatisfaction that one really is so limited in what one can handle because there are enormous areas of knowledge and understanding out there which we barely perceive and much of the time we operate through half-formed ideas and prejudices that we get out of reading the newspaper or current values. (J)

Other significant intrapersonal challenges included confrontation with received values, confrontation with personal attributes or their perceived lack, and perceived lack of time in relation to effectively pursuing their goals. Throughout their descriptions, participants tended to emphasize that they were constantly confronted with significant challenges which necessitated gaining perspective and maintaining balance, which in turn depended on striving for improved levels of awareness, and interpersonal support as they faced the responsibilities that increased awareness brought.

Interpersonal Constraints

The nature of the interpersonal challenges confronted by participants included those involved in the maintenance of committed loving relationships, including the time-consuming nature of these relationships, betrayal of trust by business partners, balancing the creative and business sides of their work, the consequences of maintaining personal integrity such as the loss of job and the loss of friends and partners, and problems related
to awareness. These problems included lack of awareness of the extent of the impact of their activities, and the problem of empathy and its consequences. Growing awareness heightened empathy which in turn brought a sense of overwhelming responsibility to effectively sustain the expression of their talents in relation to a perceived responsibility for others. Participants struggled in relation to the perceived need for enhanced mutuality in interpersonal relationships and an acute awareness of injustice such as abuse in the lives of children and abuse of authority within social institutions. Increased awareness led then to a sense of responsibility to participate in righting perceived injustice. This goal necessitated developing strategies to deal with their own and other’s reactions in the service of their goals.

And if you have two people committed to each other that way there is hope; that that honesty and that ability to – even if it’s hours later; not years later, hours later – to go back and say, “I was in a really bad place and we went through this. And yes, we did spend those hours.” But, again, my mentor said to me, he said, “What makes you think that those episodes are for the bad? They are always for the good. They are what love is about, that you’re going to go there. There’s no possibility of not going there. You’re going to be in a state of grace for minutes before, automatically, you start to fall into this wheel again where you’re going to be not who you are.” (D)

And awareness is a pain in the ass. You say it's much easier to be able to blame things on other people and maintain a state of low awareness. That's much more comfortable a situation. So, again, these are easy things to talk about but, you
know, think twice about it. Kind of one of the ways I often think about it is that there's a little part of us often who thinks that sooner or later, this is going to get easier. You know, it's like sooner or later we're going to go to the beach, and if we really do things right, then we'll get to put our feet up and life will get much easier for us. (CM)

The more you're really willing to commit to a path of development, you confront, things internally and externally that you would otherwise be able to avoid. So, actually, it's kind of paradoxical that yes, in many ways, life gets more joyful, but life gets much more difficult, you know, because there's no beach at the end. Life gets more challenging because you.... And this is why I say it's easy to say awareness is great. But it's not great.... You become more and more aware of the things that you would like to be unaware of. You become more and more aware of your own fear. You become more and more aware of sadness. You become more and more aware of suffering in the world. And that's not pleasant. And so it's easy to say these things but by and large we would just as soon cultivate unawareness. (CM)

*Institutional Constraints*

Participants significantly converged in their descriptions of the institutional constraints they continually confronted in their lives. These constraints may be broadly conceived as the pervasive and negative influence of capitalism that rests on the value of materialism. Participants continually struggled with the following perceived institutional constraints.
a) The lack of right relation of leaders in government and others in authority to their constituents. This lack of right relation was expressed as a conflict between the core values of participants and the ways that these values were enacted by leaders in the public sphere. For example, the attempt to maintain a secret life or hidden agenda in the public arena was considered by participants to be immoral.

b) Institutionalized injustice as supported by “evil” domestic and foreign policies. Perceived inequity, forced separation, and affronts to peace and compassion led participants to identify the need for social change in the direction of greater equality and peace. These activities were viewed as uncultivated. A type of institutionalized injustice was identified as provincial decision making in a global world and was construed by participants to indicate insensibility to our global interconnectedness and its consequences. Responsibility for planetary health and infringement of human rights such as clean air, fresh water, and access to health care were of grave concern to participants. Participants discussed institutionalized economic injustice in relation to the perpetuation of the current equivalent of slavery, separation by denying access to global transport, encroachment of the public domain into the private lives of individuals, the mismanagement of natural resources that had been sold to private interests, and the squandering or destruction of natural resources. A key source of conflict, especially for the women who participated in this study was institutionalized discrimination on the basis of class, race, gender, and sexual identity. The lack of supportive legislation for all groups within our culture was a particular concern.
c) Participants also identified the media to be implicated in maintenance of ill-informed ways of enacting values, for example, in sustaining prejudice and purveying information that is "hyped as important," in contrast with information about significant events in people's lives such as social justice for miners.

d) Unsupportive educational institutions including high schools and universities were also identified as constraints by a small proportion of participants in relation to the development of their talents. Examples of the ways these participants expressed their frustration with reference to educational institutions include the following.

I think if I'd been more mature I probably wouldn't have done what I – I went to a [university]...when I was seventeen years of age. You know, the Australian model, where you go to professional school straight out of high school? I think if I'd gone through an American college I would have done something quite different. Probably, I might have been an historian or something. I don't know. One is far too immature to make those decisions at that age, quite frankly.

I'm even increasingly doubtful about the university world as a place to train anyone for anything but banality. And for politically-correct mushiness. I think universities have become – I think they essentially have rejected their calling to be interested in the creation of knowledge and the discovery of truth. And they've sold themselves out to the hundred and one other interests - and today they're one of the most unknown but corrupt influences in our society. (CI)
Well, universities - the first thing to remember, if there's anything really wrong with the world today, remember that from Japan to Germany to the U.S., the world's governing class goes through one institution, and that's the modern university. So, the modern university is the filter system creating the mindset of the governing class. And that filtering system is not interested in morality. It's not interested in truth. I mean, it's not interested in the good, the beautiful, or the true. It's only interested in them to the extent that it thinks that it can show they don't exist. (CI)

Science is handled pretty well in the universities. Although, even so, a lot of the major inventions have come from outside of them. A lot of Nobel prizes have come from Bell Labs, and stuff like that. One thing that people forget is that almost all of the major ideas, particularly in psychology, all came from outside of the universities. Freud was never a university person. Jung was never one. Adler was never one. Fromm, and Sullivan, and Karen Horney, they never were. Anna Freud never even went to college. (CI)

Approaches to Overcoming Constraints

Participants expressed their responses to these challenges in similar terms, whether attempting to cope with extreme physical dependence, the intricacies of interpersonal relationships, or social injustice. Their approaches involved gaining perspective, maintaining balance, cultivating awareness, empathy, and responsibility, and effectively using their talents to achieve developmental goals.
Gaining a perspective on the difficulty depended on levels of awareness. Striving for balance was a component of the process of gaining perspective that was also dependent on awareness. Balance was sustained by, for example, “thinking things through” to determine what was actually happening in a given situation, careful management of personal resources (e.g., energy, time, talents), acknowledgment of the supreme importance of interpersonal support in meeting the associated intellectual and emotional challenges, and other strategies to maintain purposeful and effective movement towards their goals.

Maintaining perspective about the current and typically ongoing difficulty, and sustaining balance in relation to the difficulty was supported by constant reflection and deliberation as to potentially sustainable ways of negotiating challenges in an effective and responsible way.

Strategies for negotiating constraints involved striving for clear recognition of the dynamics of the challenge, incorporating or embracing the challenge, looking for associated opportunities, and fighting the challenge in cooperation with others in ways that preserved integrity. Examples of these strategies include the following.

Perceived lack of balance can be recognized as having physiological sources such as anxiety, weariness, hunger, and cyclical thoughts.

And part of that is coping with it – is self-knowledge, so that you don’t get so absorbed in other things that you can’t recognize that you’re getting too tired... and what you need is a good night’s sleep. And then – or you need something to eat, or you just need to stop certain cyclical thoughts. (S)
I don’t know that I’ve overcome any challenges. I’ve incorporated a lot of them. You know, I was a single mother and that was a challenge but I didn’t overcome it. And my mother recently died and that is a challenge and I doubt that I’m overcoming that. I think you just embrace the changes in life is important and I believe that. And you do the best you can with what life has given you. (PS)

Well, to some degree, you have to step back and I’m fortunate in that I am a writer because we always step back. It’s the nature of the profession. But you have to step back and say, “OK. What’s the challenge here?” And then you have to say, “What’s the opportunity?” (PS)

Well you have to, I think, continue working in spite of them and not let them defeat you. And figure out ways to go around and – And then not – probably not hate the people that are perpetuating this upon you because when we start hating it debilitates you. It debilitates your energy or it puts your energy in the wrong place. So you have to try to work around it and work in spite of it. And sometimes in a way that’s a blessing because you have to figure out strategies to overcome some of these obstacles that are getting in your way. And in the long run all of these obstacles make you stronger. (CO)

You’ve got to have the sense of being a warrior...You’ve got to be ready for battle. You don’t know what’s coming. You’ve got to be in good shape in many ways and have a lot of you know friends and people to help who are on your side.
That's sort of my stance, day to day. And also understanding that things that I want for the world, the things – that the issues of justice and all you know condemn me to being a warrior, in some sense, a fighter. And that they do put me in an antagonistic relationship to a lot of people. Unfortunately. You know, people who think that’s a bad direction or that would affect – hurt their interests or something. So, you can’t fool yourself about that. (W)

Summary of Findings

Participants have described a characteristic development or movement towards attainment of the ideal of excellence in right relation that occurs with the growing awareness of our fundamental connectedness as human beings. The developmental aspects of movement towards the ideal of right relation rest on conceptions of choice that involve estimates of the worthiness of the ideal and of one’s potential (i.e., one’s fitness, including one’s talents) for meaningful progress towards it. With growing awareness of the implications of our connectedness as social beings comes an increased sense of responsibility for others.

Empathy tends to result from increased awareness of this fundamental connectedness and gives rise to awareness of the consequences of responsibility to others. The problem of boundaries in relation to the limits of our responsibility to others necessitates choice. Participants indicated that they typically chose in favor of effectiveness in relation to a perception of overwhelming responsibility to others and to their own gifts.

The movement towards the ideal also seems to be inherently antagonistic. Participants described morality in relation to struggle or opposition that is perceived in
the private and public spheres in a variety of forms. The inherent struggle to approximate right relation in the face of perceived challenges or constraints requires assessment, refinement, and alignment of one’s thinking and actions in accordance with one’s deepest values and in relation to conflict. For some this development or movement includes conceptions of a type of death and rebirth, disillusionment and a sense of betrayed trust, the bracketing of contradictions when no satisfactory or effective solution to the problem of an affront to one’s values (whether in the personal or public spheres) seems apparent, an attitude of continual openness to learning, a leap of faith, or a growing sense of self-knowledge.

Morality is also defined in relation to purposeful activity in the face of perceived constraints. The thinking and actions of participants in this study were perceived as effective or meaningful in relation to their conceptions of purpose. A sense of purpose is necessary to goal formation and adjustment and to perceptions of goal attainment.

The participants also indicated that notions of choice as free or constrained underlie decisions in relation to goals and movement towards one’s ideal. Aspiration towards worthy goals seems to rest on notions of free will and choice. There is an automaticity implied in relation to choices as to the enactment of core values. Perceptions of choice are constrained by core values and levels of awareness. Levels of awareness are increased by reflection, and deliberation of alternatives and their consequences in the movement towards discernment. Awareness aids growth towards discernment that is conceived as necessary to maturity or cultivation. Conflict necessitates prioritizing one’s values in the service of core values and seems to interrupt the automaticity of thought and action in relation to one’s goals.
Assessments of personal effectiveness also rest on perceptions of appropriate situations and appropriate ways in which core values ought to be enacted. "Morality" for the participants in this study was perceived to be enacted within a context that incorporated spiritual and corporeal concerns in the personal and public spheres and created a metaphorical positioning of self (e.g., as warrior or disciple) in relation to alignment between core values and their enactment. Perceived misalignment between core values and perceptions of their enactment within the self, within intimate relationships, and between people in the public sphere created continual conflict within participants that was experienced as emotional pain. Alignment between core values and their enactment was identified by participants to be necessary to wisdom or cultivation (i.e., fertility, the perfection of human rational agency, human psychological health, maturity). Misalignment was perceived to indicate waste (e.g., the experience of waste of talent in relation to its effective expression, the experience of waste in relation to natural resources, the experience of waste in the form suffering due to institutionalized injustice).

Conflict, or an affront to core values, impels action to rectify the misalignment between values and actions, for example by taking responsibility for and accepting the consequences of one's actions instead of apportioning blame to others, even if the consequences appear to be painful.

Other instances of a clash between values and their enactment include deviation from the path of developing loving, responsible or just relationships, whether perceived as personal or vicarious deviation. The consequences of this deviation include inner pain, indignation, frustration, and despair.
The sustained contributions of the eminent people in this study rest on conceptions of excellence in right relation to which the participants seem to aspire. Their conceptions of morality incorporate standards of right relation that demand particular qualities of thought and action. Values, particularly core values, underlie their thoughts and actions that are motivated by standards and expressed as qualities when relating to people. Participants expressed characteristic ways of negotiating intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints that involved striving for perspective, balance, and effectiveness in relation to their perceived capacities. A consistent finding across participants was continuous critical inquiry in relation to every facet of their conceptions of morality, including the enactment of their values in the face of perceived constraints in the personal and public spheres.
CHAPTER V
Conclusion and Directions for Further Research

In this study I began an exploration of the moral basis for talent development that includes examination of the values of eminent people to gain a deeper understanding of their personal experience of the phenomenon of morality in relation to their cultural context. Participants described their conceptions of morality and the ways in which they enact these conceptions given intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints. As they did so, the participants in this study told us something about their perceptions of what is going on in their culture (Patton, 2002).

I began this study because my particular interest in the field of gifted education is the social and emotional needs of gifted people. I am interested in strategies for managing extreme emotional sensitivity within highly gifted people, which is not construed by experts in the field (See for example Piechowski, 1991, 1997) to be an indicator of abnormal development, but rather, an indicator of normal development for highly gifted people.

One of the reasons for asking eminent people to participate in this study is that studies of extreme groups have the advantage of removing ambiguity about particular constructs, in this case, the construct “talent development.” The focus for study was conceptions of morality held by individuals who, in terms of the assumptions of the field of gifted education, are undeniably talented as eminent individuals.
My purpose was to explore what the conceptions of morality of eminent people were and to find out how they managed their social and emotional lives in relation to their conceptions of morality as they expressed their talents. Another advantage in choosing eminent people to participate in a study of the phenomenon of morality is that they are eminent in virtue of social recognition, that is not only are they human beings who share the experience of the human condition but they are also prominently situated within the public sphere. In this regard, I referred to the work of Turiel (2002) who discusses conflict between personal values and public values. I also wanted to know what types of constraints to talent development the eminent participants had experienced and how they went about overcoming them given the cultural embeddedness of the phenomenon of morality (Turiel, 2002).

I found that the advantage of having a theologian and a moral philosopher in the sample, that is, people who are obviously not naïve moral philosophers, was that they were able to articulate their experience from within a context of decades of research. Their expressions of their experience of the phenomenon of morality matched those described by the other eight participants in many ways. One of the findings of the study is a strong convergence as to conceptions of morality among the participants, even though their fields varied widely.

The essence of the eminent participants’ conceptions of morality was an ideal of right relation that directed their thinking and actions and sustained the expression of their talents. The findings of this study indicate the developmental nature of morality. If we assume a similar passage of development towards the ideal of right relation in the lives of
gifted students, there will be many opportunities for educators in the field to have an impact on their development.

The critical and creative thinking brought to bear on real-world problems that gifted educators advocate as best practice for curriculum for gifted students needs to be implemented at all levels of research, policy, and practice within the field. Fundamental to this depth of inquiry is a rigorous examination of the assumptions that underlie and hence govern current research, policy, and practice within the field.

*Heightened Faculty for Critical Inquiry*

One of the most significant findings of this study is that all participants demonstrate a heightened faculty for critical inquiry that seems integral to their conceptions of morality. They critique their own experience and also the experience of others. They subject their experience as fundamentally social beings to inquiry. Whether they were discussing conceptions of morality, moral development, their greatest achievements and ultimate goals, ways of maintaining integrity and contributing to the common good, or the greatest challenges they have faced in their lives, participants continually emphasized reflection on their values and the ways they ought to be enacted. They seemed to question received values and the relevance of conventional ways of enacting those values in our culture for our time. Cultural and historical relevance certainly came into play in participants’ descriptions of the enactment of their values and seemed to be the leading constraint for these individuals in terms of the expression of their talents in their lives. Participants tended to describe constraints as experienced in their immediate lives, that is in terms of direct personal experience, and the vicarious
experience of constraints to the enactment of values in the public sphere, which caused them conflict.

One of the foci in gifted education has been the teaching of critical and creative thinking and problem solving strategies to gifted students. The participants in this study appear to have highly developed critical, creative, and reflective thinking skills and we do not really know whether this is unusual for eminent people or not. A valuable direction for future research, therefore, is investigation of the extent to which the skills of critical and creative inquiry are in evidence in other samples of eminent people and what types of experiences have been favorable in their lives in relation to aiding the development of these faculties.

The field of gifted education is necessarily situated in a cultural context. The ways of enacting traditional or received values in the public sphere in relation to, for example, institutionalized injustice, and the consequences of global interdependence appear to be of considerable concern for the participants in this study. The teaching of critical and creative thinking and problem solving to gifted students, therefore, needs to be highly contextualized.

Participants' faculty for critical inquiry was highly directed or focused and led to increased levels of awareness. Learning within any discipline is a set of related creative activities that is driven by ordinary and crisis-provoking anomalies (Kuhn, 1970, p. 186). The educational progress of gifted individuals is typically marked by “critical moments” (Bamberger, 1986) which may likewise be generated from within the tradition of which he or she is a member, or generated from without. Such encounters with the anomalous are often deliberately sought by gifted people through reflection on questions such that
crisis is engendered. Louth (1983) discusses Collingwood’s ideas on the importance of formulating questions.

You only begin to find out anything of real significance if you are digging for something, if you have formulated sufficiently precise and appropriate questions to which you are trying to find answers. And the difficult part of this process is asking the questions: finding the answers is relatively easy. The truth is not simply found by looking for it, but by asking questions and trying to find answers. (p. 38)

Langer (1969) further emphasizes the importance of directed inquiry.

A mind that is oriented, no matter by what conscious or unconscious symbols, in material and social realities, can function freely and confidently even under great pressure of circumstance and in the face of hard problems. Its life is a smooth and skillful shuttling to and fro between sign-functions and symbolic functions, a steady interweaving of sensory interpretations, linguistic responses, inferences, memories, imaginative prevision, factual knowledge, and tacit appreciations. (p. 289)

In order to teach this faculty for thought and so to increase levels of awareness, it is necessary to interrupt programmed thinking, at the core of which is cultural assumptions. Students will not question their own thinking unless the opportunity arises. For participants in this study, conflict tended to arise in the form of an affront to their values, typically in relation to the ways in which these values ought to be enacted in the personal and public spheres. Participants’ awareness of this conflict may be called a
“glitch” in their thinking. Classroom conditions may be consciously set up so as to foster this type of glitch in students’ thinking.

Borrowed, in its recent application, from art education, the “glitch” (Edwards, 1992) is a technique that is used to deliberately interrupt a pre-programmed mode of thinking or response. It causes recognition problems: the familiar becomes upset in such a way that a reorientation becomes necessary. The glitch has the effect of an unmasking, which permits what is perceived to be brought to one’s awareness.

Response to anomaly is the heart of creativity. Gruber (1981) noted that creativity requires the achievement of a particular state of mind that is conducive to the “Aha!” experience. The conditions necessary for this experience can be consciously fostered. All that is required is the introduction of the “glitch,” the anomalous, to free insight. It catapults the individual far beyond former expectations of the self through the effect of astonishment, of discovery, of achievement, and it is the source of the joy in learning.

For instance, participants in this study were continually confronted by difficulties or constraints which they reframed as an integral part of the process of moral development. Some participants sought the opportunities inherent in apparent difficulties as part of this reframing process. Within the classroom, gifted students may be presented with the idea that it is characteristic of the human condition to be continually confronted with perceived difficulties. This practice provides gifted students with the opportunity for reframing their own difficulties. A simple example of this classroom procedure may suffice. Providing students with an opportunity to upset the common attitude towards difficulties, a “glitch,” may be achieved, for example, by presenting a text such as the following and asking students the accompanying question.
And if only we arrange our life in accordance with the principle which tells us that we must always trust in the difficult, then what now appears to us as the most alien will become our most intimate and trusted experience. How could we forget those ancient myths that stand at the beginning of all races, the myths about dragons that at the last moment are transformed into princesses? Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love (Rilke, 1986, p. 92)

What is the author's central assumption regarding difficult or fearful experiences?

This teaching example is (a) cognitively demanding with respect to the chosen content, (b) arguably provocative in terms of the ideas it contains, (c) a fine example of lucid, persuasive writing, (d) potentially of personal relevance to gifted students, (e) a means for allowing new learning and for assessing existing learning, (f) conducive of interdisciplinary applications, and (g) grounded in the structure of the discipline to which it belongs.

Other teaching examples of the "glitch," for instance, the notion that the human condition is rightly fraught with difficulty may be incorporated within curriculum that attends to the cognitive, emotional, and moral capabilities of gifted students. Gifted students may be given many opportunities to examine their assumptions about life against the possibility of the consequent construction of more adaptive views of reality in relation to their own characteristics, abilities, and difficulties.
Participants in this study demonstrated heightened empathy for others. The capacity for identification with others is dependent on gaining awareness of and assuming responsibility for one’s innermost preoccupations regarding human nature, for self-knowledge, and ultimately self-acceptance, is the basis for genuine empathy with others (Scott & Harker, 1998). Curriculum and programming for gifted students must provide experiences that allow them to bring critical and creative thinking to bear on the consequences of their capacity for empathy with others within the framework of cross-cultural and interdisciplinary inquiry. This type of educational experience must be designed to raise levels of awareness. De Mello (1990) argued that “most people don’t live aware lives. They live mechanical lives, mechanical thoughts—generally somebody else’s—mechanical emotions, mechanical actions, mechanical reactions” (p. 39). The primary source of restiveness within people which prevents them from understanding “the loveliness and the beauty of this thing that we call human existence” (p. 5) is a refusal to wake up, to become aware.

The findings of this study also indicate a need for curriculum for gifted students that enables them to experience the natural and logical consequences of their thinking and actions, an increasing level of tolerance for perceived difference in others, the fundamentals of collaborative leadership, and alternative ways of thinking about perceived challenge and failure. This type of curriculum can only be effective if both teachers and students engage in educational experiences that allow them to critique their own assumptions.

It is only experience, which teaches us the nature and bounds of cause and effect, and enables us to infer the existence of one object from that of another. Such is
the foundation of moral reasoning, which forms the greater part of human
knowledge, and is the source of all human action and behavior. (Hume, as cited in
Nyquist, 2002, p. 5)

Core Values

Another important finding in this study is that the core values of the eminent
participants, the values that seemed to drive the expression of their talents were similar
among participants. These values included responsibility, integrity, empathy,
compassion, love, cooperation, and the value of discernment and these values seemed to
rest on high levels of awareness. Awareness or sensibility, in turn, seemed to require
constant reflection, and critical and creative thinking. There appeared to be no difference
between participants' values and the values they identified as received from parents,
grandparents, and church, for example, whether or not participants were avowedly
religious, or avowedly atheist.

An essential ethical similarity has been found among people from all of the major
religions of the world, an aspiration to excellence in right relation with other people. The
value of right relation does not differ among these different groups. Difference in values
was not a point of contention between the people in this study and their experience in
relation to institutional constraints. The point of contention for participants, that is, what
causd them outrage, for instance, if they had vicarious experience of an affront to justice
in the public sphere, was not a difference between their values and those of the people
who were perceived to have enacted injustice. The enactment of values in our culture in
our time is dependent on a certain versatility (S) in thinking because we face
unprecedented problems as the participants in this study have indicated.
apparent versatility and adaptability seems to be the result of their critical assessment of their values and of the ways that these ought to apply given our culture and our time. Further research is needed to understand the direct personal experience of the enactment of values in the lives of eminent people and their vicarious experience of the enactment of values in the public sphere.

Another related and important direction for future research is a focus once more on the constraints to the expression of talent among eminent people, the constraints they experience now at the potential height of their contribution to our culture, to more deeply probe the perceived source of these constraints. Participants imply that anachronistic application of received values by people in power, that is an application or enactment that is marked by exclusivity rather than inclusivity (S) may point to a failure of thought. Conceptions of excellence among people in this sample in relation to one's disposition towards others include heightened critical and creative or imaginative faculties as necessary to the solution to problems generated by our fundamental connectedness to one another. As the participants have indicated, awareness of our essential responsibility towards one another is vital to effective enactment of values.

Most of the people in this sample inherited their values from Jewish and Christian sources. On the one hand, therefore, it is not unusual that I would not find differences among them in relation to their core values, at least as they were revealed during these particular interviews. However, the professed atheist in the group also seemed to share the same values as the other participants. She seemed to be scrupulous in her thinking about the ways in which her values ought to be enacted, and about the potential consequences of her thinking and actions. Participants were highly consistent in relation
to their thinking about their values and their enactment of those values. They also discussed the personal consequences of misalignment between their values and their actions. Future research about the consequences of this misalignment in the lives of other eminent people would be instructive.

One of the most rewarding aspects of this study was engagement in textual analysis to reveal the core values of the participants. I examined values as a principle for thinking and action, a standard for attainment, and a quality of the expression of one’s thought and action. For instance, when discussing the maintenance of personal integrity, participants mentioned particular values. The Community Organizer, for example, discussed her activities in relation to her value of justice, responsibility, and cooperation. The Abolitionist, a theologian, talked about her social activism in relation to her value of justice. The Warrior, an atheist, discussed her personal and public activities in relation to grave social injustice, and therefore, in terms of her value of justice and her consequent desire to improve conditions for unjustly treated groups. She was continually preoccupied with ways to effectively think and act in relation to perceived injustice.

Educators within the field of gifted education must assist gifted students in gaining awareness of their core values and of thoughtful and responsible ways of enacting those values as social beings. Educators must enable gifted students to proceed through their education as social inquirers who perhaps share fundamental values with a wide range of people with whom they may cooperatively seek solutions to the types of problems that preoccupy the participants in this study. An important direction for future research in the field of gifted education, therefore, is curriculum and program development and evaluation to achieve these aims.
Developmental Nature of Morality

Another important contribution that this study makes is located in the finding that the essential focus of participants in this study in relation to their aspirations towards their goals was the developmental nature of their progress towards their ideal. The development of their thought and actions in relation to the achievement of excellence in right relation, the core of their morality, is dynamic in nature (A). One’s personal effectiveness, it seems, is dependent on making choices in relation to continual struggle.

One of the two Australian participants identified the tendency among young people in his culture to give up too easily in the face of apparent failure. The recognition that they will continually confront struggle and challenge and apparent defeat is important knowledge for gifted young people to experience. The eminent people in this study refer to “constant blows,” and constant struggle. They discussed strategies for handling the emotional reactions generated by that constant struggle such as frustration, depression, despair, suicidal thoughts, and violent thoughts. It is very important to communicate strategies such as those mentioned by participants to young people who have the heightened sensibility that some gifted students exhibit. The apparent level of sensitivity of the group of participants was surprising, only in its apparent consistency across the group, and the findings of this study, therefore, may be useful to gifted people who may not yet have developed effective strategies for handling, for instance, their heightened social, emotional, and intellectual needs.
Need for Supportive Educational Institutions

Two participants made reference to the need for supportive educational structures in relation to their specific intellectual needs. The focus of this study precluded further exploration of this problem. These participants mentioned particular difficulties that they had encountered within high school and university as students, and later when working within universities. The lack of intellectual challenge and grounding available in high school led to academic underachievement at school and later at university. Lack of courses in areas of intellectual interest was one obstacle to rigorous intellectual grounding and lack of mentors at university was another obstacle to their development. One participant also reflected on the young age at which he was expected to make a professional career choice. He was expected to do so on emergence from high school at seventeen years of age. His perception is that the institutionalized expectation that he make an important decision such as career choice at that age is inappropriate. This man proceeded to later win a Nobel prize, however, he commented that he would probably have gone into a field other than his chosen one, had his educational experiences been more supportive.

Interdisciplinary Inquiry within the Field of Gifted Education

The vital concerns of the participants in this study cut across disciplinary boundaries. They are shared concerns. I believe that a particularly important implication of the study, therefore, is the need for interdisciplinary inquiry within gifted education. The level of this inquiry needs to begin with the core assumptions of the field, the values on which those assumptions rest, and a concerted approach to research within the field. For instance, some of the participants in this study indicate that effectiveness in relation
to their professional contributions is sustained, in part, because they believe that their contributions are not based on the dictates of ego. The misplaced value of ownership of one's gifts and consequent products or performances is implicated in their assessments of what is needed to solve problems of global sustainability. Further research as to the sources of motivation, that is the values that underlie the activities of eminent people and of educational researchers and educators, would seem to be important for all of us in our necessarily interdisciplinary and cross-cultural context.

Mode of Inquiry

The mode of qualitative inquiry has been especially rewarding in my pursuit of understanding of the conceptions of morality held by eminent people. I agree with Patton (2002) that “understanding what people value and the meanings they attach to experiences, from their own personal and cultural perspectives, are major inquiry arenas for qualitative inquiry” (p. 147). I would like to see greater philosophical acceptance of this mode of inquiry within the field of gifted education.

Morality and Capitalism

A further direction for research is to build on that of Turiel (2002) who focused on areas of concern that participants in this study mentioned, such as the opposition of underserved groups in our culture to the experience of institutionalized injustice. What is the point at which institutions no longer preserve but constrain the good? The connection between morality and capitalism in relation to educational activities within the field of gifted education seems to be a crucial direction for future research. Research as to differences or similarities among different groups of eminent people in relation to their conceptions of morality, such as, for example, the study of visual and performing artists.
as compared with those in other occupations also seems to be a valuable direction for continued research. What are the constraints experienced by eminent visual and performing artists, for instance, in relation to the ideology that supports capitalism? To what extent do large corporations control cultural productions (King, 2005)? One participant mentioned the "half-formed values" we tend to receive from the media. Another participant discussed the dissemination of information by the media that is "hyped as important" as contrasting with our vital need for access to information about differing groups in our culture so that we may learn to respect one another. Has the media eclipsed any of the traditional sources of received values? To what extent does the media influence the enactment of our values in relation to our personal and public lives?

How are we as educators complicit in sustaining assumptions that undermine individual and collective welfare? What and whose assumptions underlie the field of gifted education? The continual examination of core assumptions, the continual search for ways of handling difference seems to be especially important to educational practice in our culture and at this point in history. Researchers in the field of critical theory seem to have an advantage in terms of their attempt to rise above cultural assumptions. Some researchers in this field also incorporate insights from academic theorists and vernacular theorists in their practice (McLaughlin, 1996). What can the field of gifted education learn from these practices?

How does social convention mediate the enactment of received values, whether as facilitator or impediment to human development? Some participants in this study have indicated their value of a natural order of human development towards cultivation. Do
these perceptions of the natural condition of human beings cut across race, class, or creed?

The problem of power was explicitly and implicitly discussed by the participants in this study. Study of the dynamics of power in our culture in relation to groups of eminent people provides an important direction for continued research.

A strong finding from this study is the focus of four of the five female participants on fighting social injustice. The remaining female participant did so in a more muted though seemingly no less vehement way through her art. Her emphasis was encouraging children to consider more humane and responsible alternatives to the examples that are available to them in the public sphere in relation to expression of their innate gifts. She identified constraints to the expression of our gifts to be, for example, fear and sadness and abuse at the hands of people we have trusted. She stressed the importance of “being a living example” to self and others so as to promote environmental and spiritual healing.

Why did the women in this study focus so consistently on the injustice that they perceive is enacted in the public sphere and which is a source of indignation and outrage in their lives? The men in the sample tended to turn inward to explore the necessity for committed loving relationships and to gaining perspective in relation to the ideal of truth and its practical application in their personal and professional lives.

While I attempted to encourage gender and racial diversity in relation to participation in this study, I was more successful in my goal in relation to the women in the sample, one of whom was Latina and who referred to herself as a woman of color and another woman who was of African-American origins. The remaining participants were Caucasian. Four of the women in the sample focused on current institutionalized
discrimination on the basis of race, class, gender, and sexual identity. On the basis of this study, there is insufficient evidence for a claim in relation to gender difference. Further research is needed, therefore, to explore, for example, gender and personality differences among eminent people who face challenge or constraint in the form of social injustice. Difference in approaches to challenges among groups of eminent people from varying occupations may again prove instructive. It seems to be a commonsense notion that people of similar personality types gravitate towards particular professions, leisure activities etc. What are the implications for educators of gifted students in relation to the needs of students with differing personality types as they confront perceived injustice? Do these people have particular creative strategies to deal with such conflict? Do these strategies differ and what might we learn from them in relation to the types of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and institutional constraints we all face? How can we as educators encourage critical and creative approaches to the resolution of conflict?

Sustained Expression of Talents

Further investigation of the types of intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences in the lives of eminent people in relation to the expression of their talents seem to be an important direction for future research. How do other eminent people effectively deal with pressing and prolific ideas? How do eminent people effectively sustain their contributions in the face of a sense of overwhelming responsibility for others? What experiences are crucial to the formation of conscience in eminent people?

The findings from this study strongly suggest the importance of discovering that which we enjoy most, living in alignment with our core values, and interpersonal and community support for the enactment of our values. These features of the experience of
participants are integral to their sustained contributions. As critical inquirers, they make constant use of judgment in relation to effective action as social beings. They acknowledge our fundamental connection, and therefore, our fundamental responsibility to one another and so the importance of consideration of the consequences of our actions in relation to each other in varying contexts, given constraints. It is important to further investigate the types of values conflicts experienced by eminent people because these have consequences for the development and expression of their talents.
References


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## Appendix A

### Correspondence between Research Questions and Interview Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overarching Research Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the conceptions of</td>
<td>How do you define the term &quot;morality&quot;?</td>
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<tr>
<td>morality that are held by</td>
<td>How would you characterize the course of your own moral development?</td>
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<td>eminent people?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do conceptions of</td>
<td>What do you believe to be your greatest achievement?</td>
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<tr>
<td>morality orient the thought and</td>
<td>What are your ultimate goals?</td>
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<td>actions of eminent people?</td>
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<td>How do personal values sustain</td>
<td>What motivates you to put one foot in front of the other day after day after day?</td>
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<tr>
<td>their contribution to their</td>
<td>How have your thinking and actions been instrumental in sustaining personal integrity?</td>
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<tr>
<td>respective fields?</td>
<td>Promoting collective good?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do eminent people meet and</td>
<td>What is the biggest challenge you've faced in your life? How did you overcome it?</td>
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<td>negotiate intrapersonal,</td>
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<td>interpersonal, and institutional</td>
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<td>constraints as they move</td>
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<td>through the talent development</td>
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<td>process?</td>
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Appendix B

Participant Letter

Miss Janine Lehane
School of Education
College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, VA 23187-8795
Email: jmlehl@wm.edu

Date

Dear __________,

As previously mentioned (ref. telephone conversation), I am undertaking doctoral study at the College of William and Mary. The focus of this particular study is the conceptions of morality held by eminent people. I will be interviewing a select number of people and I thank you for your interest and willingness to pursue this matter.

The purpose of the study is primarily to determine the conceptions of morality held by eminent people. I hope to discover some insights that may be of importance to educators who wish to aid young people in achieving their potential.

I guarantee you confidentiality of the information obtained in the interview. I am particularly interested in patterns of response across the group of eminent people that I will be interviewing, rather than responses from individuals in isolation. Please feel free to refuse to respond to particular questions and know that you may terminate participation at any time. The information you provide will be kept in a locked cabinet and pseudonyms will be used in reporting the findings of the study. A copy of your interview transcript will be made available to you should you wish to receive a copy.

Response to this letter will constitute informed consent, and I request that you simply advise me by telephone or email or with a note to the above address in order to meet this requirement.

Thank you once more for your ready response to my communication.

Yours faithfully,
Appendix C
Excerpts from Participants' Definitions of Morality

Women

I think it’s doing the best that we can.
And I always saw morality in the light of how we approach each other, how we handle our responsibilities to each other. (PS)

It has to do with our struggle to make right relation with one another and to live in that struggle. It’s not simply sort of a static way of being but it really is an active moving and usually, it should be known it is a struggle for us to know how it is we live together with others both collectively... in the larger world as well as in the more intimate parts of our lives in ways that enhance mutuality... which to me is what right relation is all about - the making of mutual relation which is not sameness but relationship in which everybody benefits. There’s no loser. (A)

I think morality is when you think of the social conditions of people. I think poverty is a moral issue. You know, the fact that people do not have – I mean things like education and health care are a human right. They shouldn’t be exclusive just for those who can afford it. And so I think that - That’s what real morality is: respecting other people in terms of what they choose to do with their lives. So I think privacy issues are very much a moral issue. And I think that governance is a moral issue: where you can have a government that is not a politically violent government, but one that really serves the people, represents the people. The privacy issues I think are moral issues. Natural resources are – should belong to the people not to private individuals. (CO)

Human morality is something that we make up, that we create in the face of a chaotic and amoral universe. And central to it is, just the ability to put yourself in somebody else’s place, the power of empathy. And the kind of love that develops from that: love for other people – I’m not talking about, you know, sexual love or romantic love, but... – a deep feeling of connectedness to other humans and all the consequences of that which are so enormous. (W)

“Morality” would be, do anything you like, anything, as long as you don’t do any harm to anyone else.... So, “morality” would be, to be your own example, to really act responsibly in your own back yard, before you go out beyond that back yard. I just very much believe in the power of example. And not in harming other people. But also being allowed to be governed by one’s free will. I think not judging others is a really good thing to do, almost as impossible as that is. (EE)
Men
Doing what one knows is right even if it means giving up one's most passionate and prurient desires. (D)

Cleaning up your messes. We all make messes in the world, intentional and, particularly, unintentional. And to what extent are we open to see the messes we make, and to what extent do we assume responsibility for cleaning them up?

And then, ...you might say, in a more abstract or deeper level: I do think that morality is related to our kind of life purpose: To what extent are we living in line with our reason for being, our deepest sense of value or what matters to us? (CM)

"Morality" is basically, being truthful. And facing the consequences of one's actions. (J)

I guess I see, psychologically speaking, the big struggle - also spiritually - is between love and hate, and, therefore, the Christian focus on love is obviously central. And what does it entail? How is it (love) to be expressed? And how does one deal with violence? And how in the world can God explain that to us? (CI)

We also ought to rehabilitate the traditional approach to this and think of the moral point of view simply as the most inclusive, action-guiding point of view that human beings can achieve. So that the moral question is, what ought we to do or be, all things considered? What ought we to be or do, period? Not if we want to be prudent or not if we want to be good men or good women, or whatever, but, what ought we to do and be, period? That's the point that we're all interested in achieving anyway. (S)
Vita

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