

TA 51, Response 4

EARLY MEMORY, FINALLY! by Glenn C. Wood 14 April 2002, posted 6 August 2002

Notation: Efforts to get this early memory posted finally materialized

The following were occurring thoughts while reading the Muller and vGlaserfeld dialogue (Commentary 41 (to C31 by McCarthy) replying to the replies by E vGlaserfeld, 29 March posted 9 April 2002).

Using one of my nearly ten early -- from around 16 months to around two years -- childhood outstanding memories as a paradigm, would you be so kind as to show where my understanding does or doesn't correspond with frequently abbreviated concepts? For instance, do you agree somewhat where I've put concepts such as: mind independent reality (MIR), as-if mind independent of reality (as-if-MIR), zero derivation (OD), etc.

The other 9 or more memories are different from this one, but they are not being withheld as if surprise witnesses. They all -- except for the earliest prior to 16 months (no, it's not circumcision -- thank God -- nor any sexual abuse) -- surround some more relatively normal discomfort such as a first-fear experience, guilt, immediate pain, misunderstanding, hysteria at being lost, etc.

These vivid memories of early childhood experiences have been made easier to retain due to frequent review of extensive family photos (which indicates a normal family life), but the memories involve experiences and feeling states, which are not captured in photos. This one came to mind while reading Muller's replies to vGlaserfeld -- including the latter's "whether subjective experience is perhaps not a problem-free individual apprehension of world..." and, I had to laugh, while remembering, as I read Muller's response: "SE is never problem free and always attuned to others." What a profoundly simple observation. But there is a less obvious profundity in vGlaserfeld's wondering and, to me, fits somewhere in the following memory.

This experience occurred sometime between 16 months and two years, but was not the earliest I can recall. I have to start with the pain of this needle penetrating my index finger, crying and my mother rushing in, looking at and determining what had happened, and then saying, I thought you'd shut your finger in the door ... I told you not to go in there." I start without a subject...

Normal Paradigm -- ... Vague consciousness (necessary potential categories like a-priori and a-posteriori relative, domain also of zero derivation non-structured center or background of experience with some content of consciousness rather than conscious discontentment) entering this small room containing the old

Singer sewing machine (part of relative static reality independent of mind) putting appendage under the raised presser-foot and then placing another reachable appendage -- foot -- on the treadle ... (as-if-mind independent reality, relatively comfortable momentary problem-free individual apprehension of world, naive-mind independent reality). After a point of pain (ground-zero within residue zero-like derivation, functional need for structure of rigid outside mind independent reality) I remember (mental restructure of vague structure originates in experience) -- and that has to be a retroactive or retrospective sort of recognizing (scientific mind independent reality) -- opening the forbidding door, placing ... my ... finger, then looking down at the treadle, placing ... my ... foot, (scientific mind independent of reality includes probability of having experienced mother using the machine etc.) Mother rushes in, looks at the tiny mark on fingernail -- I think comprehending what happened -- and says: "... I thought you'd shut your finger in the door ... I told you not to go in there." I don't recall other feelings of that day, such as feelings including my mother's assumed understanding -- as to what really happened -- which was greater than but included the reminder of a command or prohibition which I retroactively remember as a forbidding feeling while opening and entering the little room. Memory here extends beyond the point of pain in all directions.

This was no major trauma, and perhaps intense enough to not suppress; and there were no immediate events that overrode the confrontation with the sewing machine which I take to still be ... respectfully real in the same way I think Muller means where he says "I do not deny realism (static ontology or mind-independent pre-structured reality, MIR) but see it as a limited point of view ... and much of the time it is quite sufficient to act as if MIR were true." (See TA45 (Muller) Response 5 (to C36 by Petkov) [1]) Thus one of my first still outstanding impressions was relatively sufficient to respect the sewing machine without the experience becoming an ontology influencing all aspects of life.

On the other hand (no pun intended) I've had other experiences working with abnormally traumatic situations including the intense experiences leading to Alcoholism, experiences of Abuse, and families in need, etc. In these cases one accepts that the experiences are real -- even though possibly being denied by the subject -- while not forgetting and cautiously directing, or not immediately directing, to a more meaningful un-restraining reality. Pointing toward this sort of forgotten subjectivity can allow for a life of freedom from objectively clear but sometimes repressed unclear experiences that fixate, i.e. that keep in subjection one's normal and positive -- rather than negative -- subjectively potential state.

It would be enlightening to relate certain case situations to demonstrate how the subjectively new objectivity can show ontic experiences can be handled because they are not all there is to reality.