Theory of Education: Teaching for Transformation

When I think about learning and how persons grow, develop and transform as learners,
I draw on my experience of learning ballet . . . at the age of forty.

There is a place for natural giftedness, but everything else that comes after has to do with
countless hours of practice, under the guidance of a teacher who is also a dancer
and thus, can show, not just tell, the path of correct movement.

Ballet schools me in a radical willingness to be seen, in the skin-crawling vulnerability of
pink tights and leotard, against the unflinching honesty of the mirror. It requires me to know,
not just by head or even heart but by sound, step, beat, and the unmistakable feel in my body.
Ballet reveals that truly transformative learning is holistic—and hard:
the painstakingly slow development of alignment, range of motion, and strength
takes place in the face of the ever-present possibility of getting hurt or having an old injury
reawakened by the strenuous regimen of training.

But when I surrender to its exacting form and instruction,
in a community of dedicated practitioners of the art, something extraordinary begins to happen:
the dance becomes a mold, and a crucible, for forging knowledge, perspective, skill, and actual
physical changes in my body that liberate and empower me to move in ways
I did not know were humanly possible for me before . . .

My life story is a journey of discovering the transformative power of education. Since the age of four, when I was taught to read by older kids playing "school," my desire to learn was one of the deepest longings of my life. As books introduced me to new worlds, so education opened doors to the places and possibilities that were otherwise barred to me by race.[1] As a Korean girl growing up in Russia, education was my way to freedom—a way to claim equality that was not mine by birth, a chance to become Russian (if not the beautiful blond-haired and blue-eyed Slavic, then at least a brainy one). My Korean mother valued education above all things, enforcing my top performance with measures bordering on abuse. As such, education was both awesome and awful. It was not just about making it in school; it was about making it (or not) in life. My deep love of learning became linked to an equally deep fear of failure. Yet, ironically, this strained combination made me virtually unstoppable; from medicine to ministry, from Russia to the United States, I transformed my life to a level far above that of my poverty-stricken Korean ancestors in the USSR.

CPE introduced me to a different kind of educational transformation. My supervisor at Emory, Rev. Joan Murray, saw past my habitual drive towards outcomes, empowering me to discover a *person* on a unique journey of becoming. My supervisor at UNC REX, Rev. Logan Jones, dared me to ask not merely "what the world is asking of me" but "what my *soul* is asking of me." In CPE, I rediscovered my love of learning—not merely as a means of succeeding at the game of life but as a search for my true self, found in the process of being stripped of my fear of poverty and failure. The ultimate paradox of transformation, I now know, is learning to be more fully and more humanly myself, so that I can use my unique self as an instrument of care.

When students come to CPE, they too come with hopes, fears, and habits born out of their previous experiences of learning. Like me, they might be more focused on the immediacy of their need to succeed in the world and therefore less aware of the deeper dynamics of their becoming. By affirming the instrumental value of their CPE experience while offering support for the journey of self-discovery and self-revelation, I invite my students to a transformative experience of learning. In my theoretical orientation, I resonate with transformative learning theory, which I first discovered in the work of Jack Mezirow. Mezirow offers a comprehensive model of adult learning that describes how the work of meaning-making in adulthood engenders positive changes in learners' identity, competence, and relational skill.[2] For my critical purchase and my group theory, I use systems-centered theory (SCT) developed by Yvonne Agazarian. SCT sponsors a shift from a person-centered to a systems-centered frame of reference, empowering me to work with larger contextual

and existential forces in learners' development.[3] My intentional consideration of *systemic* dynamics of human growth is an important counterpart to my strong focus on *individual* dimensions of learning. As an educator aspiring to teach for transformation, I pay careful attention to the holistic interplay of life and learning in adulthood, seeking to help my students not only meet their immediate professional goals but discover and respond to the deeper summons of their soul. Nurturing connection between their pastoral formation and their personal becoming, I accompany them on the journey towards greater authenticity of their selfhood as a foundation of ministry.

FUNDAMENTALS: TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING AND ADULT EDUCATION

At the heart of transformative learning theory is the belief that a search for meaning is a defining characteristic of being human.[4] The first "schools" of our lives—families, primary communities, cultures—bestow upon us values, symbols, and assumptions to guide our work of meaning-making. Like a pair of tinted glasses, communal frameworks of meaning we adopt color the way we see the world. Our existing worldview and self-understanding are a part of our relational inheritance, and, in turn, they determine how we see ourselves, others, and the world around us. They help us succeed in the world by ensuring a close match between our experience and our expectations.

As long as our life stays the same, our identity and our ways of seeing and being in the world remain in the realm of the familiar—and as such, intimately yet uncritically known. But when the unthinkable happens, opening a chasm between what we experience and what we expect, we are confronted by a chaos of disbelief and incomprehension. We can respond to this painful occurrence in one of two ways: denial or discernment. *Denial* preserves the status quo by rejecting our new experience to protect our established ways of being in the world. When in denial, we cling, reflexively and urgently, to the interpretive "glasses" that focus on the familiar and the known. *Discernment,* in contrast, empowers us to become curious about our established worldview and self-understanding. We take a look at the "glasses" that until now we have been looking through. If we risk engagement with our new experience and use it to investigate the validity of our expectations, significant learning can occur, opening the way for genuine growth and transformation.[5]

This twofold dynamic of the adult learner's response to the unexpected is at the heart of my understanding of how students learn (and fail to learn) in CPE. Remembering that discontinuity between learners' lived experience and their established worldview can lead to either an activation (*discernment*) or a shutdown (*denial*) of meaning-making, my educational practice is a dance at the boundary of engagement and resistance. When faced with resistance, I meet my students with

compassionate curiosity, inviting them to notice the habits of belief and behavior revealed in their efforts at self-preservation and reflect on the ways these habits helped them succeed in the world. Their self-reflection in relation to the past, in turn, primes their recognition of the impact of these habits on their learning in the present. In contrast, when the dissonance of their CPE experience elicits more interest than defensiveness, I engage my students with affirmative challenge, partnering with them in identifying the facets of their worldview and self-understanding that limit their pastoral functioning.

As an educator grounded in transformative learning theory, I know that I can invite and support, but never guarantee, my students' transformation. Much as I wish to offer life-changing experiences of growth, I see my students not as passive consumers but as co-creators of meaning, whose agency is at the heart of what they do (or do not do) with my invitation. My core goal in supervision, therefore, is not to force change but to listen to the voice of the students' own desire that led them to CPE, harnessing its power in the service of growth. According to transformative learning theory, genuine transformation involves change in three dimensions of human becoming: the rational, affective, and grief-like process of coming to terms with the cost of transformation. In my educational practice, I work within this tripartite framework of assessment and intervention as I call my students to join me on the wondrous and scary journey of transformative learning.

AT THE BARRE: The Rational Dimension of Transformative Learning

Transformation occurs when we critically examine and change our taken-for-granted frames of reference to make them more inclusive, flexible, and trustworthy guides to action. Because the conscious processes of meaning-making are at the core of human potential for transformation, the work of *critical reflectivity* is the most explicit and immediate dimension of transformative learning. We develop new habits of seeing and being in the world by engaging in the rational work of articulating, examining, and evaluating values and assumptions previously accepted without questioning. The breakthrough in awareness often happens in response to a *disorienting dilemma*, a breach of interpretive expectations. Disorienting dilemmas vary in their traumatic severity (some are epochal, others incremental), but their startling effect on the learner is an impetus for change. Essential for this work is not only learners' individual self-reflection but also their access to alternative frames of reference and experiences of others. Participation in *communal discourse*, with its shared exploration of new roles, rules, and perspectives, becomes a foundation for developing new ways of seeing and being in the world.[6]

Through the lens of critical reflectivity, I see CPE as a model of education with tremendous transformative power—precisely because it offers its learners experiences bound to overturn their established frameworks of meaning. The unfamiliarity of the experience-driven curriculum, the unnerving dynamics of Individual Supervision (IS) and Interpersonal Relations Seminar (IPR) and the intimate confrontation with human suffering disrupt students' habitual ways of being in the world, demanding reconsideration. As an educator, I lean into the inherent disorientation of CPE to deepen my students' learning. I invite my students to practice critical reflectivity individually and in group as they unpack the effects of the CPE experience on their habitual ways of seeing and being in the world. I review action/reflection/action as a core methodology of CPE, highlighting its importance for the development of pastoral competency. And throughout, I intentionally connect this cognitive, rational work of reflection on their clinical experience to their personal history, social location, and ethnocultural and spiritual heritage. I use formal didactic instruction, as well as the inevitable demographic differences between the students themselves, as the way to introduce alternative frameworks of meaning and encourage conscious examination not only of their professed theology but also of tacit assumptions that shape their normative understanding of pastoral identity and functioning. As they become aware of their embedded beliefs, as they give and receive critical feedback to examine their habitual behaviors, and as they work with their peers to develop new frameworks of reference to guide ministerial action, my students come face to face with the possibility of genuine transformation.

My work with MM, a Euro-American, female student in her twenties, is an example of how I use the process of critical reflection to help my students discover, evaluate, and transform the habits of behavior and belief that limit their pastoral functioning. From the first week of the unit, MM struggled with pronounced fatigue, which in week 3 intensified to such a degree that it interfered with her ability to do clinical ministry. Reflecting on the low numbers in her visitation report, she observed that her usual way of doing ministry ("not resting until all work is done") was a poor match to the summer internship during a pandemic. Alert to the disruption of meaning that students are likely to experience in CPE, I assessed that MM might be facing a disorienting dilemma: her fundamental understanding of ministry and self-care was called into question by her lived experience of hospital chaplaincy. I modeled for MM compassionate curiosity about the values and beliefs guiding her ministry, inviting her to explore their origins in relation to her family history, Lutheran theology, and cultural upbringing. MM came to life as she spoke of her enduring

perception of self-care as "selfishness unbefitting a pastor" inherited from her father who was a preacher in the Midwest. I invited MM to dialogue with her peers and the theoretical frameworks of the unit (e.g., family systems theory, process theology) as she critically examined her views of ministry. As a result, MM articulated a theology of ministry in which caring for the self was a vital part of caring for the other. The observable increase in the number and quality of MM's patient visitations was an outcome of the radical change in how MM began to see herself and her work (and rest!) as a minister. My supervisory invitation to critical reflectivity and communal discourse empowered MM to examine her taken-for-granted frames of reference and experience the joy of transformative learning.

CENTER FLOOR: The Affective Dimension of Transformative Learning

While transformation starts with alteration in the frame of reference and perspective, its ultimate goal is the expansion of consciousness and integration of the personality. Thus, the dynamics of human interiority, as reflected in the emotional, imaginative, and spiritual processes of becoming, are essential for a genuine, whole-person change. *Emotions* connect us to the embodied nature of the meaning-making process by coloring our interpretations of our experience. *Imagination*, the faculty of perception attuned to the rich contents of our inner world, empowers us to see the larger, extrarational pattern of our becoming, fostering connection between the head and heart, symbol and story, and darkness and light of transformative learning. *Spirituality* sensitizes us to the sacred, integrative wholeness of life itself as a source of change. These three strands of affective knowing come together in the intricate work of nurturing the soul, a deeply personal way of learning that seeks to honor the image, feeling and intuition of mystery at work in human transformation.[7]

The affective dimension of transformative learning has been of profound importance for my own formation as an educator, anchoring the life-giving and difficult work of integration of my supervisory identity, authority, and competency. Informed by my own educational process, I see pastoral supervision as "soul work," the art of companioning my students on the journey of discovering the depths of their authentic selfhood as it shapes their pastoral identity and functioning. I believe that by experiencing CPE as "soul learning," my students will see their own ministry of spiritual care as "care of souls."[8] To nurture the souls of my students, I draw on all three facets of affective learning. I pay close attention to the feelings roused in the context of educational and clinical experience. I believe that emotions contain tremendous energy and wisdom for learning, and I partner with my students to befriend and use that power for their growth in self-awareness,

as well as their ability to understand and minister to others. Similarly, I seek to awaken my students' imagination in service of learning. Paying attention to their unique learning styles and dispositions, I expand the traditional language-based modalities of CPE to include symbolic avenues of meaning-making in art, film, music, movement, sculpture, and alternative forms of writing (fiction, poetry, journaling), inviting my students to expand the collection of images that animate their views of ministry, relationships, and spiritual care. For example, my commissioning and graduation services incorporate ritual, poetry, icons, and my students' own art to create a soul-friendly space that can take us, even if momentarily, beyond the myriad of details and anxieties of learning to a place of mystery and wonder about the deeper meaning of CPE. An imaginative flash of insight or moment of emotional connection becomes a way to cultivate spiritual sensitivity, the awareness of the Sacred moving in and through the ordinary.

The expansion of consciousness and integration of personality my students experience as an outcome of soul work in CPE was especially evident in my supervisory alliance with DS, an African American pastor in his sixties. DS's pastoral care had a strong "positive" bend; though he was cheerful and kind, his visits held little evidence of depth. In the face of suffering, DS offered quick reassurances and prayers for restoration. In individual and group supervision, DS demonstrated strong awareness and understanding of the problem, connecting it to his personal story and cultural and theological heritage. Yet, despite his eagerness to change, little change occurred in his pastoral practice. Midway through the unit, DS was called to be with two sisters who had just lost their mother. While he deeply wanted to care for these women, he kept interrupting the story of their mother's painful struggle with cancer with his positive proclamations of her "legacy of love." Following the visit, DS was crestfallen: "I just can't help it!!"

I assessed that DS's learning difficulty was not due to a lack of critical reflection but to the deeper affective challenge of facing pain. Thus, when DS worked on another deeply charged topic (systemic racism), I invited him to alter the format of his action/reflection; instead of writing a paper, he was to try a nonverbal way of processing. This tapped into DS's artistic ability, and we discovered that by entering into the space of the visual and imaginative, DS recovered the wholeness of his perspective. His collage of police brutality and his drawing for Black History Month spoke bold truth to both the light and the shadow of the Black experience in America. It was a powerful moment in DS's learning, and it led us to formulate a question for his patient visitation: What does the artist know that the pastor is eager to forget? Following this intervention, DS's pastoral presence

and ministry demonstrated far greater relational authenticity and depth. Making imagination, emotion, and soul a focus of my supervisory intervention, I supported the holistic transformation of DS's pastoral identity and functioning.

DANCING THROUGH INJURY: The Grief Dimension of Transformative Learning

Because genuine transformation involves a radical change in learners' self-understanding and core ways of being in the world, it unleashes in its wake the waves of profound grief. When what we have always believed about the world is deeply challenged, when our cherished ideas of ourselves are found to be partial and surface masks, when the changes in our thinking, feeling, and relating cause alienation from the people and communities we have known as our only home, our growth is marked with the signature of anguish. Transformative learning is most painful precisely at the point when it succeeds. Thus, recognizing and attending to the dynamics of grief in education is a critical condition for a genuine and sustained journey of transformation.[9]

As an educator with firsthand experience of CPE transformation, I am keenly aware of the glorious peaks and painful lows of transformative learning. Knowing that grief is an unavoidable yet deeply unwelcome part of transformation, I seek to support my students in the difficult work of identifying and mourning the losses engendered by learning. First, I proactively prepare them for the *experience of failure*. I create a compassionate affective climate for the work of assessment and feedback, and I offer skillful and appropriate self-disclosure about my own experience of learning through failure (e.g., I use my own early verbatims to teach the value and process of case studies). Second, revealing failure not merely as unavoidable but essential for growth, I explicitly frame the challenge of CPE as both a joy of learning and the *labor of unlearning*. The desired gains in conceptual understanding, practical skill, and maturation of pastoral identity depend on the arduous process of letting go of the deeply engrained but limiting habits of thinking, feeling, and ministerial action. Third, I am alert and actively assessing the *signs of heightened vulnerability* in my students' cognitive, emotional, and spiritual states. The world and the self as they have known them are passing away, but the new worldview and self-understanding are still in the making; and their interim "already-but-not-yet" state brings up understandable but frightening lack of control, uncertainty, and helplessness. I am committed to joining my students on the shaky ground of transformation, making our supervisory relationship itself a womb-like transitional space that nourishes and shelters the tender newness of their pastoral becoming.[10]

Each student who made a journey of genuine transformation against the odds of its tremendous cost is forever etched in my memory: BG, a Euro-American Baptist pastor in his forties whose call to chaplaincy was forged in the agony of coming to terms with the abusive behavior and betrayal of his congregation; SS, a Euro-American Episcopal chaplain in her fifties whose commitment to understanding and undoing the effects of White supremacy in the world triggered a painful unraveling of her family bonds; LK, a Korean United Methodist lesbian minister who birthed her belief that she is not an "abomination in the eyes of God" from the ashes of her denominational rejection. Learning experiences of this kind take me to the upper limit of my supervisory functioning, where the educational encounter itself is wreathed with the halo of grace. Still, the outcomes of such learning can be clearly measured. Having walked through their own dark valleys of grief, my students are better prepared to care for people in the hospital whose lives too are threatened by life-altering lessons in loss and sorrow. The crucible of their grief becomes a birthplace of their pastoral competency.

GOING EN POINTE: SYSTEMS-CENTERED THEORY AS CRITICAL PURCHASE and GROUP THEORY

Transformative learning theory provides me with a theoretical framework for supervision that is powerful and nuanced. Informed by the cognitive, affective, and grief dynamics of transformation, I partner with my students on the journey of transformative learning. But what happens when the students are not interested in transformation? When they see CPE as just a "necessary evil" on their path to ordination? Such was the case with MR, an Italian American seminarian in his twenties. MR had to do CPE for ordination and was deeply resentful of the task. During an interview, he judged CPE to be overly relational, psychologizing, preoccupied with listening, and prone to emotional manipulation. His only hope was to "get through these weeks unscarred."

When blind mistrust and intense negative preconceptions foreclose a meaningful conversation about transformative learning, I turn to SCT as my critical purchase.[11] Conceptualizing a person, group, or larger societal entity as *living human systems*, SCT views the human process of learning as the work of discriminating and integrating differences. Learning happens when learners' systems open their boundaries to new information; integrating the difference becomes a vehicle of change. Learning is hindered when learners' systems close boundaries to new information, which happens when the new is too different and exceeds the systems' capacity for integration.

Fortunately, systems' capacity for working with differences can be influenced. The core SCT skill for doing this is functional subgrouping. Recognizing the unsettling effect of difference on

human systems, SCT differentiates between stereotypical and functional subgrouping. When forming *stereotypical subgroups*, learners divide around difference in an effort to lessen its unsettling effect: "us-*vs*-them" polarization drives this behavior, and much of the energy of stereotypical subgroups is wasted on trying to persuade, convert, or correct others. Stereotypical subgroups seek to forcefully integrate or expel the "unacceptably different" part of the system. In contrast, the goal of *functional subgroups* is to join others in an exploration of similarity. When practicing functional subgrouping, learners come together to reflect on experiences resembling their own; focusing their energy on understanding "us" (rather than arguing with "them") creates an experience of emotional resonance that makes individual learners feel safer, therefore making it easier for them to learn. Within the SCT framework, the experience of genuine emotional and interpersonal resonance is the most effective path to learning. Feeling understood comes before any new understanding.[12]

Importantly, the function of functional subgroups is not to hide or subdue differences between people. Rather, it is to contain and explore the differences more effectively by working with them in different subgroups. Because the subgroups on two sides of the divide work separately, the *microcosm of the subgroup* becomes a space for learning more about the meaning of our own experience. Because the subgroups on two sides of the divide work in each other's presence, the *macrocosm of the group as a whole* becomes a vehicle for the titrated exposure and understanding of the alternative experience. Moving the work of exploration between the two sides of difference allows spontaneous points of connection to emerge not only within the subgroups but also between them. When the "opposing" subgroups begin to see each other in a different way, the group process moves towards greater complexity and potential growth. Functional subgrouping is a powerful tool for working with differences, using even interpersonal conflict in the service of growth.[13]

Thus, my supervisory work with MR began with a radical reversal in my educational posture. Informed by SCT, I assessed that at the beginning of the unit his "system" was completely closed to CPE, and thus I did not waste energy and time in trying to teach him, i.e., trying to get new information across his system's boundary. Setting aside my temptation to correct his perceptions of CPE, I focused squarely on the interpersonal immediacy of our supervisory encounter. My ability to join him emotionally in the moment, and my commitment to understanding his thoughts and behaviors in a way that was genuine, non-defensive, and deep, became a pivotal point in MR's learning. His experience of feeling truly heard in our supervisory dyad—while being exposed to the alternative experience of his peers using the clinical method of learning—empowered MR to explore

his fear of emotional and relational connection, risk the vulnerability of the educational process, and initiate helping relationships in the clinic. At the end of the unit, he spoke movingly about his new "sacramental theology of listening," referring to CPE as the summit of his educational experience.

The transformation experienced by MR illustrates another core principle of SCT: *all living human systems have an innate drive towards growth, development, and transformation*. That is true for every system, be it an individual student or a CPE cohort as a whole. The effectiveness of a group leader therefore depends less on her engagement with the "driving forces" and more on her ability to weaken the "restraining forces" to a system's development, so that it can access its own resources for transformation.[14] My understanding of what restraining forces need to be weakened, and in which order, is grounded in SCT's overarching view of group development. SCT identifies *three key phases of group development*: the authority phase, with subphases of flight, fight, roles/role locks, and the crisis of hatred; the intimacy phase, with subphases of enchantment and disenchantment; and the work phase. Each phase is characterized by distinct communication patterns and behaviors that drive or restrain the system's ability to work with difference and, as such, the possibility of good learning. Using functional subgroups in the larger context of group development is at the heart of my use of SCT as my group theory.[15]

As an SCT-informed educator, I see my individual students' growth as closely linked to the learning environment of their group. In my supervisory practice, I consciously attend to the larger communal contexts of learning (pastoral care department, interdisciplinary caregiving team, hospital) while deliberately and systematically influencing the development of group norms in my student cohorts. My ability to use the SCT map of group development to guide my interventions towards weakening the phase-relevant restraining forces was especially evident in my work with the 2020 extended interns. The group consisted of four males and one female, different in age and demographics (White/Black, poor/affluent, low/high educational level), unfolding in the context of COVID-19 and intense racial, socioeconomic, and political polarization. In week 4, a charged discussion of race and privilege erupted in the cultural awareness seminar, dividing the group into "more enlightened" vs. "less enlightened" camps of understanding systemic racism. While I welcomed the appearance of this important issue in group (which so far had only played it safe and harmonized), I was also aware that the cohort had not yet developed the interpersonal safety and resources to do this work effectively. The communication patterns and behaviors I observed ("yes, but" talk, blaming, righteous indignation, sarcasm) signaled that the group was transitioning from

the flight to the fight subphase of the authority phase, with the strong potential to elect one of its members as a scapegoat, to contain the difference they did not yet have the skills to integrate. My ability to work with the frustrated energy of the group to make them conscious of the meaning and inefficacy of stereotypical subgrouping—and teach them the skill of functional subgrouping—was crucial for their ability to continue the difficult and necessary dialogue about race. Thus, they were able to learn from (rather than just fight over) their differences. By helping my students to shift from the person-centered to the systems-centered way of seeing their conflict, I provided them with a more effective framework for engaging systemic racism, both in the classroom and in the clinic.[16]

CONCLUSION

My ability to shift between transformative learning theory and SCT as conceptual frameworks for understanding the complexity of adult learning is a powerful asset in my supervisory practice. My primary theory informs my work with the rational, affective, and grief dynamics of learning. My critical purchase and group theory empowers me to use SCT training in functional subgrouping and knowledge of the phases of system development to create learning communities of care that support growth and transformation of their members. As I move at the intersection of the individual and the systemic, teaching my students to tend to the delicate interplay of life and learning, I see pastoral supervision as an embodied, emotioned, and ensouled art of linking the transformation of the learner with the transformation of the world.

The image featured on the title page of my Educational Theory paper is a photograph of my reproduction of Tracey Clerkin's pencil drawing of ballet shoes (from Clerkin's website Ballet Art: Pencil Drawings & Paintings, https://www.ballet-art.co.uk/, accessed November 14, 2021). Watercolor on Arches 140-lb. cold-pressed paper, 12" x 16."

NOTES

[1] In Russia, the history of the Korean community is scarred by Stalin's perception of the "Asian threat to Soviet security," targeted ethnic cleansings, forced relocation, exclusion from military service, and access only to the humanities branches of university learning. See, for example: Human Rights Helsinki Watch, *"The Punished Peoples" of the Soviet Union: The Continuing Legacy of Stalin's Deportations* (New York: author, 1991); Michael Parrish, *The Lesser Terror: Soviet State Security 1939–1953* (London: Praeger, 1996); Terry Martin, "The Origins of Soviet Ethnic Cleansing," *Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 4 (1998); Jon K. Chang, *Burnt by the Sun: The Koreans of the Russian Far East* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2018). While legal restrictions to Korean rights in Russia were lifted during 1953–1975, the implicit prohibition of professional advancement, racial discrimination, and political oppression have continued well into the present. The law about rehabilitation of the victims of political repression in Russia was issued in 1991. It was applied to Koreans in 1993. My family received its Certificate of Rehabilitation in 2018. These painful political, socioeconomic, and cultural realities had a profound effect on my access to and the pressures associated with education.

[2] Jack Mezirow was an American educator influenced by John Dewey, Thomas Kuhn, Paulo Freire, and Jürgen Habermas. Based on his research with women returning to college in middle age, he challenged the understanding of adult learning as the mastery of skill, describing it instead as a deep shift in perspective leading to the transformation of identity. Jack Mezirow, *Education for Perspective Transformation: Women's Re-Entry Programs in Community Colleges* (New York: Center for Adult Education, 1975). Over the last fifty years, Mezirow's own research and the work of theorists who deepened his original understanding have made transformational learning theory what it is today. I work with transformational learning theory in the context of its historical development, seeing the contributions of other researchers as an indispensable part of its evolution. My supervisory practice is especially influenced by the work of Robert Boyd, Gordon Myers, Patricia Cranton, and John Dirkx. While I understand that important conceptual differences exist between these theorists, I see the value of engaging transformative learning theory holistically, as a theoretical framework that itself is undergoing transformation over time.

[3] Yvonne Agazarian was a British clinical psychologist who developed the theory of the living human systems and systems-centered therapy, seeking to overcome the paradigm clash between individual and group therapy. With characteristic wit, Agazarian observes how individual behavior is heavily influenced by its interpersonal context: "We are . . . puppets on the strings of unconscious group dynamics." Yvonne M. Agazarian and Susan P. Gantt, *Autobiography of a Theory: Developing the Theory of Living Human Systems and Its Systems-Centered Practice* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2000), 82. Agazarian was influenced by an astonishing range of theoretical frameworks: Bion's psychoanalytic theory, Lewin's field theory, Miller's systems theory, Shannon and Weaver's theory of communication, Howard and Scott's stress theory, Korzybski's semantics, Bennis and Shepard's theory of group development, and Schrödinger's quantum physics theory.

[4] Mezirow writes: "A defining condition of being human is that we have to understand the meaning of our experience." Jack Mezirow, "Transformative Learning: Theory to Practice," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* no. 74 (1997): 5.

[5] The terminology of "discernment" comes from the work of Robert Boyd and Gordon Myers and is a good example of how subsequent theorists deepened Mezirow's original understanding of transformative learning. Robert D. Boyd and Gordon J. Myers, "Transformative Education," *International Journal of Lifelong Education* 7, no. 4 (1988).

[6] In his work, Mezirow identifies ten progressive phases of transformation, linked to the process of the learners' critical reflection on experience that does not fit into their established assumptive frame of reference, in conversation with the larger community of learners. Jack Mezirow, "Learning to Think Like an Adult: Core Concepts of Transformation Theory," in *Learning as Transformation: Critical Perspectives on a Theory in Progress*, ed. Jack Mezirow (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), 3–33; Jack Mezirow, "A Critical Theory of Adult Learning and Education," *Adult Education* 32, no. 1 (1981): 3–24. His later work expands the terminology and conceptuality, yet the emphasis on the rational dynamics of transformation remains. See Jack Mezirow, Edward W. Taylor, and Associates, *Transformative Learning in Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2010).

[7] The affective understanding of the transformative process is grounded in the Jungian psychodynamic theory with its emphasis on the Self and the concept of individuation. This way of understanding transformation extends beyond the

cognition, language, and consciousness of the ego into the collective unconscious experience of the human race. Boyd and Myers, "Transformative Education"; John M. Dirkx, "Nurturing Soul in Adult Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 1997, no. 74 (1997): 79–88; John M. Dirkx, "Engaging Emotions in Adult Learning: A Jungian Perspective on Emotion and Transformative Learning," *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 109, no. 109 (2006): 15–26; Patricia Cranton, *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 39–56. The underlying conceptuality of Jungian theory is an important point of connection between my educational theory and my personality theory.

[8] I connect soul work in education and ministry to the Christian tradition of *cura animarum* (Latin, *cure of souls*) and the Russian Orthodox monastic tradition of *душепопечительство*, as well as the contemporary terminology of Jungian analytical psychology. My firsthand experience with this approach to pastoral supervision comes from my work with ACPE Certified Educator Rev. Logan Jones. See Logan C. Jones, *The Care of Souls: Reflections on the Art of Pastoral Supervision* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2019).

[9] Boyd and Myers, "Transformative Education," 274–80; Sue M. Scott, "The Grieving Soul in the Transformation Process, " *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education* 74, no. 74 (1997): 41–50.

[10] I explore the negative dynamics of transformation in greater depth in my dissertation: Natalia A. Shulgina, *Changing Habits: Unlearning Burnout in the Context of Theological Education of Clergy under the Guidance of the Cistercian Monastic Tradition* (PhD diss., Emory University, 2017), 641–810.

[11] In my experiential learning of SCT, I bear a special gratitude to ACPE Certified Educators Rev. Kitty Garlid and Rev. Angelika Zollfrank for the SCT Introductory and Explorer training in the context of ACPE, and to my current mentor at the Systems-Centered Training and Research Institute, Dr. Susan Gantt. The important work of introducing SCT into the ACPE context was accomplished by ACPE Certified Educator Rev. Joan Hemenway. Joan E. Hemenway, *Inside the Circle: A Historical and Practical Inquiry Concerning Process Groups in Clinical Pastoral Education* (Decatur: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1996); Joan E. Hemenway et al., *Expanding the Circle: Essays in Honor of Joan E. Hemenway* (Decatur: Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 2009).

[12] Yvonne M. Agazarian, *Systems-Centered Core Skills: SCT Foundation Manual* (Systems-Centered Training and Research Institute, 2011); Yvonne M. Agazarian, Susan P. Gantt, and Frances B. Carter, *Systems-Centered Training: An Illustrated Guide for Applying a Theory of Living Human Systems* (London: Routledge, 2021).

[13] The effectiveness of functional subgrouping has to do with the deepening of conscious understanding as well as its ability to promote emotional regulation, lower the sense of threat, and build a secure interpersonal context. Irene Trey, "Functional Subgrouping in the Classroom: A Powerful Tool for Learning," in Susan P. Gantt and Yvonne M. Agazarian, eds., *SCT in Action: Applying the Systems-Centered Approach in Organizations* (New York: Routledge, 2019); Susan P. Gantt and Bonnie Badenoch, eds., *Interpersonal Neurobiology of Group Psychotherapy and Group Process* (New York: Routledge, 2013).

[14] In this area of understanding systems' development, Agazarian has been especially influenced by Lewin's model of the "force field." Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science* (New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

[15] Yvonne M. Agazarian, *Visible and Invisible Group* (London: Karnac, 1981); Yvonne M. Agazarian, *Systems-Centered Therapy for Groups* (London: Karnac, 1997). The most fascinating realization about group functioning is that sometimes what the group says it has come together to do (e.g., explicit goals of CPE) is not the same as what it is actually is doing (e.g., implicit social goals of staying safe, discharging frustration). Awareness of the driving and restraining communication vectors and behaviors is key for understanding the true phase of a group's development.

[16] An extended account of this vignette was published in the newsletter of the Systems-Centered Training and Research Institute. Natalia A. Shulgina, "Race & The Issue of Privilege: The Promise of SCT for Group Work in CPE," *Systems-Centered News* Volume 29, no. 1 (Winter 2021): 19–21.