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How Aristotelian and Thomistic Virtue Prescribe Recovery for an Addicted Soul: A Trading Zone Between Aristotelian-Thomistic Psychology and Psychotherapy

Abstract

We propose an Aristotelian-Thomistic definition of addiction, i.e., alcohol and substance abuse as habituated behavior. I agree that the mental-disease-pharmaceutical construct is a necessary explanation of addiction, but it insufficiently explains the causation and recovery of addiction. We give special attention to the phenomena of anxiety and a false ego ideal as a primary cause of addiction. We investigate the nature of addiction as a search for a life of spiritual recovery based on a psychodynamic group recovery and virtuous habits.

We assert that an all-inclusive understanding of addiction and the nature of recovery requires an in-depth Aristotelian-Thomistic faculty, psychological psychodynamics and psychology of virtue and habits. Furthermore, we will define addiction as appropriately understood and treated by a Aristotelian-Thomistic-Psychodynamic Trading Zone with schools of neo-spiritual, psychodynamic methodology and group recovery Alcoholics Anonymous ethnographic analysis. We will ground the Thomistic psychology of addiction on the seminal Thomistic study *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice* by Kent Dunnington¹.

The paper will aver that the primary cause of addiction is of a psychological, spiritual, and moral nature. We will demonstrate this argument primarily from a psychoanalytic ethnographic analysis of recovery as observed from alcoholics and substance addicts in recovery, i.e., Thomistic psychodynamic analysis of incontinent-vicious habituated behavior and the searching, recovering soul.

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¹ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011).



The Trading Zone Aristotelian-Thomistic Psychology Methodology

The rudimentary concept of the trading zone methodology is taken from Robert Kugelmann in his pivotal historical study of psychology, *Neo-Scholasticism, and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries*². Kugelmann is a psychologist and researcher at the University of Dallas who has devoted much of his research and publishing on the contested boundaries between scientific psychology and Aristotelian-Thomistic faculty psychology. This Trading Zone methodology is explained in Kugelmann's chapter one, "From Neoscholastic Psychology to a Thomistic Rational Behavioral Psychology".

The trading zone is concerned with what happens in disciplinary psychology and other social science boundaries³ For example, cognitive science came from a variety of backgrounds: artificial intelligence, linguistics, neuroscience, philosophy, and psychology. The places where the exchanges occurred were journals, university departments, and professional organizations; however, conferences are probably the closest analog to intercultural trading zones, as people from various disciplines and countries gather to exchange ideas"⁴.

Kugelmann claims that the point of intellectual trading zones is the exchange of ideas, and the exchange has made it possible for some subcultures in psychology to engage in exchanges with religious communities and traditions. He adds, however that some subcultures, in particular the more narrowly defined experimental ones, have no interest in exchanges, nor do the religious groups seem interested in their wares. "In both theoretical and applied areas of psychology there has been lively interest in the boundaries, and much interest in what the other side has. In these trading zones, there are many crossings and exchanges"⁵.

As stated, the construction of a trading zone psychology is not for the purpose of establishing a meta-science agreement on the nature of psychology or a metaphysical agreement on the nature of the human person. It is for the clearly focused purpose of addressing a clinical or sociocultural problem that involves the principles and methodologies of combined subcultures in fields of philosophy, psychology, and theology. A Thomistic Trading Zone construct must exercise serious caution in trading zone exchanges. In a bold confrontation with the basic failure of scientific psychology, the influential Thomistic psychologist Robert Edward Brennan in 1941 warned that empirical psychology does not have the answers to the existential pursuit of meaning, purpose, spirituality, and the cure of mental illness. Brennan, in his formative work *Thomistic Psychology: A Philosophical Analysis of the Nature of Man*⁶, concludes:

² R. Kugelmann, *Neo-Scholasticism, and Catholicism: Contested Boundaries*, (Edinburgh: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

³ *Ibid.*, 352.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 353.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ R. E. Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology: A Philosophical Analysis of the Nature of Man*, (New York: MacMillan, 1941), 364.

Without a soul, psychology is like a temple without a deity or a home without family spirit. [...] It is difficult to see, then, how the investigator can avoid assuming some definite philosophic attitude toward the subject matter which he is studying. In this case, the subject matter is man, regarding whom there can be but only one satisfactory attitude. It is the position which recognizes in every human being, regardless of race or age, a creature possessed of soul and body, has cosmic entity made out of spirit and matter, an organism quickened with a principle of rational life: a corporeal substance that not only vegetates with plants and senses with the animals but also, and more importantly, reflects on its own intellectual nature and stretches out, by its faculty of divine love, toward a God that is supremely perfect⁷.

In this study of addiction, we primarily explain addiction from an Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophical theological construct using the work of *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice* foundation by Kent Dunnington⁸. (Throughout the paper we will use the abbreviation of A-T for Aristotelian-Thomistic nomenclature). We incorporate the science of psychoanalysis in the trading zone construction because it is most congruent with the methodology of an A-T study of alcoholic and drug addicts in recovery programs by means of participant observation-narrative description and interpretation of the soulful interactional activities among members of addiction recovery groups.

Therefore, the A-T trading zone is comprised of three trading zone conceptualizations of addiction and the searching and recovering soul, i.e., 1) An A-T psychoanalytic anxiety state perspective is applied to addiction and the searching-recovering soul. 2) We will explain and deploy an A-T ethno-psychoanalysis participant observer construction that examines the agent and communal searching-recovering dynamics of Alcoholics Anonymous recovery groups, and 3) We will identify a psychoanalytical psychology foundation that fuses A-T philosophical theology and psychoanalytical ego development and social psychoanalysis theory.

Module One: A-T Habituation Perspective of Addiction Trading Zone Component

Before approaching a study of addiction and the searching-recovery process, it is necessary to put forth a definition of addiction. However, a definition of addiction depends on the discipline examining the issue under consideration. The most influential US scientific and popular cultural definition of addiction is from the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM).

Addiction is a treatable, chronic medical disease involving complex interactions among brain circuits, genetics, the environment, and an individual's life experi-

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice*, (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011).

ences. People with addiction use substances or engage in behaviors that become compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences. Prevention efforts and treatment approaches for addiction are generally as successful as those for other chronic diseases⁹.

The above medical definition asserts that addiction is emphatically defined and treated as a chronic disease. Consequently, the United States and Western culture has come to accept the medical definition of addiction as the most popular meaningful understanding of why “(...) people with addiction use substances and engage in behaviors that are compulsive and often continue despite harmful consequences”¹⁰.

The examination of the nature and treatment of addiction depends on an interpretive paradigm of this analysis. In the above definition, addiction is being interpreted and defined from a medical scientific interpretive paradigm. It is important to realize that the assumption and principles of the medical addiction hold as verifiable within a medical disease paradigm. It is possible to test and improve within the medical addiction paradigm, but it is also possible to respond to the nature and treatment outside the medical disease paradigm.

Perhaps the most important debate among addiction research scientists today is the distinction between habit and addiction. This debate has become intense among mental health experts. The behavioral school of alcohol, substance and behavioral abuse maintains that addiction is best comprehended and researched as choice-based behavior. Mark Lewis the developmental addiction neuroscientist in his recent work *The Biology of Desire, Why Addiction Is Not a Disease* challenges the medical classification of addiction as “chronic disease”. He explores as a neuroscientist the scientific error of ignoring that addictions and habits are not as different as the medical model presumes. As a neuroscientific behaviorist, Lewis convincingly argues that addiction is caused by the pursuit of various expressions of highly attractive goals and the consequent attention to alternative goals¹¹. Lewis seems to represent an emerging paradigm among addiction behaviorist neuroscientists that there is a continuum between habit and addiction. It is a matter of addiction to drugs being the end point in a series of transitions from initial voluntary or recreational drug-taking through progressive loss of control over drug use. In an paradigm article, “Neural Systems of reinforcement for drug Addiction: from actions to habits of compulsion”, Barry J Everitt and Trevor W Robbins conclude, “Drug addiction is increasingly viewed as the transitions from initial drug use-when a drug is voluntarily

⁹ American Society of Addiction Medicine 11400 Rockville Pike, Suite 200, Rockville, MD 20852, www.ASAM.org (access: 11.06.2021).

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ M. Lewis, *The Biology of Addiction, Why Addiction Is Not a Disease*, (Public Affairs; Reprint edition, 2016).

taken because it has reinforcing, often hedonic, effects through loss of control over this behavior such that it becomes habitual and ultimately compulsive”¹².

We have put forth the medical and the neuro behavioral as the two major empirical paradigms that define alcohol and substance addiction. In this trading zone, A-T psychodynamic analysis of addiction in terms of the searching and recovering soul, we deploy an A-T Spiritual Habituation understanding of addiction. The core of this A-T trading zone, theological-habituation construction is a Thomistic study *Addiction and Virtue* by Kent Dunnington. It is interesting to note that Dunnington is an evangelical theologian who turned to Aristotle, Aquinas and Alcoholic Anonymous in order to develop a Christian philosophical theological understanding of addiction. He explains:

I am neither an “Aristotelian” nor a “Thomist” per se. As I began to think about addiction, I found myself returning to these thinkers again and again for a simple reason: both Aristotle and Aquinas assume that the primary task of any philosophy of action is to explain how it is possible that human beings know the good and yet fail to do it. This is, of course, what is utterly puzzling about addiction—that we should repeatedly and compulsively do that which we know is damaging us. It is because Aristotle and Aquinas remain to this day the most sophisticated and careful students of this puzzle that I have found their work to be so helpful to understand addiction¹³.

A-T faculty psychology is about the confluence of powers between the sensitive and rational soul. This faculty psychology is comprised of a basic trichotomy of the soul (psyche), body (soma), and mind (nous). The soul creates life and moves the soul to vital action; therefore, the soul is in accord with the reflective intellect powers that master the habits, emotions, substantial skills, and competencies of the human person. It is the movement of the soul to the vital good actions that lead to a life of happiness. A-T faculty psychology is always a matter of focus on our actions because it is by focusing on performing the right actions that we are in harmony with our soul.

To be in accord with right”, he [Aristotle] shows it should be taken for granted that actions causing virtue possess the common quality of being in accord with right reason. This happens because the good of everything consists in the fact that its operation is suited to its form. Now the distinctive form of man is that which makes him a rational animal. Hence because it harmonizes with right reason, for the perversity of reason is repugnant to its nature¹⁴.

¹² Barry J. Everitt & Trevor W. Robbins, “Neural Systems of Reinforcement for Drug Addiction: from actions to habits to compulsion,” *Nature Neuroscience Volume 8, Number 11, November 2005*, p. 1481.

¹³ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond The Models of Disease*, p. 12.

¹⁴ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Two, Lecture 4, (Notre Dame, Indiana: Dumb Ox Books, 1964).

Dunnington, as a Thomistic philosophical theologian of addiction, understands “(...) a type of action good is simply to affirm that it is a fitting component of a worthwhile way of life. To call a type of action bad is to deny that it is fitting to a worthwhile life”¹⁵. He begins his study by wisely drawing attention to Aristotle’s four types of human action: 1) A virtuous action is when the person rationally approves the good, desires the good and does what is good. 2) A continent action is when the person rationally approves what is good, desires what is bad, yet following reason, does what is good. 3) An incontinent action is when a person rationally approves of what is good, desires what is bad, and following appetite, does what is bad. 4) Finally, A vicious action is when a person rationally approves of what is bad (i.e., believes it to be good) desires the bad and accordingly does what is bad¹⁶.

It follows, as Dunnington asserts, that A-T psychology of addiction concentrates on the action of the incontinent and vicious user of alcohol and/or drug use. It is the incontinent person who acts from appetite but not from choice, whereas the continent person acts with choice, but not with appetite¹⁷. Dunnington poignantly argues that most addictive behavior, from the A-T perspective, “(...) is remediable through nonmedical recovery models, therefore most addictive behavior falls within the category of incontinent action. Although he also points out that addictive behavior is sometimes beyond the scope of human action (morbid addiction) and sometimes straightforward vice (indulgent addiction)”¹⁸. The great challenge for Aristotle and Aquinas in their understanding of human action was the issue of incontinent human action. How is it that a person is able to know that something is contrary to the inner voice of the rational soul, and yet the person is willing to follow the pleasurable instincts of the passions.

For A-T psychology, especially a psychology of addiction and the searching-recovering soul, habit is necessary for a full account of human action and addiction. Aquinas explains that operations of the will proceed from the soul through the body. In the *Summa Theologiae* 1-2, 50.1, Aquinas makes the argument that habits are not formed by the will. He asserts that “(...) habits of the will, although primarily habits of the soul, are secondarily habits of the body”¹⁹. Dunnington goes into great detail explaining Aquinas’s teaching on the confluence of the intellect, the passions and habit and the relationship to addiction. We, on the other hand, for purposes are concerned primarily with explaining A-T Addiction as soulful habituation. Therefore,

¹⁵ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond The Models of Disease*, 37.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, Book One, Lecture 20.

¹⁸ Kent Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond The Models of Disease*, 55.

¹⁹ Ibid. This is a critical observation that Dunnington makes in his Thomistic analysis of addiction. He argues that the human will is not as Descartes supposed an inexhaustible, abstract power, but rather an embodied power. Human will is executed through the material conditions of human personhood.

we turn to Book Two, Lecture three, n. 271 of Aquinas Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics:

Every habit, he [Aristotle] says, has a disposition to do and to be busied with things by which it is made, worse and better, that is, by which the goodness of a good habit and the evil of a bad habit is increased. This can be understood likewise of the things by which the habit naturally becomes better or worse, that is, by which it naturally is formed or increased (which is to be made better). We see that men become evil through the deterioration of virtue from the fact that they pursue the pleasures and steer clear of the sorrows which they ought not, or when they ought not, or in some way by which one may deviate from right reason²⁰.

Then Aquinas in his Nicomachean Commentary quickly teaches that virtues and vices are not passions. They are habits.

Now a habit is a disposition determining a power in reference to something. When the determination is made conformable to the nature of the thing, there will be a good habit which disposes that a thing be done well²¹.

It is critical to developing an A-T psychology of addiction to understand the importance of habit in A-T psychology and the operation of habit by a person because addictions, as Dunnington claims, is not like something we are as much as something we become busied with a habituated lifestyle. We enter into progressive stages of denial and repression of our addictive habituated behavior. The psychiatrist Gerald G. May writes that “The addictive pattern of denial and repression breeds a sense of alienation from oneself and others”²². A state of dread and anxiety develops that life becomes boring without an addictive lifestyle grounded and energized on hedonic habituation to vicious pleasure.

In an A-T psychology, “Habits are qualifications of the powers (or faculties) of human persons”²³. In question 50 of the Prima Secunda, Of the Subjects of the Soul, Aquinas asks whether habits are originated and operationalized in the human body, the soul, or more precisely the sensitive soul, or are habits formed in the intellectual part of the soul and the will? Aquinas answers that all these parts are involved analogously and imperfectly. Although, on the topic of a psychology of addiction, we must focus primarily on “(...) the capacity for habituation in the sub powers of the sensitive soul”²⁴.

The powers of the sensitive soul are interior powers of the imagination, the estimative sense (*sensus aestmativus*) and the memory, and most important in addiction we are capable of developing habits of imagination. For example, often

²⁰ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Two, Lecture 271.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Lecture 298.

²² G. G. May, *M.D. Addiction & Grace, Love and Spirituality in the Healing of Addictions*, (Harper One; 1st edition, 2007), 44.

²³ Kent Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue, Beyond The Models of Disease*, 72.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

a person separated from his birthplace for an extended numbers of years develops habits of imagining his/her birthplace, home, and town as large and beautiful, only to return and discover the misperception of a habituated emotional-nostalgic imagination. Then in a quiet inner voice the person says, “It’s much smaller and not as beautiful as imagined”. Dunnington explains that the powerful confluence of memory, imagination and cogitative estimation sense enables the re-representation of sensible forms of intentions. He states that “(...) habituation of the cogitative estimation is the single most powerful component of addiction and the addictive experience”²⁵. He gives a concise explanation of the specific powers of the from the *Summa Theologiae*, First Part, Question 78. Article 4., and we argue it is perhaps one of the most critical concepts in the understanding in A-T social behavioral and psychodynamic psychology of addiction that we will treat in the next module. Dunnington explains:

The sensus aestimativus, the “evaluating sense”, enables a function similar to that of the imagination. Whereas the imagination allows for the apprehension of sensible things, the sensus aestimativus allows for the “apprehension of intentions which are not received through the senses” (1.78.4). By “intentions”, Aquinas means the insensate qualities of objects, such as thing’s goodness or badness, suitability, or unsuitability. Aquinas helps us grasp the function of the sensus aestimativus by first showing how the sensus aestimativus must function in animals. Nothing in a lamb’s sense of perception of a wolf warns the lamb that the wolf is bad, an enemy to avoided. This information must come from elsewhere, and Aquinas says that it comes from the sensus aestimativus by which animals perceive these intentions only by some natural instinct²⁶.

Dunnington defines the steering principle to the understanding of addiction as essentially an issue of “(...) the cogitative estimative power that is the site of a “compensation of reason into sense; it is the paradigmatic locus as embodied knowledge”²⁷. We argue that he has defined an essential faculty for the understanding of a foundational A-T psychology, especially in the study of addiction. We must mention that it is in the pivotal work of the Thomist Peter A. Redpath in *The Moral Psychology of St. Thomas*²⁸ who supports the extreme importance of cogitative estimation as essential to an understanding of a psychology of the human person. Redpath explains “(...) in human beings the faculty of particular reason replaces the estimative power in irrational animals. It is the proximate principle that moves the sensitive appetite. But St. Thomas adds that universal reason naturally guides and moves particular reason”. This quote from Redpath

²⁵ Ibid., 75.

²⁶ Ibid., 73-74.

²⁷ Ibid., 74.

²⁸ P. A. Redpath, *The Moral Psychology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, (St. Louis MO 63109), 105. It is in chapter three that Redpath gives a concise explanation of Thomistic faculty psychology that explains that the need for modern psychology to return to a non-Cartesian faculty psychosomatic psychology of the human person.

becomes extremely important in module two of our trading zone construct on the Thomistic Psychodynamics of the Searching Recovering Soul.

With Dunnington's explanation of the importance of the cogitative estimative we come to his definition of addiction.

I have tried to focus on its center and to argue that addiction is a habit of the cogitative estimation according to which the object of addiction is invested with meaning that extends to every other aspect of an addicted person's life. I have argued that addiction is a habit that, like charity, informs all other habits by determining the end toward which those habits are directed²⁹.

An A-T psychology of addiction places habits between a binary scale ranging from virtuous to vicious behavior. We could say from virtuous habits to vicious (vice) habits. Edwin R. Guthrie, an educational behavioral psychologist esteemed for his common sense, described habit "(...) as an action series that has become comparatively stereotyped and can now be released by comparatively slight cues. He used the word reintegration to describe habitual action. It means "The tendency of an action to be reinstated as a whole when a part of its former stimulus situation recurs"³⁰. Unfortunately, the writings of the non-Skinnerian radical behaviorist Guthrie never received adequate attention in empirical psychology, but his teaching on behavior and habituated action are a strong vindication of an A-T psychology that habits are embedded sense memory and imagination moving the body. It is sense memory and imagination that move bodily organs through their respective faculties.

Guthrie's behavioral perspective of incontinent behavior and habit are similar to the description of incontinent, character behavioral action. For example:

In repeated actions many associations are set up which do not relate to the environment but serve to knit the action into an integrated whole to effect reintegration. Any stimulus which starts the action will be followed by the action without reference to outside cues, or with only occasional reference. The reinstatement of the first acts as the cue for the next. The act is now somewhat independent of the pattern of stimuli offered by the outer world³¹.

Book Three of *St. Thomas Aquinas' Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* treats in-depth two critical issues related to addiction, i.e., fortitude and addiction. We will treat these two issues in more detail in the module two. It is worth noting in lecture eleven and twelve of the *Nicomachean Ethics* the concern is that "Men are reproached for those vices and bodily defects that are within our power but not for those beyond our control". In Book Three,

²⁹ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue*, 166.

³⁰ E. Guthrie, *The Psychology of Human Conflict. The Clash of Motives Within The Individual*, (Harper & Brothers, 1938), 67.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

Lecture 12 Refutation of the Opinion: No One Is Voluntarily Evil, we find a behavioral explanation of behavior similar to Guthrie's association psychology.

513. At "Because a person becomes unjust", he [Aristotle] shows that evil habits are not subject to the will after they have been formed. He says that because a person becomes unjust voluntarily, it does not follow that he ceases to be unjust and becomes just whenever he may will. He proves this by means of a likeness in the dispositions of the body. A man who in good health willingly falls into sickness by living incontinently i.e., by eating and drinking to excess and not following the doctor's advice, had it in his power in the beginning not to become sick. But after he has performed the act, having eaten unnecessary or harmful food, it is no longer in his power not to be sick. Thus, he who throws a stone is able not to throw it; however, once he has thrown the stone, he has not the power to take back the throwing. Nevertheless, we do say that it is within a man's power to cast or throw a stone because it was from a principle under his control. So, it is also with the habits of vice; that a man not become unjust or incontinent arises from a principle under his control. Hence, we say that men are voluntarily unjust and incontinent, although, after they have become such, it is no longer within their power to cease being unjust or incontinent immediately, but great effort and practice are required³².

We started this essay with the popular medical definition of alcohol and drug addiction as one of disease similar to a chronic disease. From an A-T addiction psychology perspective, we assert that it is a definition that comes from a medical-psychiatric-pharmaceutical paradigm. Nevertheless, we put forth the belief that this paradigm is a necessary, but not sufficient explanation of addiction. In this module, we maintain that addiction is primarily an issue of incontinent-vicious habituated behavior. As we learn A-T psychology of human action is the confluence of passion and rational judgment. Before an addict acts, he/she must judge. Before the addict judges, he/she must deliberate. The problem is that the alcoholic or drug addict is the incontinent deliberator who does not struggle with "reasonable habits of sobriety, habits of memory, habits of imagination, habits of cogitative estimation, habits of appetite and habits of intellect, rather he lives by habits of brutishness behavior"³³.

Edwin Guthrie, the renowned behavioral scientist of habituation describes behavioral reintegration when a past habit stimuli takes over the whole organism. For example, an alcoholic takes his/her first drink, and despite the best of intentions not to get drunk, often wakes up with a black out. It is like the following illustration:

The act is now somewhat independent of the pattern of the stimuli offered but the outer world. It can run itself off once it is started. The dog lying asleep on the hearth illustrates this reinstatement in almost complete independence of environ-

³² Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Three, n. 513.

³³ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue*, 80.

mental stimuli. He is lying down but goes through the movements of running after a rabbit. His legs work in proper order, if not to the proper extent. Muffled “woofs” issue from his mouth. We say that he is dreaming because he is so obviously out of touch with his surroundings. And this is undoubtedly the stuff that dreams are made of. They are stray action systems running through their paces, each movement offering the cues for the next, until something breaks up the sequence³⁴.

The alcoholic/addict moves initially into an intoxicated habituated state like the dreaming dog in Guthrie’s case. It is similar to the habituated alcoholic/addict who is out of touch with his/her surroundings, For example, in extreme cases it is known as “blackout experiences” of alcohol and or drug abuse and sometimes drug habituation lasting for days of long drugged animal like behavior lying asleep on the hearth. Current theory on the etiology of addiction of the medical-psychiatric paradigm, as Gerald G. May M.D. observes, holds that: “Man no longer has a need for the ‘Spirit’; it is enough for him to be Neuronal Man”³⁵. We conclude this first module of the trading zone having established that the foundation of an A-T psychology of addiction is a comprehension of foundational principles of addiction as an etiology of incontinent-vicious habituation. As we move into module two, we expand A-T psychology into an understanding of the human person in terms of social behavior as Aquinas teaches in his *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*.

Self-sufficiency, in Greek autarchia, is necessary for happiness. But his self-sufficiency is found most of all in contemplation for which man needs only what is commonly required for social living. For the necessities of life are indeed needed both by the wise or contemplative man and by the just man and others possessing the moral virtues that perfect the active life.

We conclude this module perhaps by oversimplifying Dunnington’s A-T philosophical theology of addiction by putting forth a meta factor cybernetic soulful construct. The meta factor is the continuous confluence of the internal sense habits of memory, imagination, and cogitative estimation (particular reason). In A-T soulful cybernetics, it is a continuous feedback/feedforward action Ensouled Body system of 1) sense memory-imagination, 2) cogitative-estimate, 3) choose and 4) act.

Module Two: A-T Addiction Psychology Trading Zone Psychology and a Psychodynamics of the Searching-Recovering Soul

A psychodynamic interpretation methodology is used in the trading zone study because it has a proper explanatory fit with recovery group healing for spiritual addiction and A-T addiction psychology. Psychodynamic psychother-

³⁴ E. R. Guthrie, *The psychology of Human Conflict. The Clash Within The Individual*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1938), 68.

³⁵ G. G. May M.D., *Addiction & Grace*, 65k.

apy is a form of psychotherapy derived from psychoanalytic theories and modeled after a psychoanalytic model of mental functioning. “Psychodynamic psychotherapy is primarily for individuals who will benefit from a more focused method of treatment that is active and concentrates on the realities of one’s daily life. Other terms include psychoanalytic psychotherapy, insight-oriented psychotherapy, and expressive psychotherapy”³⁶. It is the name psychoanalytical psychotherapy that describes the origins of psychodynamic as coming from the paradigm of psychoanalysis.

In order to understand the proper trading zone with the psychoanalytical paradigm we must explain briefly this fit with A-T psychology of addiction. It is important to note that as early as 1963 Thomists had recognized the compatibility between Thomism and Psychoanalysis. In an in-depth study of the emergence of the psychoanalytical school from Freud to its rapid development, especially the American theoretical academy and clinical practice, into a discipline more open to the spiritual nature of the person Michael Stock O.P. in “Thomistic Thought & Contemporary Psychoanalysis” wrote the following:

While St. Thomas never knew the unconscious as Freud did, he was keen enough not to close off his psychological formulations against development by new ideas and new methods of research. In point of fact, he noted in a more or less intuitive way, the properties of the id and the superego, the role of drives in psychic life, and the fact of unconscious thought processes and motivations, and on a number of other issues of lesser moment, he expressed himself in a way which would not seem foreign to contemporary depth psychology. On the strength of these Thomistic insights, it seemed possible and profitable to work on expanding Thomistic psychology with psychoanalytic materials³⁷.

We do not have the need or time to trace the development of American and post Freudian schools of psychoanalysis from its divergence from Freud into a meta psychology more harmonious with A-T psychology. However, we will trade and construct with three psychoanalysts, i.e., Paul Marcus, Karen Horney, and Charalambos S. Ierodiakonou.

Frist, we look briefly at the critical work in psychoanalysis that opens up several opportunities for various levels of dialogue with A-T psychology and especially Catholic pastoral psychology. Paul Marcus is a highly respected, published, academic American scholar and practitioner in the development of the American psychoanalytical tradition. In his most recent book *Psychoanalysis as a Spiritual Discipline, In Dialogue with Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel*, we easily find several domains for successful dialogue and conceptual trading zone activity, as is apparent in his strong reference to the philosopher Pierre Hadot³⁸.

³⁶ Bethesda (MD): National Center for Biotechnology Information (US), 2010.

³⁷ M. Stock, *Thomistic Thought and Contemporary Psychoanalysis*, “Laval théologique et philosophique” 19(1963), No. 2, 350-360.

³⁸ P. Hadot, *Philosophy as A Way of Life*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1997.

As philosopher Pierre Hadot notes about ancient Greek philosophy, psychoanalysis can be understood as a “spiritual exercise”, a tool for living life skillfully, more fully and wisely. The aim of a spiritual exercise is to foster a deep modification of an individual’s way of “seeing and being” a decisive change in how one lives one’s practical everyday life³⁹.

Marcus defined Spiritual Psychoanalysis on a Marcel /Buber philosophy that presents the psychoanalyst and analysand (the person being analyzed) engaged in deeply soul penetrating existential questions such as, “ ‘Why do I exist rather than not?’ ‘Have I the right to be, am I worthy of being?’ ‘What do I hope for, what do I desire to be happy?’ and ‘What must I do?’”⁴⁰. As we examine the dialogue of alcoholics and drug users in AA in early stages of recovery, we hear similar searching intense existential expressions of basic anxiety.

Second, we have Karen Horney M.D., a psychoanalyst who studied psychiatry from 1914 to 1918 at Belin-Lankwit, Germany. She trained as a Freudian analyst but broke from the Freudian tradition and developed a psychoanalytical theoretical school of alienation, self-realization, and idealized self-image principles. From the founding days of Freudian psychoanalysis in 1910, the emerging clinical practice was destined to diverge into several theories and methodologies. It was, however, in the United States with the leadership of Karen Horney, Erik Fromm and Harry Stack Sullivan that the American school made a radical departure from Freudian theory. This American group most fundamentally disagreed with Freud’s teachings on sexuality and instinctual orientation. Horney did not define the basic drive of the Id as being a sexual and aggressive desire. She defined the basic drive of the person as one of “Basic Anxiety”, and it is this unconscious drive that is obvious in the psychodynamics of addiction recovery. In *Neurosis and Human Growth*, M.D., Horney defines Basic Anxiety.

I use the term *Basic Anxiety*. It is his feeling of being isolated and helpless in a world conceived as feeling potentially hostile. The cramping pressure of his basic anxiety prevents the child from relating himself to others with the spontaneity of his real feelings and forces him to find ways to cope with them. He must (unconsciously) deal with them in ways which do not arouse or increase, but rather allay his basic anxiety. The particular attitudes resulting from such unconscious strategical necessities are determined both by the child’s given temperament and by contingencies of the environment. Briefly, he may try to cling to the most powerful person around him; he may try to rebel and fight; he may try to shut others out of his inner life and withdraw emotionally from them. In principle, this means that he can move toward, against or away from others⁴¹.

³⁹ P. Marcus, *Psychoanalysis as a Spiritual Discipline*. In *Dialogue with Martin Buber and Gabriel Marcel*, (London and New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2021), 10.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 192.

⁴¹ Karen Horney, M.D., *Neurosis and Human Growth*, (New York, New York: W.W. Norton & Company. INC., 1950), 18-19.

The crucial insight of Horney and American psychoanalysis is the importance of self-identity and contingencies of the environment, especially early childhood. It is with our next psychoanalyst Charalambos S. Ierodiakonou that the importance of contingencies of the environment and psychoanalysis and psychodynamics group recovery is of paramount importance.

Charalambos S. Ierodiakonou M.D. is an Aristotelian oriented psychiatrist psychoanalyst who is a distinguished Professor of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki. As an Aristotelian recognized philosopher and psychiatric-psychoanalyst, he presents the methods, categories, and the conception of the undivided nature of the human being that represents the Aristotelian and A-T psychology to contemporary psychodynamic recovery therapy based primarily on various revised schools of psychoanalysis. We have selected from his work *The Psychology of Aristotle, The Philosopher, A Psychoanalytic Therapist Perspective*⁴² four concepts for an A-T addiction and psychodynamic group recovery construct, especially narcissism, pleasure-hedone, volition and prudence.

1) Narcissism-Self Love: Ierodiakonou believes that an Aristotelian psychoanalytical understanding of narcissism must be taken basically from two chapters in Book IX of Nicomachean Ethics as well as in the Eudemian Ethics that discusses the nature of friendship in depth. He states that Aristotle comes to the major psychological conclusion that “Friendships are determined according to one’s feelings for oneself” (1166a)⁴³. He continues from Aristotle that a “Mature personality respects life as the extreme good and considered man’s existence as beneficial. The good man is full of pleasant memories and hopes for the future”⁴⁴, and “His mind is rich in ideas”⁴⁵. Therefore, Aristotle’s view is that such a wise man “(...) is his own best friend and therefore should have the greatest love for himself”⁴⁶. Therefore, Ierodiakonou states that the wise man can be in a dialogue with himself. Furthermore, during this dialogue, it is very important that the good and prudent man “(...) is in harmony with himself”⁴⁷.

We must mention here that the A-T concept of narcissistic, self-love is based mainly upon the moral aspect and belief that most people, however ordinary, may possess the good qualities that give the right to self-love. In contrast as Ierodiakonou describes disordered narcissistic vicious character, “Bad and wicked men cannot establish steady friendships because the relation with their selves

⁴² Ch. S. Ierodiakonou, *The Psychology of Aristotle, The Philosopher, A Psychoanalytical Therapist’s Perspective*, (London: Karnac Books Ltd, 2011).

⁴³ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethic’s*, Book Nine, Chapter 4; Text of Aristotle (1166 a1-166b29), 143.

⁴⁴ Charalambos S. Ierodiakonou, *The psychology of Aristotle*, p.144

⁴⁵ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethic’s*, Book Nine, Chapter 4; Text of Aristotle (1166a).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

is not even friendly. They are never satisfied, are uneasy all the time, have insatiable appetites and their actions can be harmful to others and themselves”⁴⁸.

Peter Michaelson is an Psychodynamic Addiction therapist who in his book *Secret Attachments, Exposing the Roots of Addictions & Compulsions*⁴⁹ describes the addict who does not possess a true narcissistic sense of self-love, as we have explained in terms of A-T. Consequently, the addict without the existential sense of self-love feels neglected and deprived: Thus, Michaelson writes:

Because of this secret attachment to “not getting”, addicts never feel satisfied, no matter how bountiful their lives may be, no matter how much their partners try to please them. They are like birds with their mouths stuck open, insisting on oral gratification while feeling they never get enough⁵⁰.

2) Pleasure (hedone): In terms of constructing an A-T psychodynamic construct of a searching recovering soul we draw attention to Ierodiakonou’s judgment about Aristotle’s perspective on pleasure and addiction. We feel that the most basic principle in the understanding of addiction is the A-T depth psychology-soul principle of the hedone-lupe (pleasure-unpleasure, psychic pain). He points primarily to arguments from Aristotle’s Nicomachean ethics. He holds that the Philosopher establishes a key soulful axis of the two poles of pleasure and pain, “It is evident that people avoid unpleasure as something bad, while they prefer pleasure as something good, so these two are opposed to each other” (1173a)⁵¹. We also see that Aristotle extends this principle into a type of antiquarian, social cultural, psychoanalytic principle. In Book Three of his Nicomachean Ethics he says, “Every study, whether of virtue, politics or other, must deal with pleasure or psychic pain” (1105)⁵². It is important to note that Aquinas in his commentary on this passage maintains when a habit of virtue is performed it is done with pleasure (BK 2, n.265)⁵³. We draw explicit attention to Book Two Lecture III of Aquinas Commentary. It is in this book where we learn another critical principle in the A-T psychodynamics of group recovery, particularly the difference between abstinence living a fulfilling life grounded on serenity and sobriety. Aquinas teaches it by virtuous habit, we achieve long-term pleasurable serenity even in sorrowful times:

Such actions, therefore, have some admixture of sorrow. But after that the habit of virtue has been formed, these actions are done with pleasure. The explanation

⁴⁸ Ch. S. Ierodiakonou, *The Psychology of Aristotle, The Philosopher, A Psychoanalytical Therapist’s Perspective*, 144-145.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ch. S. Ierodiakonou, *The Psychology of Aristotle, The Philosopher, A Psychoanalytical Therapist’s Perspective*, 150.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

is that a habit exists as a sort of nature, and that it is pleasurable which agrees with a thing according to nature⁵⁴.

Ierodiakonou underscores that Aristotle's concept of hedone lands on a significant spectrum, in contrast to the narrower psychobiological view of lust by Freudian psychoanalysis. In terms of constructing an A-T psychodynamics, it is grounded on a spiritual principle of pleasure. It is this sense of pleasure that is essential to the individual and group recovery experience:

It ranges from the simple sensory taste of sweetness and other somatic pleasures, for example, of smell or vision, to intellectual and emotional ones, like the enjoyment of music, of solving mathematical problems, of beautiful memories, or of high hopes, Indeed the philosopher [Aristotle] considers that these last experiences can in no way cause psychic pain, since they have no deficiencies" (1173b)⁵⁵.

Ierodiakonou continues with an insight in light of our previous A-T explanation of the self-sufficient contemplative character.

It may interest scholars, as well as everyone who loves studying, that Aristotle adds gaining knowledge among the pleasures which involve no pains; moreover, his personal preference is shown in a comment in the concluding paragraph of Chapter Three X, Book Ten "It makes no difference whether pleasures necessarily follow these experiences, because we would choose them even if we would get no pleasure from them" (1174a)⁵⁶.

3) Volition (will) and psychomotor function: In modern psychological circles volition is considered as the function by which a person consciously chooses the planning and performing of a certain action. Ierodiakonou claims that what Aristotle calls the appetitive part of the soul we can consider equivalent i.e., wish, desire and appetite. He, then, clarifies that the soul has the faculties of calculations and logic, while desire and appetites (as well as passion) are characterized by irrational thinking. Then the Aristotelian oriented psychoanalytic psychiatrist maintains "Desire is the appetitive seeking of sweet pleasure" (414b) and reason and desire "run contrary to each other" (414b)⁵⁷.

His final summation on the issue of volition are of critical importance to a trading zone construction between A-T psychology of addiction and a psychoanalytical psychodynamic construct. Ierodiakonou explains:

I am of the opinion that orexis (appetite) in the Aristotelian writings is equivalent to the psychoanalytical notion of instinctual drive. It is an innate function with

⁵⁴ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, Book Two, Lecture 3, n. 265.

⁵⁵ Ch. S. Ierodiakonou, *The Psychology of Aristotle, The Philosopher, A Psychoanalytical Therapist's Perspective*, 154.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 154-155.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 35.

great impetus and consists of instinctual tendencies expressing internal needs, which ask for immediate satisfaction at any cost, in an impulsive way. As a consequence, appetite, in order to reach its scope, activates other processes through the soul or/and the body: (a) Appetite (orexis) is an innate, instinctual drive, seeking satisfaction bodily or mentally, even in an irrational way; (b) Desire is produced upon the appearance of a pleasurable object and it acts in a hedonistic way, ignoring logic; and (c) Wish intervenes into the intentions of the above two and directs an action within reasonable limits⁵⁸.

In the matter of constructing an A-T psychoanalytical-psychodynamic addiction recovery trading zone, we take as an A-T principle that appetite (orexis) is an instinctual drive. It has the potential to develop into habituated behavior seeking immediate satisfaction at any cost, in an impulsive way. Therefore, we differ from Kent Dunnington who states that addiction is a puzzle of human action, i.e., humans knowing the good and not doing it. It is a person knowingly repeatedly and impulsively destroying him/herself. Dunnington's answer is that "Aristotle and Aquinas to this day remain the answer"⁵⁹.

4) Prudent thinking (and acting)—phronesis: Ierodiakonou notes that Aristotle in *On the Soul* uses in some passages *phronein* and *noein* interchangeably. Thus, *Phronein* is a way by which conception expresses itself, and it has a similar role in relation to thought⁶⁰. Most important, it is an intellectual habit and virtue. "It has the capacity to think well and deliberate deeply in order to act rationally and prudently in order to achieve a good life in general, as well as for a particular worthwhile end. In the definition of *phronesis* there is the element of ability to push to action"⁶¹. Ierodiakonou makes a comment we will return to in the next module on prudence and a lifestyle of abstinence and sobriety, "Whoever has *phronesis* is prudent enough to know limitations and to exert self-control without strain". It is not the purpose of this essay to develop a discipline of A-T Spiritual Psychoanalysis or Psychodynamics, but if such a task were attempted it would focus on leading analysts to approaching life in a state of psychic *phronesis*. We touch upon this theme in more detail in the next trading zone module. We mention here that the most contemporary in-depth treatment of particular reason and the virtue of prudence is expressed in Peter Redpath's latest work *How to Listen How to Speak*, and we claim in the next module that it serves as an A-T similar function to the ambiguous psychoanalytical *superego*:

As a moral virtue, 1) prudence exists within the prudent man's concrete cognitive reason, and 2) to exist therein precisely as a moral virtue, it must also simultaneously exist as a command and control principle within this person's abstract,

⁵⁸ Ibid., 36.

⁵⁹ K. Dunnington, *Addiction and Virtue. Beyond the Models of Disease and Choice*, 12.

⁶⁰ Ierodiakonou, 27.

⁶¹ Ibid.

sylogistic reason, Saint Thomas maintains that, within the individual circumstance, precisely what makes the prudent man the measure of moral activity is the fact that he is able to apprehend with precision universal and singular first principles of moral choice. Through abstract sylogistic reason, he is able to recognize the universal human good. Through concrete, cogitative, or particular, reason, he is able precisely to sense the enabling means to choose to move closer toward this end at this time and in this place. As a real end and real means, what is really good in the individual circumstance appears really good to the prudent man's cogitative and intellectual reason!⁶²

We are arguing that an A-T psychology of addiction is capable of understanding the etiology of addiction, especially alcohol and drug use, as a problem of habituated behavior and psychodynamic disorder. In the brief trading zone exchanges offered, we propose that A-T psychology is compatible with selected psychoanalytical theories related to the issue of addiction, particularly to the addict searching to recover his/her lost soul. Psychodynamic addiction is a concentrated method of psychoanalysis used in present day treatment. The aim of psychodynamic therapy is the need for the addict to develop deep spiritual-moral insight, expansion of rational choice, liberation from the past, overcoming of victimization, externalization, repression, anxiety, glorified ego (false narcissism), improvement of interpersonal relationship and mastery of emotional experiences in order to achieve long term sobriety.

There is a growing recognition presently that the treatment of recovery of alcoholics and drug addicts requires attention to methods of psychodynamic therapy. Even though, in the early days, recovery requires much attention to habituation behavioral exercises. We are learning today that a type of spiritual psychodynamics is also necessary, as the experienced psychotherapist Peter Michaelson explains:

Addictive personalities unconsciously recreate and recycle old childhood expectations of being deprived, denied, criticized, rejected, and forced to submit in the contexts of their present lives...To repeat, these unconscious attachment to feelings of deprivation, refusal, control, criticism, rejection are like emotional addictions... These emotional addictions or secret attachments result in a childish, victim mentality that must be transformed before self-defeating reactions and behaviors are given up for good⁶³.

In our next trading zone module, we blend the A-T habituation psychology and a spiritual psychodynamic perspective in order to analyze Alcoholics Anonymous group recovery psychology. We present an A-T ethnographic analysis of the AA Twelve Step searching, recovering, soul program.

⁶² P. A. Redpath, *How to Listen. How to Speak*, (St. Louis, MO, En Route Books & Media, 2021), 336.

⁶³ P. Michaelson, *Secret Attachments, Exposing the Roots of Addictions & Compulsions*, (Naples, FL, Prospect Books, 1993), 15.

Module Three: AA, The Searching-Recovering Soul, A Psychodynamic Conversion of Anxiety and Habituation

An ethnographic study of recovery of an organization like AA is best described as idioculture ethnography; an idioculture is a concept used in modern cultural sociology to describe a subculture as a collective socialcultural meaning making system⁶⁴. The trading zone methodology is an ethnographic observation and interpretation of Alcoholic Anonymous (AA We will continue to use these initials). Observations encompass things one witnesses, documents and records, etc. “It is based fundamentally on participant observation. It is critical that researchers develop a thorough appreciation of where and in what ways one’s own experiences may approximate those in the natural interactional symbolic setting. Participant-observation entails a more active (and inactive), common sense and somewhat ambiguous role as a researcher fits in the dynamic settings at hand”⁶⁵. The role of participant observer, A-T ethnographic psychologist is an engagement in an inductive qualitative inquiry that seeks to transform the sensing-thinking inquirer’s understanding of a defined domain under observation using an inductive and hermeneutical cycle of 1) initial topic clarified 2) preliminary engagement with related domain specific literature, empathic conversations, healing friendship interactions, spiritual exercises, and recovery leitmotifs 3) descriptive data gathering 4) interpretative lens and 5) final Trading zone Implications⁶⁶.

At this point, I must interject an important qualification that possibly introduces a strong bias into my role as subjective-objective, ethnographic observer. As of 2021, I have been an active member of AA for twenty-five years. During those years, I have experienced complete recovery. However, it has been over the past ten years that I have studied recovery from the perspective of an A-T spiritual psychology of AA as a pastor-spiritual counselor of addicts, and a student of A-T group psychodynamics.

I read Kent Dunnington, especially his doctoral thesis on Aquinas and AA and had the opportunity to discuss his work with him. I learned that he wished to do his Ph.D. in addiction after being invited to attend AA meetings as a non-alcoholic observer. Thereupon, based upon his AA observations and in-depth reflection, he decided that a Thomistic theological construct of habit and virtue was the suitable etiology for an understanding of addiction in modern society. We have begun this module again explaining trading zone methodology, but we might add that a methodology is really best described as a way of doing practical action-oriented A-T psychology.

⁶⁴ L. Spillman, *What is Cultural Sociology*, (Cambridge UK, Polity, 2020), 54.

⁶⁵ R. Prus, *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research, Intersubjectivity and the Study of Human Lived Experiences*, (Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 1996), 133.

⁶⁶ R. Anderson, *Intuitive Inquiry: Inviting Transformation and Breakthrough Insights in Qualitative Research*, “*Qualitative Psychology American Psychological Association*” 2019, No. 3, 312-319.

AA How It Started

The best way to begin our A-T ethnopsychology study of AA is to begin with a meeting between two alcoholics. It consists of two alcoholics who are completely broken mentally, morally, and physically by their alcoholism. They are an alcoholic stockbroker, Bill Wilson, and a surgeon, Doctor Bob Smith. These are two highly educated and professional individuals who had become vicious, habituated alcoholics. Their careers had been destroyed and marriages threatened. They had engaged in herculean efforts of willpower to control their drinking and had achieved sporadic self-willed periods of abstinence. Yet, for the best of their efforts and all their worldly accomplishments, in their own eyes and those of loved ones, they were bottom-out drunks.

Bill Wilson had originally attended a Christian recovery group known as the Oxford Movement Recovery Group. It was a Christian Evangelical group organization focused on evangelical Christian principles as a result the group had a short life span. Wilson and a few others continued to meet. Wilson was in Akron, Ohio in 1939. He went to visit Doctor Bob Smith. He told Doctor Bob that he had attempted several approaches to quit drinking, but he felt that he was on to something promising. He suggested to Bob that they get together as incurable drunks and talk about how we can stay sober on a daily basis. Then the story goes, we became friends with the same problem, the same shame and guilt. Bill told Doctor Bob, "If we love each other. If we are daily friends, and we will stay sober on a daily basis. It works". Doctor Bob was very skeptical, but he decided to give it a try. He and Bill Wilson met, and they remained sober. They then decided to find a third incurable alcoholic. They went to the psychiatric ward at a local hospital and met with another skeptical drunk. They said that they would meet on a daily basis, and they remained sober. It was from drunks meeting and becoming healing friends, sharing their pain, and searching for their soul (for a higher power than self) that AA was born. Paul Marcus in the final chapter of *Psychoanalysis as a Spiritual Discipline* writes, "Calling to mind Marcel's homo viator, psychoanalysis is conceived as "a psycho spiritual journey"⁶⁷. He, then, quotes from *The Psychoanalytical Mystic* by M. Eigen:

I feel what you will call that other dimension (the spiritual/divine) is here, always here. Whatever you call God or spiritual reality is right here, in our lives... Do our interactions make a more kindly world or a less kindly world? It reminds me of what Judaism says—that my words are creating angels and devils"⁶⁸.

It appears when two suffering alcoholics in spiritual pain and a raging sense of anxiety dialogue with each other and pray. It is the beginning of a spiritual conversion to a new life.

⁶⁷ P. Marcus, *Psychoanalysis as a Spiritual Discipline*, 195.

⁶⁸ M. Eigen, *The Psychoanalytic Mystic*, (Binghamton, NY: ESF Publishers, 1998), 98-99.

1) AA Ethnopsychodynamic Study Clarification: We principally focus this brief ethnography on the early stages of recovery in AA. We focus our attention on when the alcoholic/addict user initially enters the AA recovery program and begins a conversion process to a life of serenity and sobriety. We consider the first two years of being active in AA recovery as the period of personal and interpersonal conversion activities and behavioral actions. Note, we use the terminology that the alcoholic/addict enters AA. In the past years, increasingly a large number of persons entering have also been drug users. It is not the official policy of AA to include non-alcoholics, but it has become at the local level a widely acceptable policy. Cocaine use is the most common; however, our type of cocaine user includes multiple types of drugs.

2) We begin our investigation by examining approved and related literature that gives us a reliable understanding of the historical spiritual and group healing psychology of AA. We have selected three basic works that we claim present, what we call, the AA spiritual psychology. They are 1) Father Ed Dowling, *Bill Wilson's Sponsor* by Glenn Chesnut, 2) *Alcoholic Anonymous*⁶⁹, *Big Book*, and 3) *Twelves Steps and Twelve Traditions*⁷⁰.

We do not have the need in this essay to give complete attention to *Father Ed Dowling, Bill Wilson's Sponsor*⁷¹. It is selected as a knowledgeable work on the spiritual development of AA. From the beginning, AA developed a pluralistic appealing expression of spirituality. It was influenced for the main part by Father Dowling S.J. a close friend of Bill Wilson. Doctor Smith was influenced by a nun, sister Ignatia that he knew from St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio. As a result, there was a strong influence of Ignatian spirituality in terms of the importance of the Ignatian spiritual exercises, known as the AA 12 Step Program. Father Dowling also had a personal ministry to, what he called, common folk, self-help psychology and was also involved promoting Abraham Low's M.D. Recovery Plus, an anger management recovery group movement.

Besides Bill Wilson's interest in Ignatian spirituality, he was also fascinated with psychoanalysis, especially the Jungian school of analysis. Although, there were others in the early group, especially Father Dowling, who, for assorted reasons, were cautious in their incorporation of psychoanalytical concepts into the program. Yet, as we will see, there are definite elements of psychoanalytical psychology merged into the *Big Book*. In early days, another major influence in the AA spiritual psychology convergence was from the American New Age Religion Movement. The main influence was Emmett Fox who was a New Age theologian who taught the power of scientific prayer: "Work by rehearsing anything or everything that you know about God. God is

⁶⁹ Alcoholic Anonymous, *Third Edition Revised* (New York City: Alcoholic Anonymous World Services, INC., 1976).

⁷⁰ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, (The A.A. Grapevine, and Alcoholic s Anonymous Publishing, 152, 1953, 1981).

⁷¹ G. F. Chesnut, *Father ED Dowling, Bill Wilson's Sponsor* (Bloomington In: iUniverse, 2015).

wisdom, truth, inconceivable love. God is present everywhere, has infinite power, knows everything, and so on. It matters not how well you may think you understand these things; go over them repeatedly⁷². If we return to module one and engage in a A-T habituation lens of interpretation of alcoholism, we easily understand why this down to earth, positive spirituality would be appealing to searching recovering alcoholics. At the same time, it stresses the relationship between spirituality, prayer, and habituation, i.e., replacing bad habits with good habits on a daily basis. It is learning good, orderly, daily habits.

Bill Wilson in 1939 completed his work simply called *Alcoholic Anonymous*, and a year later, in St. Louis, the “Fraternity of AA” was founded. Wilson divided the Big Book manuscript into sections; part one describes the solution and part two is about personal stories of recovery. This work is still an essential part of the recovery program, as it clearly sets out the AA principles of spiritual recovery. Members have a profound belief in efficacy of the spiritual principles and the recognizable, searching, recovery testimonies of promising new sober lifestyles. This book is known to members as simply the Big Book. We draw attention immediately to chapter 2 “There is A Solution”. It is here that as an A-T psychologist and a 25-year member of AA, my lens interprets the fundamental principle of group recovery as spiritual friendship.

But there exists among us a fellowship, friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage; however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feelings of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have help us together as we are now joined⁷³.

One of the most critical concepts that explains the understanding of an A-T psychodynamics is that it is about activity. We stress again that psychodynamics is a condensed clinical and group therapy of the psychoanalytical school. Hans Loewald, one of the most respected in the development of the American academy of psychoanalysis, believes that psychoanalysis does not come to an understanding of the mind “(...) in terms of its structure and functions. It is the aim of psychoanalysis to know and analyze in the notion of “action principles”, i.e., the relations among the temporal modes of past, present and future that define psychic time⁷⁴. The type of recovery-healing friendship we discover in AA is a spiritual friendship is similar to an A-T psychodynamic principle we find expressed in the *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics* that speaks about the importance of having pleasurable friendship over long periods of

⁷² E. Fox, *The Golden Key with Pictures*, (New York: Sunburst Books, 1967).

⁷³ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 17.

⁷⁴ *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 108.

time and sharing common beliefs and morals. It is in Book 8, 1605 that we find a power in AA that even new members at their first meeting seem to sense in the welcoming, empathic, and understanding friendship.

But in friendship the act of one is not sufficient but the acts of two mutually loving one another must occur. For that reason the Philosopher [Aristotle] did not state absolutely that it is a virtue but added “or at least accompanies virtue”, because it seems to add something above the notion of virtue⁷⁵.

AA is very clear up front with newcomers to the first step of the program that it is a spiritual program of recovery. Based on my statement on the importance of friendship I am about to briefly describe the dynamics of the AA first step meeting. It is when the alcoholic is introduced for the first time to AA and offered spiritual friendship. But first I must explain a critical important principle pertaining to A-T recovering group psychodynamics. It is taken from the writings of the neo-Thomists Peter A. Redpath, “We sense with our intellects and intellectualize with our senses”⁷⁶. Here, I will interject the advantage to a recovery program is the sense learning over time. It occurs by a type of spiritual sense of induction by a person in group recovery over time. This commonsense induction described by Redpath fits the soulful (psychic) psychodynamics of recovery. He explains that immediate induction occurs “without the need to reason about it to make it intelligible to us, *understanding*. Because what we reason about necessarily involves immediately knowing some subject without needing to reason about it”⁷⁷. I will endeavor to develop this sense principle in the following first meeting description.

An Alcoholic First Meeting

First, I will give some background to an alcoholic/addict user coming to his/her first meeting. I must stress that no one, as a rule, comes to AA because they think that they have a drinking problem. As a rule, they have been forced by courts, by an intervention, completed rehabilitation treatment, their health is completely perilous or a person has experienced, what AA calls, a “bottom”. The alcoholic/addict habituated person engages in conscious and unconscious self-deception. It is denial and repression. It is an habituated defense mechanism. It is an internal strategy guided by an erroneous conscience. Whereby not only does the person not recognize that a problem exists, but he/she also doesn’t want to think about it. By the time alcoholics/addicts come to the first

⁷⁵ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, n. 1605.

⁷⁶ P. A. Redpath, *A Not-So Elementary Christian Metaphysics*, (St. Louis, MO 63109: En Route Books & Media, 2015), 147.

⁷⁷ P. A. Redpath, *How to Listen. How to Speak*.

meeting, they have come to some level of awareness of having a severe problem with alcohol and possibly drug use. Yet, there is still the problem of rationalization and denial lingering, specifically in the unconscious.

Wherever denial and repression exists, the alcoholic realizes some kind of problem exists. The realization calls forth a new defensive maneuver, which is to rationalize, to make excuses in an attempt to justify the behavior. These rationalizations are not intentional lies; the person actually tries to convince him/herself that they are true. "I need a drink because I feel depressed". "I desire a drink to celebrate". "I have to have these pills to help me sleep". "Life is short, why not enjoy it?" The very occurrence of such rationalization is irrefutable evidence that alcoholism and/or drug use is present, for if there were no addiction, there would be no reason to make excuses or to attend a first step AA recovery meeting.

The Bottom

The following bottom story is a brief description from the AA Big Book called "Too Young":

I couldn't think straight anymore. Most of my conversations were meaningless to everyone but me. I can't remember what had been said five minutes ago. I usually passed out when I hit the bed. I wake up covered with sweat. I heard voices when no one was around, and I saw things that weren't there. Then one day, whammo! I was in the hospital, hysterical. What had happened? Was I having a nervous collapse? The doctor was asking me about my drinking but I can't be an alcoholic—I'm too young⁷⁸.

I have often heard recovering alcoholics/addicts explain at meetings that spirituality is necessary for alcoholics because they have already been to hell. When a person attends a first step meeting the level of motivation, as a rule, depends on the depth and intensity of the bottom as a crescendo of "pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization... We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period, we get worse, never better"⁷⁹ (As expressed in the AA Big Book).

First Meeting Annihilation Anxiety

The first step meeting is when the alcoholic is in a state of annihilation anxiety. It is defined as "mental condition reflecting concerns over survival, preservation of the self and the capacity to function. The danger associated with annihilation anxieties is a threat to one's survival"⁸⁰. Most often, an alco-

⁷⁸ Alcoholics Anonymous, 317.

⁷⁹ Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 3; More About Alcoholism, Chapter 3.

⁸⁰ M. Hurvich, *The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytical Theory*, "American Psychoanalytical Journal" February 2003, 581.

holic/addict comes to his/her first meeting with the threat of losing his/her marriage, health, facing a jail sentence, or being sent by the court to jail for a DUI, but the greatest cause of anxiety is losing employment with the loss of income which means the alcoholism or drug use cannot be supported.

The alcoholic comes to the first step meeting in a state of annihilation anxiety; yet, despite this existential threat, he/she still suffers a conflicting anxiety of giving up alcohol/drugs forever. Bill Wilson describes this intrapsychic conflict in his story as he is on the edge of his bottom. "Trembling I stepped from the hospital. Fear sobered me for a bit. Then came the insidious insanity of that first drink and I was off to the races again"⁸¹.

The alcoholic/addict is greeted by a couple of members at the meeting, often he is brought by a recovering alcoholic/addict he has met. They ask his first name. He tells them, "My name is John". "John, we are happy to have you here. We want you to relax. You are among friends. Take a chair at the table". John sits, and the person leading the meeting speaks, "We have a visitor tonight. It is his very first meeting, and he thinks he may have a problem with alcohol. Now John, we will just ask you to listen as we go around the table. Each person will tell their story of searching and recovery. They will talk about three things. They are going to talk about 1) What it was like drinking, 2) What happened, and 3) What it is like now". The leader then says, "John, I want to give you one piece of advice as you listen. Don't think about how you are different. Think about the similarities. When we are finished, we would like to hear your thoughts and feelings".

Usually, the new person has little to say except to express a sense of relieve and gratitude of finding friends (companions) who have had the same suffering. Most groups will then recommend to the newcomer, stressing the behavioral-habitation nature of the program, that John attend 90 meetings over the next 90 days, if John is serious about his drinking, read the Big Book and The Twelve and Twelve, and get a temporary sponsor. Several group members will give him their first name and phone number and tell him to call if he has a sincere desire to stop drinking.

Seldom does a newcomer remember much of what is said at this first meeting, but if he/she is engaged in an earnest desire to recover, as AA in the Big Book portrays, "with the alcoholic illness with it there goes annihilation of all things worthwhile in life". The alcoholic/addict leaves the meeting with a deep "we" sense. For example, as told by a newcomer after three months in the program, "The best was the word *we*. I was no longer alone. Others before me had made the admission of powerlessness and had been set free from years of alcoholic misery. If John could work the AA program and stay sober for six years, then I would have to try my best to do it, too"⁸².

⁸¹ Big Book, Alcohols Anonymous World Services, 4.

⁸² Step by Step, real AAs, Real Recovery AA, (Grapevine Inc. 457 Riverside Drive, New York, New York, 2011).

I personally can remember having a coffee with an extremely successful businessman who had fourteen years of sobriety and had also been a remarkable semi-professional athlete. He told me about his story of alcohol and cocaine addiction. He tried several rehabilitation clinics and finally came to AA. Then he began to speak about his first few months in AA and how he came to understand the nature of spiritual recovery. He spoke directly to my A-T Psychology interpretive lens. He said that he had come to know several men in the program who were similar to him in their careers and life story, and he could sense the peace and the calm they had found. He wanted that sense of peace and calm. AA members read the Big Book, the Twelve and Twelve, dialogue about how to stay sober, get a trusting sponsor, but, most of all, over time with spiritual friends on a journey to recovery, gain a “sense” of goodness and virtue.

In the above sensing conversation with my AA spiritual recovering companion, he was experiencing the sensing factor. He had experienced the A-T principle of “sensing with his intellect and intellectualizing with his senses”. As taught in the *Summa Theologiae*:

As the Philosopher [Aristotle] says (Ethic., vi, 8), prudence does not reside in the external senses whereby we know sensible objects, but in the interior sense, which is perfected by memory and experience so as to judge promptly of particular cases. This does not mean however that prudence is in the interior sense as in its principle subject, for it is chiefly in the reason, yet by a kind of application it extends to this sense⁸³.

It is the remarkable-unconscious motivation of being in a spiritual recovery group dedicated to the pursuit of shared virtuous participation grounded in an organized awareness, as expressed in the AA Big Book. “It is not by chance we were given the power to reason, to examine the evidence of our senses, and to draw conclusions. That is one of man’s magnificent attributes”⁸⁴.

What is the spiritual psychological nature of this magnificent attribute that empowers an organization with persons “(...) willing to believe in a Power greater than themselves and live by spiritual principles and use everyday language to describe these spiritual principles?”⁸⁵ We interpret this powerful personal and organizational strength as belonging to the human faculty of particular reason and the virtue of prudence. This is the single most important causative factor that permeates the AA spiritual culture in some manner at every meeting and every critical-empathic dialogue. This following quote from an A-T perspective is perhaps the most important quote in the AA Big Book on the nature of the search and recovery from addiction. It is about the healing-

⁸³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q, 47, a. 3, obj. 3, Aquinas Institutes online Latin-English editions.

⁸⁴ Alcoholic Anonymous, 53.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 93.

spiritual power of the habituation of virtuous action and the cogitative sense, as expressed in AA everyday language:

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day “Thy will be done” in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves⁸⁶.

The searching, recovering soul learns intensely by means of meetings, prayer, study, meditation, and sponsorship the importance of rational and moral deliberation and choice. There are two action principles senior member pass on passionately to those in early recovery: 1) get a sponsor, 2) meeting makers make it. The virtue of prudence is both an intellectual and moral virtue. As we explain next in the Twelve Steps, AA leads members by means of intense moral examination and slowly moving to spiritual wisdom, as expressed in Step Eleven, to the awareness that “New lessons for living were learned, untapped resources of courage were uncovered, that finally, inescapably, the conviction came that God does move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform”⁸⁷. It is the A-T lesson that prudence and particular reason is essential to long term recovery of the alcoholic/addict. In many ways, AA is a learning, spiritual psychodynamic culture, as Aquinas teaches about prudence and organization for the common good:

According to the Philosopher [Aristotle] (*Ethic.*, vi, 8) some have held that prudence does not extend to the common good, but only to the good of the individual, and this because they thought that man is not bound to seek other than his own good. But this opinion is opposed to charity, which “seeketh not her own” (1 Cor. 13:5): wherefore the Apostle says of himself (1 Cor. 10:33): “Not seeking that which is profitable to myself, but to many, that they may be saved”. Moreover, it is contrary to right reason, which judges the common good to be better than the good of the individual. Accordingly, since it belongs to prudence rightly to counsel, judge, and command concerning the means of obtaining a due end, it is evident that prudence regards not only the private good of the individual, but also the common good of the multitude⁸⁸.

If there is a great lesson from AA’s spiritual psychology, it is conveyed best in the above Aquinas teaching on the relationship of solicitude and prudence. Solicitude is about loving concern for the other. From participant observation and as an active member of AA for twenty-five years of recovery, I be-

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 98.

⁸⁷ Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 105.

⁸⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 10.

gan to sense a culture of loving, concerned, prudent friendship, and I became spiritually habituated.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions is, what I would call, the AA action manual. It was written by Bill Wilson and published in 1953. It is used by AA groups worldwide and is the source of a group study, usually once a week. It is recommended to every newcomer to get a Big Book and a Twelve and Twelve for study and spiritual reflection. As the newcomer works the program and becomes comfortable and trusting with the culture of anonymity, he/she will trust a sponsor and get very close, as a rule, to a few intimate friends. It is with these individuals that much of the deep, interpersonal, spiritual psychodynamic I-Thou dialogue occurs. It is in the 12 Steps that the influence of Father Dowling's and Ignatian spirituality makes a defining contribution to AA spiritual habituation and psychodynamic dialogue. Newcomers are told that it is a requirement to work the steps because they are spiritual exercises. The definition of a spiritual exercise is any spiritual activity that gets better with practice. Even though the 12 steps do not use the terminology of virtue ethics, the steps unquestionably call for the exercise of the virtuous, moral actions of prudence, justice, courage, and temperance.

Steps one to three are admittance about complete defeat and the destructiveness of self-sufficiency. It is an exercise in profound humility, teaching the alcoholic/addict that "Until he so humbles himself, his sobriety—if any—any will be precarious"⁸⁹. Step two is about acceptance of a higher power of the newcomer's understanding, and in step three the alcoholic must be prepared to make a decision to turn his will over to God as he/she understands Him.

Step Four and Step Twelve: We will return to steps five to ten after we examine four and twelve because they are extremely important to the spiritual, psychodynamic aspects of this trading zone addiction construct. Paul Marcus stressed that a main component in the future of the Spiritual Psychoanalysis of the Axial Age is the focused attention in analysis to moral identity and growth. Consequently, A-T psychology, as argued, easily engages in the practice of a spiritual depth psychodynamic of addiction. We assert that the understanding of the impact of sense memory, imagination, and the cogitative sense as unconscious factors are clearly addressed in steps four and twelve. See step 4:

We have also see men and women who go power-mad, who devote themselves to attempting to rule their fellows... Alcoholics especially should be able to see that instinct run wild in themselves is the underlying cause of their destructive drinking. We have drunk to drown feelings of fear, frustration, and depression... Our present anxieties and troubles, we cry, are caused by the behavior of other people—people who really need a moral inventory. We firmly believe that it only they'd treat us better, we'd be all right⁹⁰.

⁸⁹ Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 12.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 45.

Step 12 is the final step in the program. The last three steps 10, 11 and 12 are often called the spiritual maintenance steps. They are to be practiced as the foundational exercise for a lifestyle of spiritual serenity and sobriety. We are mentioning this step with step four because we wish to draw attention to Karen Horney, mentioned previously, who defined the basic drive of the unconscious id as Basic Anxiety (defined in module two). A constant recurring theme in AA recovery is the psychic and moral, unconscious, internal dynamics of fear resulting from a disordered narcissistic drive. Horney's foundational theory concisely is that the basic cause of madness is self-aggrandizement. Horney teaches, "The narcissistic impulse is toward the development of the phony self"⁹¹. The phony self is always at the expense of the real self.

It is in the last Step 12 where the alcoholic/addict is given his/her commission to go out and bring the message of AA to the alcoholic/addict who is still suffering. The alcoholic/addict has learned that sharing the program with another still suffering alcoholic/addict is God's greatest blessing. In the final step, the alcoholic/addict is reminded of the who and what they are. A story is told that a number of outside doctors, psychologists and others examined the personality traits of AA program members over a long period of time. The conclusions were rather straightforward and much in line with Horney's depth psychology. Step 12 describes the recovering alcoholic basic anxiety and resentment from the study:

These distinguished men had the nerve to say that most of the alcoholics under investigation were still childish, emotionally sensitive, and grandiose. How we alcoholics did resent that verdict! We would not believe that our adult dreams were often truly childish. And considering the rough deal life has given us, we felt it perfectly natural that we were sensitive. As to our grandiose behavior, we insisted that we had been possessed of nothing but a high and legitimate ambition to win the battle of life... We have had a much keener look at ourselves and those about us. We have seen that we were prodded by unreasonable fears or anxieties into making a life business of winning fame, money, and what we thought was leadership. So false pride became the reverse side of that ruinous coin marked "Fear".

We argued in module two that it is only the virtuous, prudent person of wisdom and emotional mastery who has true narcissistic self-love. On the other hand, the alcoholic/addict is driven, as we read above, by insatiable appetites and envy run wild. Therefore, we must consider that a basic anxiety is the cause of the alcoholic/addicts bad and wicked narcissistic self-love. The psychoanalyst Neville Symington identifies narcissism as the core of the psychopathology of our times. He claims that this narcissism has driven the modern, insatiable, sensory appetites to an internal, small, commanding superego, god

⁹¹ K. Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, 24.

figure. It is interesting because this internal “god figure” fits accurately the demands of the pleasure seeking alcoholic/addict. It is immediacy! I want a straight answer right away! I want the problem solved now! If I am not pretty enough, smart enough, rich enough, one drink will solve it now! If I shoot some cocaine up my nose, I touch my inner god now! As Symington writes: “I want the answer right away. I cannot tolerate any delay. Thinking, research, curiosity of mind are all very well, but I want to know now. So, I fashion god. My god will deliver straight away”⁹². Symington seems to explain basic anxiety in a concisely brilliant analytical way:

“So, I want an immediate answer to my question because I am quaking with fear” (A-T interpretation basic anxiety).

“Tell me quickly. I cannot bear the suspense”.

The Superego-ego dialogue.

“I need you to be god because then you can give me an immediate answer”.

Here, I must add a personal note. When I came to AA years ago, it took me a few attempts to get the program. The last time I came I was really hurting. Consequently, I was willing to listen, learn to work the steps and get a sponsor. The sponsor I got had been in the program for years. I would call him a wise, plain speaking, guileless and everyday man. He told me that he was concerned because I was too educated in philosophy and theology. I would be too tempted to intellectualize the program. He taught me to keep it simple. He then continuously drilled this moral aphorism into my soul: “Just remember Bill, there is a God and you are not big enough for His throne!”

Finally, we come to steps five to ten. These are truly the action steps. Step 5: The alcoholic/addict admits to God, him/herself, and another human being the nature of their wrong. Step 6: The alcoholic is ready to have God remove all defects. Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our short comings. Step 8: Made a list of all the persons we have harmed and were willing to make amends and Step 9: Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings. When we come to step five, the recovering alcoholic/addict is called to actions of completing a moral inventory and in step eight he/she must make amends with those they have harmed. If we put the A-T lens of interpretation to these steps, we interpret that they are learning by an unconscious, inductive learning experience of the virtuous actions of prudence, justice, temperance, and courage. We will call step five one of spiritual induction, and we must turn briefly to the latest work of Peter Redpath, *How to Listen, How to Speak, Standing on the Shoulders of Giants to Renew Common Sense & Uncommon sense Wisdom in the Contemporary World* on the fundamental necessity of understanding how personal and social inductive learning defined by A-T psychology, and more

⁹² N. Symington, *A Pattern of Madness*, (London, New York, K. Karnac (books) Ltd., New York, 2002), 106-108.

important should be defined by empirical psychology. Inductive reasoning is usually accepted as a process of defined-methodical observation and arriving at principles. Redpath expounds the full existential force of induction thus:

We know through immediate induction, without the need to reason about it to make it intelligible to us, *understanding*... children are born with a greater or lesser facility to learn music or mathematics; think productively or practically, concretely or abstractly; immediately to understand first principles, have strong psycho-logical induction faculties; or *possess some common sense considered in general or in relation to this or that subject*... I have discovered this on more than one occasion with all such individuals! People tend to be conversationally persuaded by understanding—immediate induction—not by endless argument. To engage in endless conversations with people who, for example, are theoretically intelligent in one way, but lack practical experience or moral prudence in a subject in another way, is fruitless, hopeless⁹³.

If we grasp the extreme significance of Redpath's a common-sense induction, we might alter his latest text slightly and speak of the uncommon common sense spiritual inductive journey of steps five to ten. The alcoholic/addict has learned from meetings and a sponsor the importance of making a fearless moral inventory. It is undoubtedly stressed that it is a moral inventory comprised of a universally recognized list of human failings—the Seven Deadly Sins of pride, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, and sloth⁹⁴. Step five is when the alcoholic/addict senses a deflation of the ego. It is then perceived as the most difficult step. Step five is really an exercise of a solicitousness moral inventory; it is an action that leads to an internal sense of the virtue of prudent deliberation and freedom of choice. After the moral inventory is complete, he/she must share the inventory with another person, and it is interesting to note the wording of the advice given, "We ought to take much care, remembering to take much care, remembering that prudence is a virtue which carries a high rating"⁹⁵.

Step six is about asking God to remove character defects, but upon close A-T interpretation the step is about the need to have a sense of moral perfection in the spiritual journey of the recovering alcoholic/addict. There must be a commitment to strive for a lifestyle of moral perfection. A 100 percent admission in step one was made to practice absolute perfection never to drink again. Step six teaches that it is a matter that moral progress is possible to the extent that the recovering person has a vision and commitment to higher ideals of perfection. The step draws special attention to the virtue of temperance and moral ideals. I would suggest that this following passage from Aquinas on charity somewhat captures the spiritual sense of step six. We learn from Aquinas

⁹³ P. A. Redpath, *How To Listen. How To Speak*, 5-6, 262.

⁹⁴ Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 48.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 61.

nas that if we are to seek perfection in love of self and others, then we must seek progress in the moral virtues:

In order that man work well in things referred to the end, he needs not only a virtue disposing him well to the end, but also those virtues which dispose him well to whatever is referred to the end: for the virtue which regards the end is the chief and moving principle in respect of those things that are referred to the end. Therefore it is necessary to have the moral virtues together with charity⁹⁶.

A way to describe the action and interactions of steps five to ten is the alcoholic/addict has been involved in a common sense inductive spiritual dramaturgy. One of the truly insightful theories of modern sociology comes from Erving Goffman who put forth that our behavior is shaped front stage every day before an audience. It is a setting of persons, places, and situations. How well we adapt and perform depends upon our back stage preparation. "In dramaturgy, communicating information about ourselves to others and managing their impressions of us—regardless of whether or not we intend to be dramaturgical. Goffman illustrated whether we like it or not our behavior is expressive"⁹⁷.

Facing the five to ten action steps is for the alcoholic/addict a genuinely anxiety intensifier and a call for courage because he/she has spent most of their life attempting to hide behind a mask of a false persona. Or worse, the drunk or drug addict has believed that they are the director, writer, producer, and lead actor of the drama. In AA parlance, it is said that it is when the searching-recovering ego gets right-sized. The AA searching, recovering soul does not sit down in a psychodynamic psychotherapy group session. A-T psychology explains the process as a psychodynamic spiritual dramaturgy of focused moral activity. The recovering alcoholic/addict is strongly motivated, especially throughout the initial first two years, to attend frequent meetings and to work the steps with the guidance of a sponsor. Note, the sponsor is not a therapist nor spiritual director. From day one like any other AA member, the sponsor only shares his/her experience in working the steps and provides encouragement and moral guidance, particularly in matters of prudent deliberation. It is also necessary in this intense, spiritual, dialogical, dramaturgy for the searching, recovering persons to daily pray throughout the day, "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference".

The above prayer says grant me the serenity. This is a critical point. It teaches that the incontinent, vicious person must perform on three dramaturgy actions: 1) It is a backstage preparation before God a lamentation prayer. For

⁹⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 65, a. 1.

⁹⁷ K. L. Sandstrom, D. D. Martin, G. A. Fine, *Symbols, Selves, and Social Reality*, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 120.

example, I had a lady in AA explain it to me this way, "I had been taken by ambulance to the psychiatric ward of the hospital. I was crying in my bed in tears, confused, demoralized, and broken. I had never gone to church, but I wanted to pray to some kind of god. There was an old, African American lady in the ward with me. She was always talking out loud to God. I went over. Her name was Wanda. I asked Wanda could you teach me a powerful prayer. She said yes. 'It's simple. Just cry out real loud with me, Help Me Jesus!'" 2) God wants to observe us in the drama making amends to those to we have hurt, especially persons destroyed in our social relationships. Where, when, how and with whom have we grievously failed to practice the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and courage on the stage of life and, 3) We then know that we have the ability to discover our true nature as opposed to being the main actor in the drama. AA is a lifestyle. It is a dialogue of recovery. AA members attend daily and weekly meetings to dialogue about their everyday spiritual encounters, fears, hopes and interpersonal encounters. They are always exchanging and treasuring moral aphorisms, e.g., one day at a time, let go and let God, easy does it. However, the maxims most commonly heard at AA meetings are about fear, e.g., fear is false evidence appearing as real, face everything and run or face everything and recover. These moral maxims are of paramount importance in the spiritual recovery process because they are used as types of personal mindfulness, sensing, formation, principles that brings a psychosomatic sense of calmness conducive to a state of prudent habituation and deliberation.

We come to step ten: "Continue to take personal inventory and when wrong, promptly admit it" and eleven: "Seek through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out". Senior members of AA call these the spiritual maintenance steps that are to be followed for life. After 25 year as a recovering alcoholic, active member of AA, having sponsored recovering alcoholic/addicts and as a student of Aristotelian-Thomistic psychology, I prefer to call these steps of uncommon, common-sense contemplation. I want to stress from participant observation of twenty-five years and my own personal experience what I call, "The conversion experience of the searching, recovery journey" of roughly the first two years of the program.

It took me a couple of attempts at the program before I became serious. On my final attempt, I was willing to listen and learn because my rationalization and denial games were over. I sat in meetings listening, but in my early recovery I was still at the stage of various stages of "annihilation anxiety". As a result, I found it hard to focus. For example, I had been a serious reader, but it was about a year before I could read a complete book. My sponsor told me that I was suffering from the recovering "monkey brain". I sat and listened. I began to pray. Simple lamentation prayers. Slowly, I calmed down. I went to meetings every day. I formed close intimate friendships. I became part of the group after the meeting where a smaller group goes for a coffee and fellowship. They

were my friends, and I entered a state of “conversion anxiety”. I listened to stories at speakers meetings of persons with one to twenty years of sobriety while working the steps. I wanted what they had. I kept on sensing and feeling. I began going back to church with my wife. I began spiritual and philosophical reading again. I became interested in eastern mysticism.

By the fifth year, I had a radical change of lifestyle, and my faith in Jesus Christ as my savior had returned. I left the private sector and became an Episcopal priest. Still, I remained active in AA and sponsoring new members. The best way to express my searching, recovering soul is that I began to sense at a deeper, higher, philosophical-theological level. Gradually, I began to remember my undergraduate classes in philosophy when I studied Thomas Aquinas. I sensed that Aquinas seemed to explain what was happening at the AA meetings and conversations. I took a number of years, but by the fifteenth year, I found Thomistic scholars at the right time in my spiritual inductive searching-recovery. I met Peter Redpath and studied intensely his interpretation of Aquinas, specifically the faculties of the soul. Eureka, I discovered the foundation of psychology. “We sense with our intellect and we intellectualize with our senses”. The best explanation of this magnificent teaching is in chapter 15 of his latest pivot work *How to Listen. How to Speak*. It is highly recommended if the reader wishes a more comprehensive understanding of particular reason and the virtue of prudence as the ego and superego of A-T psychodynamics.

Finally, we come to step twelve: “Having had a spiritual awakening, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs”. We have developed an A-T psychological understanding of addiction from the perspective of virtuous habits, psychodynamic theory, and AA group recovery. It is significant that Bill Wilson in step twelve reminds recovering AA missionaries that they must have a spirituality that is grounded on an unique AA form of contemplative anxiety. It is the deep anxiety of not losing their abstinence. They do not want to return to the stage of life, the daily dramaturgy where they are no longer the main phony performer. Bill Wilson says, “But now we see ourselves as chips off the same old block. At heart we had all been abnormally fearful. It mattered little whether we had sat on the shore of life drinking ourselves into forgetfulness or had plunged in recklessly and willfully beyond our depth and ability. The result was the same—all of us had nearly perished in a sea of alcohol”⁹⁸.

Peter Michaelson, a practicing, addiction psychodynamic psychotherapist, is correct. “Without accompanying psychotherapy, drugs cannot resolve unconscious conflicts. People become smarter, wiser and more discerning when they work out their unconscious emotional problems with the help of a therapist and a support group”⁹⁹. What have we learned from our brief ethnographic study of

⁹⁸ Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 123-124.

⁹⁹ P. Michaelson, *Secret Attachments*, 26.

the AA program for searching, recovering alcoholics/addicts? We have basically learned that the counseling Father Dowling gave Bill Wilson was correct. Common-sense folk, with the same alcohol and drug habituations, with love for each other, virtue-based dialogue, submission to the steps and the love of compassionate friends will experience the psychodynamic impact of 1) becoming smarter and wiser, 2) more discerning, and 3) working out emotional problems. Of course, we interpret that the AA group psychodynamic impact is achieved by deep friends engaged in the sensing and sharing of particular reason and a culture dedicated to the virtue and energy of group prudence.

Karen Horney identified a major omission in the Freudian tradition. It was Freud's lack of psychological attention to the nature of social behavior and human development. It is a calamitous error in the understanding of the ontological nature of the human person. Horney, in the development of her clinical psychoanalytical school, was not aware of the sociological theory of dramaturgy, but she had an extraordinary intuitive sense of the neurotic individual as an unconscious, basic, anxiety-driven, aggressive, sycophant or isolated anti-social actor. Sigmund Freud theorized that the mind is composed of three parts: the superego, ego, and id. It is the id that contains the basic instinctive drives, aggressive desires and pleasure seeking. The content of the id is entirely unconscious and repressed in the id¹⁰⁰.

Contrary to Freud, Horney theorized that that the basic drive of the human person's id is to discover the real self:

He/she needs an atmosphere of warmth to give him/her both a feeling of inner security and the inner freedom enabling him/her to have his own feelings and thoughts and to express him/herself. He/she needs the good will of others, not only to help him/her in many needs but to guide and encourage him/her to become a mature and fulfilled individual. He/she needs healthy friction with the wishes and wills of others, in love and in friction, he will also grow in accordance with his real self¹⁰¹.

As a psychoanalyst, Horney gives much attention to family and socialcultural life, as we observe in the Nicomachean Ethics. As a clinician she identifies erroneous parenting patterns, such as dominating, overprotective, intimidating, irritable, over exacting, overindulgent, erratic, partial to other siblings, hypocritical, indifferent, etc. that form of a basic unconscious, insecure social "we". In other words, another name for basic anxiety is a weak "we" dramaturgy anxiety as expressed in AA recovery literature and recovery dialogue. As mentioned from participation-observation in AA, I have observed that issues of extreme fear and anger are constant motifs in AA recovery dialogues. It is clearly addressed in the AA twelve steps as an issue worthy of

¹⁰⁰ K. Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, 17-40.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 18.

focused attention and remedial action. In 2004, the American Medical Association conducted a national epidemiologic survey on alcohol and related conditions. It confirmed that prior to clinical or rehabilitation treatment recovering alcoholics and addicts suffered from anxiety disorders¹⁰². I would contend that Horney defined different anxiety types, and it is the narcissistic anxiety type who best describes the alcoholic/addict. I am modifying my theory based on the A-T psychology trading zone psychology of an understanding of the sensitive soul, dramaturgical behavior, and ethnographic observation.

Horney's narcissistic anxiety types are predominantly swayed by a pleasurable imagination of glory and fame. We interpret from a dramaturgy standpoint that in their backstage sense imagination they paint a glowing picture of quick and glamorous achievement. They have a special brand of pride residing in 'effortless superiority.' It is in the glory of the dramatic, of the unusual that captivates their imagination while the humble tasks of daily living are resented as humiliating. As a result, the narcissistic, anxiety-driven alcoholics or drug users appear on the front stage and stage fright sets in i.e., Horney's basic narcissistic anxiety theory¹⁰³. Therefore, we are adapting Horney's narcissistic anxiety to portray alcoholic/addicts when on the front stage of social interaction experiences suffering anxiety stage fright. As Horney puts it succinctly, they move toward others (overly compliant), they move against others (overly aggressive), or they move away from others (overly isolated). For example, we have the drunk alcoholic at a party who wants to hug everybody, or who wants to fight with everybody or who doesn't want to talk to and be nice to anybody.

Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve brings us to the final ethnographic A-T psychodynamic and virtue habituation interpretation. In step eleven, there is a passage I believe that describes the AA recovering-searching alcoholic/addict coming to a sense of the contemplative:

As the day goes on, we can pause where situations must be met and decisions made, and renew the simple request: "Thy will, not mine, must be done". If at these points our emotional disturbance happens to be great, we will more surely keep our balance, provided we remember, and repeat to ourselves, a particular prayer or phrase that has appealed to us in our reading or meditations. Just saying it over and over will enable us to clear a channel choked up with anger, fear, frustration, or misunderstanding and permit us to return to the surest help of all—our search for God's will, not our own, in the moment of stress. At these critical moments, if we remind ourselves that "it is better to comfort than to be comforted, to understand than to be understood, to love than to loved". We will be following the intent of Step Eleven¹⁰⁴.

¹⁰² *Prevalence and Co-occurrence of Substance Use Disorders and Independent Mood and Anxiety Disorders*, "American Medical Association" 2004.

¹⁰³ K. Horney, *Neurosis and Human Growth*, 313-314.

¹⁰⁴ Alcoholics Anonymous, 87-88.

The final three steps brings the recovering-searching person to a contemplative sense by the path of the essential virtues to recovery. They are justified precisely in Book Six of Aquinas Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics. We learn that happiness results from the habituation to wisdom and prudence¹⁰⁵. Prudence is an expression of the intellect it gives good advice, judges, and orders the means to the end. However, in terms of the psychodynamics of dramaturgical basic anxiety, Book Six, lesson 1269 points out that “Both prudence and moral virtue concur in a virtuous operation: prudence perfecting the part rational by essence, and moral virtue perfecting the appetitive part, rational by participation”¹⁰⁶.

From Basic Anxiety to Contemplative Anxiety

The underlying causes of alcohol and other drug use are many, varied, and not well understood. Hundreds of variables have been studied as potential predictors of the onset of alcohol and other drug use. In this essay, we have been primarily concerned with an A-T trading zone psychology study of the person who concedes that he/she is an alcoholic/addict and ready to enter in the AA recovery program. We have been primarily focused on the searching- recovering psychodynamics and the exercises of AA spiritual and moral habituation. It is clear from AA literature and ethnographic observation that AA is driven by a psychodynamic and behavioral dynamics spiritual psychology, but it is not a mental health or therapeutic program. Thus, we have come to ask about the essential nature of Alcoholics Anonymous healing dynamics. The AA Big Book states the solution was simple: “To pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet”. We have approached the A-T study of the searching-recovering soul from three vectors 1) virtue and habit, 2) psychodynamics, and 3) ethnographic participant observation. Finally, we must pull these three paths together into an integrated soulful interpretation of the why and how AA group recovery brings about sobriety.

We believe that AA works because it is not therapy. It is not counseling. It is not rehabilitation. It works because it is a conversion experience. It is extremely difficult for alcoholics and addicts to quit, let alone to maintain long term sobriety. It demands a lifestyle change. It is a radical lifestyle conversion. It is more than behavioral changes. The changes must occur deeply in the soul. The problem is the soul. The soul is divided between an all-powerful, disordered sensory voice and a childish intellect. In such a condition, the clinician, the AA sponsor, the new friend companions in AA know that serenity and sobriety will never be achieved unless the “childish, emotionally sensitive, and grandiose” attachments are confronted. Since they energize the narcissistic basic anxiety that motivates the phony self-glory seeking alcoholic/addict.

¹⁰⁵ Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean*, Book 6, Lesson 1259.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

We suggest that the recovering alcoholic/addict experiences possibly five stages of anxiety and spiritual conversion in the first two years of the AA program, if they work the program. First stage is basic anxiety that we have explained in module two. We interpreted Horney's definition in terms of alcoholic/addict social behavior and dramaturgy. The narcissistic, self-glory, ego need for social behavior fame motivated by sense pleasure leads to the desire for social alcohol-drug pleasure socialization. In the early stages, the intoxication temporarily convinces the delusional glory, false self. Eventually, the self becomes the delusional self who becomes driven by a more intense level of anxiety to hide his/her alcoholic/addictive nature. It is important to realize that at this stage the delusional self has become the real self.

The second stage is the annihilation level that we have clarified as when the alcoholic/addict hits their bottom. It is a crushing, shameful and demoralizing level of anxiety because his/her delusional dreams of glory and conquest are over. In the coming days, the recovering individual must face this new level of anxiety. It would be near impossible a task without the compassionate friendship, emerging spiritual dialogue, and meetings.

The third stage is the habituation anxiety level that occurs as the recovering person is faithful to the ninety meetings in ninety days. It is when they are given their ninety-day coin. It is the time when the internal sense faculties bring a sense of calmness in the midst of the chaos of recovery and the diminishing sense of annihilation. Usually, the newcomer has developed some form of a spiritual life of prayer, and moral behavior, i.e., living by moral maxims of just do the next right thing, let go and trust your higher power.

The fourth level is extremely important it is when the alcoholic/addict reaches the stage of prudent anxiety. It begins to appear when the searching, recovering individual has the daily sense that much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions are a part of their daily delusional phony alcoholic/addict anxiety-driven life. We assert it is in this stage that recovery is becoming apparent because the newcomer has begun to have a sense of particular reason and the habit of prudence. For example, at his stage the recovering person will often put forth in meetings aphorisms of deliberation: For example, "My sponsor has taught me, as a rule, never to go with my first thought". "I used to never miss an argument. It was my way or the highway. But I learned that I don't have to run to every fight".

The final level of anxiety is contemplative anxiety that may sound like an oxymoron. Accordingly, we will suggest that there is something positive to a certain type of anxiety. The influential psychologist of the 1970s who was really influential in moving psychotherapy into cognitive therapy was Albert Ellis. He was the founder of a school of clinical psychology known as Rational Emotional Behavioral Therapy. Ellis was an influential forerunner in the cognitive therapy movement. Stoicism had a profound influence on Albert Ellis. He frequently referred to the famous Epictetus quote: "Man is disturbed not by

things, but by the views he takes of them”. Yet, his psychology does somewhat agree with Aristotle’s on the necessity of the person to master emotions by rational beliefs.

Despite his stoic limitations, his clinician approach to anxiety is of value. He is somewhat teleological in his approach to the treatment of anxiety. Anxiety is a condition that is caused because by an agent’s irrational beliefs about their goals in life. It is always the irrational beliefs that cause disordered emotions. It is a psychotherapy tradition opposite the Freudian school of id dominance of the ego. Therapy always begins and ends with focus on the development of rational belief techniques to control anxiety. It is irrational beliefs that cripple the agent pursuit of goals causing anxiety. Ellis held that there is a difference between constructive rational beliefs and irrational beliefs. Rational beliefs make a person feel positive and enthusiastic about pursuing goals successfully. As a result, rational concern is also a form of anxiety because it contemplates the possibility of failing at a project and forces a person to be cautious and vigilant about doing it. Concern helps a person plan a project and carry it through. It puts things in order when things get out of order. Ellis taught patients to believe that rational beliefs tend to “make you concerned, cautious, vigilant and prepared for eventualities”¹⁰⁷.

We have briefly mentioned his theory of an unconstructive irrational anxiety and a constructive rational anxiety. It is apparent from A-T psychology that Ellis is on the topic of rational and irrational anxiety is really on the more comprehensive concept of “particular reason, the habit of prudence and mastery of emotions”. But where we do find him complimentary to the last three steps of AA is that “Concern is a form of anxiety because it contemplates your failing at the project and forces you to be cautious and vigilant about doing it”¹⁰⁸.

I choose to call the last three steps, adapting Ellis’s anxiety concern concept, as a contemplative anxiety. I am using anxiety in the sense of a focused concern anxiety because I am defining AA contemplation being focused each day on being concerned about spiritual perfection. Of course, in AA, the issue of perfection is a necessity since step one is where the alcoholic/addict commits to total abstinence. I am however talking about a higher level of concern for perfection. Since an A-T psychology holds that the degree of spiritual progress on a daily basis is dependent on a higher motivational end vision. It is the searching, recovering alcoholic/ addict’s love of God, self, and neighbor where the true self is found. We find this perfection in Aquinas Q.184, The State of Perfection:

Perfection is said to consist in a thing in two ways: in one way, primarily and essentially; in another, secondarily and accidentally. Primarily and essentially the perfection of the Christian life consists in charity, principally as to the love of

¹⁰⁷ A. Ellis, *How to Control Your Anxiety, Before It Controls You*, (NY: Citadel Press, 1998), 36.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

God, secondarily as to the love of our neighbor, both of which are the matter of the chief commandments of the Divine law, as stated above. Now the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. This is evident from the very form of the commandment, pointing, as it does, to perfection—for instance in the words, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart”: since “the whole” is the same as “the perfect”, according to the Philosopher (Phys., iii, 6), and in the words, “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”, since everyone loves himself most.

Conclusion

In this essay, we were attempting to examine the problem of addiction from the perspective of the searching, recovering soul. Hence, we were clearly proposing a paradigm other than the medical-pharmacological or the emerging, neuro-psychological, brain habituation construct. Our argument has been that the paradigm best suited to explain addiction is grounded on an Aristotelian-Thomistic psychology. The great advantage to the A-T construct is the ability to include theory and methods from empirical psychology, medical psychiatry, and psychoanalysis, i.e., a trading zone.

As Aristotelian-Thomists, we do not attempt to develop a synthesis with these disciplines that study addiction. Since our A-T understanding of the psychosomatic nature of the human person as a composite of body, mind, and soul is an essential principle (starting point) of a scientific investigation of addiction. Without this first principle of the composite nature of the person, we maintain that it is not possible to develop the necessary principles to study the issue of the complexities of addiction of human beings. Such complexities require a A-T faculty psychology of the soul as foundational.

We explained the A-T methodology of a Trading Zone as one of selecting a psychological problem of addiction and drawing theory and principles from compatible disciplines. We did this to move towards an etiological understanding and generate a robust theory that would contribute to the solution of some aspect of the problem of addiction. First, from Kent Dunnington’s work, we examined addiction from the Thomistic perspective of virtue and habit or as we spoke of virtuous habituation as opposed to incontinent behavior. Second, we borrowed from psychoanalysis and developed an A-T understanding psychodynamics and third, we presented a brief ethnographic study of Alcoholics Anonymous and the psychodynamic journey of the searching-recovering of the alcoholic/addict.

We conclude with a theory based on our trading zone methodology. Obviously, there are many forms of addiction. We studied AA because it offers such a rich history of suffering souls searching for recovery. Furthermore, it is a program that is based strongly on spiritual, moral, rational, and contemplative principles essential to recovery.

As we come to end of our inquiry, we assert that the solution to long term sobriety is a conversion experience to a culture of deep spiritual, moral and virtuous habits. This experience is an A-T psychodynamic recovery theory because of the focus on the internal senses and particular reason with the virtue of prudence and other cardinal virtues. A person senses the pleasure of goodness, and this sensing is internalized as conscience. The person experiencing the various stages of conversion is steadily moved to a teleological vision of the perfection of love of self and love of others as self. AA is a clear example of the conversion theory and addiction recovery. We suggest that all forms of long-term addiction require some type of conversion experience over time with focused A-T psychodynamic sensing by means of interaction of particular reason and prudence in a loving-healing culture.

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How Aristotelian and Thomistic Virtue Prescribe Recovery for an Addicted Soul: A Trading Zone Between Aristotelian-Thomistic Psychology and Psychotherapy

Summary

This is an essay about addiction recovery based on a trading zone psychological methodology between an Aristotelian-Thomistic [A-T] psychology of addiction, particularly alcohol/drug addiction. It is an applied psychology where we cross over to other disciplines and exchange theories and practices with a specific target of addiction recovery in mind. We could say that we are interested in learning and borrowing for the sake of problem solving within complementary disciplines. The complimentary disciplines in this A-T psychology trading zone are psychoanalytical psychodynamics and a psychoanalytical ethnographic analysis of Alcoholics Anonymous. We use the terminology in the essay of module construction, i.e. module 1) The Habituation Perspective of the Addiction Trading Zone, 2) A-T Addiction Psychology and a Psychodynamics of the Searching-Recovering Soul, and 3) The Searching Recovering Soul, A Psychodynamic Conversion of Anxiety & Habituation. Each module contains psychological concepts that are considered as necessary for a synergistic action solution to the issue of alcoholic/addiction recovery. An A-T psychological trading zone module construction is hierarchical. It, therefore, requires that module one is grounded on an A-T metaphysical psychology that allows for a fitting exchange of principles, concepts, and techniques on the issue of addiction.

Keywords: A-T Trading Zone, Addiction Recovery, Psychodynamics, Alcoholics Anonymous Ethnographic.

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