Chapter 3

Styles of Problem Solving

> …She knows the things of old, and infers the things to come;
> she understands turns of speech and the solutions of riddles;
> she has foreknowledge of signs and wonders
> and of the outcome of seasons and times.
> --Wisdom of Solomon 8:8

The canny feminine uses many styles of problem solving, sometimes tricky and indirect, sometimes straightforward.[1] The bottom line is that it preserves eros—the fewest number of people are hurt—as the problem is brought to a successful conclusion. This chapter contains a compendium of canny feminine interventions with examples from literature and fairy tales to illustrate them. It is likely not a complete list: by definition the canny feminine adapts to new situations and uses whatever is at hand, so it changes with the times. Additionally, not every use of these techniques is an example of the canny feminine. Tricking, disguise, laughter and the like may all be used for cruel and divisive purposes. Recognizing the canny feminine at work involves the gestalt, not the parts; there is a satisfying "feel" to it that usually includes the sense of the observer that this was probably the best, and not necessarily most obvious solution to the problem. A good analyst almost certainly uses the canny feminine, and I have noted in some of the interventions when Jung or another analyst has spoken about it.

"Foxy" Approaches and Tricks[2]

The prototypical stories of Solomon and the baby and Shahrazad are good examples of loving tricks. One reunites mother and baby; the other cures the mad king and spares the lives of Shahrazad and her sister.

Canny tricks occur throughout the series of novels by Alexander McCall Smith concerning life in Botswana for the proprietor of the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency, Precious

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[1] The ethical issues that may arise from the more unusual approaches will be discussed in Chapter 4.

[2] This category is the one in which the difference between cunning and canny is critical. I spent a decade or so of my academic career studying the religious and folkloric symbol of the fox in Japan, fascinated by this symbol. Fox tricks tend to be cunning, but fox gifts may have a canny twist. For details, see Smyers 1999.

Ramotswe.[3] Her first case after she opens the agency is the inverse of Solomon's, involving a possibly false father. The client, Happy Bapetsi, is a nice young woman who works in a bank. Her father left when she was just a baby, so she never knew him, and now her mother is dead. But suddenly a man of about the right age shows up, claims to be her Daddy, and moves in with her, bossing her around and eating a great deal, without offering to help at all. He knows the correct details about Happy and her mother, but she feels he could have learned these from talking with the true father before he died (which she senses is probably the truth). He has been with her for about three months, and she would not mind his eating and doing nothing, except that she does not believe he is her real Daddy. Mma Ramotswe ponders how to go about the task, and knows that the man will not likely submit to a blood test.

> She stopped in her line of thought. Yes! There was something biblical about this story. What, she thought, would Solomon have done? (McCall Smith 1998:11).

She borrows a nurse's uniform and drives to Happy's home, where "the Daddy" was sitting in the morning sun. She jumps out of the van and tells him that there has been a terrible accident involving his daughter and that she will require a great deal of blood. He says that should be no problem—he can pay for whatever she needs.

> "It's not the money," said Mma Ramotswe. "Blood is free. We don't have the right sort. We will have to get some from her family, and you are the only one she has. We must ask you for some blood."
>
> The Daddy sat down heavily.
>
> "I am an old man," he said.
>
> Mma Ramotswe sensed that it would work. Yes, this man was an impostor.
>
> "That is why we are asking you," she said. "Because she needs so much blood, they will have to take about half your blood. And that is very dangerous for you. In fact, you might die."
>
> The Daddy's mouth fell open.
>
> "Die?"
>
> "Yes," said Mma Ramotswe. "But then you are her father and we know that you would do this thing for your daughter" (13).

He refuses to come with her and then says that there has been a mistake, he is not really her father. Mma Ramotswe gives him five minutes to get his things together and then takes him to the bus station. She leaves Happy a note explaining that she got him to tell her the truth himself,

[3] There are seven novels to date, with an eighth due in April 2007. The author is a Scottish medical doctor and seeming polymath who has published over 50 books ranging from children's tales to technical tomes on the forensics of sleep and Botswana's criminal system.

"the best way" (14).[4]

This story, like the biblical one, uses danger to the child to reveal the true parent.[5] In another biblical tale, children's lives are spared, but through a simple lie, not appeal to parental feelings. The king of Egypt instructs the midwives of the Hebrews to spare any girl children but to kill any males who are born. But the midwives "fear God" and cannot kill the boys. When they are again summoned by the king and asked why the boys are being spared, they answer that Hebrew women are more vigorous than Egyptian woman, and give birth to their babies before the midwife even arrives! (Exodus 1.15-20).

Lies may also be useful to establish the truth in situations of fraud. Mma Ramotswe solves a case of embezzlement quite easily by quietly offering a luxury item at a bargain rate to each member of the staff of a store. The thief had been able to hide his footsteps, but could not resist the item, far beyond his means, for which he offered cash. This case actually makes Mma Ramotswe uncomfortable as it involved "recrimination and shame," and may be less canny than some of her others. But she reflects that in situations such as this, forgiveness is also an important element (McCall Smith 2003:4).

Mma Pekwane comes to the Agency and says that her husband has stolen a car. She does not want to confront him and risk losing him, or go to the police, which would certainly get him in trouble. So she asks Mma Ramotswe to find out the owner of the car, steal it back from her husband, and return it to the true owner. Mma Ramotswe consults her husband, Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni, an automobile mechanic, who explains to her that most stolen cars come from South Africa, and although their registration numbers have been filed off, there is usually a second number in a less accessible location in the vehicle. She and Mma Pekwane arrange that the dogs will be inside and the husband eating a special meal so that Mma Ramotswe and her husband can find the serial number, which they do. Then she contacts a former classmate who now works for the police, who agrees to find out to whom the car is legally registered. She asks him to contact the owner and tell him that the car will be parked in a certain place and to come and fetch it. So on the designated night, Mma Pekwane throws the keys out the window where Mma Ramotswe finds them on the lawn. She drives the Mercedes-Benz to the designated spot and leaves it there for the police. When her husband notices that his car is gone, Mma Pekwane shouts for him to

[4] This is similar to Isis' trick in which she gets Seth to admit that Horus should be the winner.
[5] We will see a similar dynamic in a story about a Cherokee child in Chapter 4, but involving more subtleties and complications.

call the police, but he hesitates, and says he will look for it himself.

> She looked him directly in the eye, and for a moment she saw him flinch. He's guilty, she thought. I was right all along. Of course he can't go to the police and tell them that his stolen car has been stolen (McCall Smith 1998:131).

The wife's conscience is assuaged, the husband is not in legal trouble, and the car has been returned to its rightful owner.

The final example for this section is an example of Mma Ramotswe tricking a recalcitrant, and not very bright clerk, in a government office from which she needs some information. She knows that confidentiality regulations are important, but feels that getting her information, which may right a terrible mistake from the past, is more important. So she behaves as a kind of respectful bully.

> "But that is not the rule," said Mma Ramotswe. I would never tell you your job—a clever man like you does not need to be told by a woman how to do his job—but I think that you have got the rule wrong. The rule says that you must not give the name of a pensioner. It says nothing about the address. That you can tell."
>
> The clerk shook his head. "I do not think you can be right, Mma. I am the one who knows the rules. You are the public."
>
> "Yes, Rra. I am sure that you are very good when it comes to rules. I am sure that this is the case. But sometimes, when one has to know so many rules, one can get them mixed up. You are thinking of rule 25. This rule is really rule 24(b), subsection (i). That is the rule that you are thinking of. That is the rule which says that no names of pensioners must be revealed, but which does not say anything about addresses. The rule which deals with addresses is rule 18, which has now been cancelled."
>
> The clerk shifted on his feet. He felt uneasy now and was not sure what to make of this assertive woman with her rule numbers. Did rules have numbers? Nobody had told him about them, but it was quite possible, he supposed.
>
> "How do you know about these rules?" he asked. "Who told you?"
>
> Have you not read the *Government Gazette*?" asked Mma Ramotswe. "The rules are usually printed out in the *Gazette* for everybody to see. Everybody is allowed to see the rules, as they are there for the protection of the public, Rra. That is important."
>
> The clerk said nothing. He was biting his lip now, and Mma Ramotswe saw him throw a quick glance over his shoulder.
>
> "Of course," she pressed on, "if you are too junior to deal with these matters, then I would be very happy to deal with a more senior person. Perhaps there is somebody in the back office there who is senior enough to understand these rules."
>
> The clerk's eyes narrowed, and Mma Ramotswe knew at that moment that her judgment had been correct: if he called somebody else he would lose face.

> "I am quite senior enough," he said haughtily. "And what you say about the rules is quite correct. I was just waiting to see if you knew. It is very good that you did. If only more members of the public knew about these rules then our job would be easier."
>
> "You are doing your job very well, Rra," said Mma Ramotswe. "I am glad that I found you and not some junior person who would know nothing about the rules."
>
> The clerk nodded sagely. "Yes," he said. "Anyway, this is the address of the woman you mention. Here, I'll write it down for you. It is a small village on the way to Lobatse. Maybe you know it. She is living there.
>
> Mma Ramotswe took the piece of paper from the clerk and tucked it into the pocket of her dress. Then, having thanked him for his help, she went outside, reflecting on how bureaucracy was very rarely an obstruction, provided that one applied to it the insights of ordinary, everyday psychology, insights with which Mma Ramotswe, more than many, had always been well-endowed (McCall Smith 2002:107-109).

Although it would be unkind if anyone else witnessed the scene, she does preserve the dignity of the clerk, and, in fact, probably gets the information in the only way possible.

In general, analysts do not use this aspect of the canny feminine themselves, but are very aware of it in the context of how the psyche works. When a client reports slips of the tongue, "odd" synchronicities such as the car not starting when the client did not want to attend the function, and so on, the analyst may see a "trick" from the psyche that has an important insight to impart. One (non-Jungian) therapist who is famous for his counterintuitive tricks is Milton H. Erikson. Using hypnosis and a "strategic" approach, Erikson often helped the patient to overcome fears. One of his "tricks" was to provide a worse alternative than what the patient was afraid of, relativizing the fearfulness of the original problem (Haley 1973:25). He also assigned procedures in a "benevolent ordeal," asking patients deliberately to engage in the symptom at, say, 2:00 in the morning (Haley 26). One very canny response involved joining the patient in his delusion: he asked an otherwise unproductive man at the state psychiatric hospital who thought that he was Jesus, because he was a carpenter, to help build some bookcases. "Jesus" could not refuse (28). His goal was to bring about change, not teach the person what was wrong (67).

One of Erikson's cases involved a young man who fainted when he crossed certain streets or entered certain buildings, one restaurant in particular. He also had a strong avoidance of women. Erikson instructed the man to invite the therapist, his wife, and an attractive woman to dinner in that particular restaurant. When they arrived, Erikson repeatedly looked for good places for the man to faint, offering suggestions of places where he would not hurt himself as

badly. The man did not faint. Then Erikson picked a fight with the serving staff (who were in on it), making a terrible fuss about everything. The man was cured: he took a friend to that restaurant the next night. "After what he had been through there, nothing else was to be feared; the worst had happened and anything else would be a welcome relief" (69) (case on pp. 67-69).

Timing and Intuition: The "Uncanny Feminine"

The canny feminine is often not linear, clear, or rational. Based on insight, intuition, irrational "feelings," and the like, one must trust something deeper than everyday knowledge. These feelings are sometimes described as "uncanny," but in my understanding, are not the opposite of the canny feminine (which the negative prefix suggests), but an important form of it. Not only must the person know which feelings to act on, but also *when* to act, for bad timing may spoil an otherwise correct assumption.

Mma Ramotswe almost refuses to take on a rather hopeless case because she feels that she has little chance of solving it. An American woman, Mrs. Andrea Curtain, asks her to find out what happened to her college-aged son, Michael, who had lived in Africa and disappeared ten years ago. He lived on a commune, had a South African girlfriend, and was very happy. But then he disappeared and not even a tracker could find any trace of him. His mother just wants to know what happened; she has assumed for years that he is probably dead (McCall Smith 2000:23-33). Because this case is so old, Mma Ramotswe cannot rely on her usual direct readings of people, and must use something deeper. She goes to the abandoned farm on which the boy had lived, thinking, "Places had echoes—and if one were sensitive, one might just pick up some resonance from the past, some feeling for what had happened" (61). Later in the case she has this feeling: "She was very close, she felt, to understanding what had happened, but she could not express it, and she could not tell why she knew" (93). She saw an old newspaper clipping when she was at the farm and knew at once that one of the men pictured in a photo was evil (111). She visits him and senses when he is lying to her.

> As he spoke, Mma Ramotswe made her decision. He was lying. Had he been telling the truth, she would have brought the encounter to an end, but she knew now that her initial intuition had been right. He was lying as he spoke. It was easy to tell; indeed, Mma Ramotswe could not understand why everybody could not tell when another person was lying. In her eyes, it was so obvious, and Dr. Ranta might as well have had an illuminated liar sign about his neck (182).

Finally he agrees to speak. He had been a member of that commune in the desert, and blithely tells Mma Ramotswe that Michael had simply gotten lost and died. Then he tries to get her out of his office by saying he will call Security and say that she is a thief. She knows that he has seduced some of his students and women at the university where he teaches and uses this as a counterbalance to his threat (a canny trick). But she promises not to use this information against him if he will tell her the truth about the American boy. So he tells her the story of the failed commune. It turns out that Carla, the South African woman who was involved with the American, also had an affair with this professor. One night the American found them together and in his consternation, ran blindly into the bush, where he stumbled into a deep ditch and broke his neck. They hid the body in an anthill where the tracker could not find it. Carla tells Dr. Ranta that she was pregnant with the American's baby and leaves the commune; he leaves soon after for a prestigious fellowship to the U.S. Mma Ramotswe senses that this, finally, is the truth and at last can tell the mother what happened to her son (203). Before doing this, however, she locates Carla and then is able to mitigate the pain of the confirmation of the son's death by introducing Mrs. Curtain to her grandson, a completely unexpected blessing for the suffering woman.

Mma Ramotswe's work is very similar in many ways to analysis, as she works with the very human problems of everyday life and not the more grisly things that one might expect of another kind of detective. Her techniques are therefore often parallel to those of a good analyst. She waits for the client to bring the matter up in his own way, in his own time, instead of rudely asking what the problem is (McCall Smith 2001:49). Even when she has a flash of intuition, she has to decide if this is the time to confront the person or not:

> Should she speak, or should she remain silent? If she spoke, she could be wrong and he could take violent exception to what she said. But if she held back, then she would have lost the moment (198).

Jung emphasized the importance of timing in the analytical work, saying that the right thing at the wrong moment may be disastrous: "We assume that the right word cannot do harm, that the truth is useful at any moment, but that is not so, it may be perfect poison, and nowhere does that become so clear as in analysis" (Jung 1984:530). Von Franz elaborates the point, arguing that there is even an ethics to timing:

> …There is no objective quality in a deed—it depends on the measure and the time, and if it is done rightly within the limits of the personality. For the Chinese, virtue

> means doing the right things in the right measure at the right moment, and nowhere does one meet that idea as often as in analysis. If I tell a patient a truth today it may destroy him, but if I wait and tell him in three weeks' time it may help him. For everything there is the right moment, the right constellation for action, and to act too early or too late destroys the whole possibility. We do not consider that enough. We think too much in abstract terms, either that a thing is good or bad, and we do not think enough from the feeling standard of the special time circumstances in which we act, for our ethical deeds do depend on time (von Franz 1950:84).

Jung had a particularly recalcitrant client whose extreme rationality made her "psychologically inaccessible." One day as she told him a dream about a golden scarab, Jung heard a noise at the window behind him, and saw a gold-green beetle, the closest thing to a golden scarab in Switzerland, trying, oddly, to get into the dark room. When he showed it to his client, the synchronicity deeply impressed her and "broke the ice of her intellectual resistance (Jung CW 8:¶982;843). Analysts are alert to these unpredictable, uncanny, and highly meaningful occurrences, which may do more for the treatment than verbal interpretations.

Another aspect of timing, in addition to knowing when to speak or act—or not to—is in taking the time to let one's intuitions or insights emerge. Mma Ramotswe spends a fair amount of time drinking bush tea and watching the birds, or thinking, or doing nothing. She and her assistant drink tea at work too:

> Tea, of course, makes the problem seem smaller, as it always does, and by the time they reached the bottom of their cups, and Mma Makutsi had reached for the slightly chipped tea-pot to pour a refill, it had become clear what they would have to do (McCall Smith 2003:93).[6]

There seems to be enough time, or it moves more slowly than usual, in the examples of the canny feminine that I have collected, and that may be a hint of how to develop it in oneself: slow down, reflect before speaking, and possibly, drink tea.[7]

Indirection

For this example, we will consider a kind of fairytale: "The King and the Beautiful Lamp." A tinsmith came with his wares and tools to a certain country where he usually did good business, but all the people seemed unhappy and no one bought any of his goods. Indeed, they

[6] Flora also institutes afternoon tea at Cold Comfort Farm. Initially suspicious, the characters eventually partake, and even relax with her. See also the anecdote of Jung and the too-directed analyst in the final example of this chapter.
[7] Another excellent example of the use of canny feminine timing in healing is the character August in *The Secret Life of Bees* by Sue Monk Kidd. She bides her time wisely in helping to heal an unmothered girl.

did not even have the energy to speak with him. Finally an old woman invited him in for tea and explained all the problems in the kingdom. “Why not tell the king?” he asked. “His soldiers will not let us near him,” she replied. So the tinsmith went to a place near the castle grounds, and began to craft a magnificent lamp. The guards tried to get rid of him, but he said he was making the lamp for the king so they let him continue. The king arrived and was most impressed; he offered to buy the lamp immediately. The tinsmith said that there was no charge except the promise not to show anger as he solved the lamp’s secret, the secret of the weaknesses of the kingdom.

The king took the lamp home and the queen also thought it wonderful. The servants filled it with tallow and lit it. All exclaimed at how beautifully it made patterns on the wall and shone. However, the king was furious when almost immediately, a stream of tallow ran out of the lamp and burned his leg. He shouted for the guards to bring the tinsmith, but calmed down when he remembered his promise not to get angry. The artist explained that it is the best lamp he has ever made, and if there is a problem, it must be with the tin itself.

Now they summoned the tin merchant, who explained that if the tin is defective, it is because of the foundry. The foundry owner said it is the fault of the bellows: if they don’t work right then the tin is spoiled. The bellows maker explained that if the leather from the tannery is not strong, then the bellows do not work well, and this is the fault of the farmer. The farmer bravely tells the king that the reason the leather is bad is because all the corn they grow goes for taxes to the king, so of course the skin of the animal is wretched, which makes bad bellows, which makes a bad fire, which makes inferior tin.

The king could hear about the plight of his kingdom in this way, and said that the lamp threw “a new light” on his job as king. He instituted reforms, and the country prospered again (Alexander 1999:113-118). It is clear from the beginning of the story that if anybody, tinsmith included, tried to describe the problem directly to the king, they would have failed, and possibly lost their life too.

In Alexander McCall Smith’s *Tears of the Giraffe,* we find a good example of the *opposite* of indirection. The maid of Mma Ramotswe’s fiancé, J.L.B. Matekoni, has been getting away with doing a very poor job of cleaning and cooking, and has also been seeing men at his house. She resents the appearance of his wife-to-be, and instead of using indirection, tries to get rid of Mma Ramotswe in a melodramatically direct way. Deciding that witchcraft is too risky

and expensive, she concludes that getting the detective sent to prison is the best solution for maintaining her comfortable position. So she concocts an elaborate scheme to plant a gun in Mma Ramotswe's house (McCall Smith 2000:96-97). She gets a shady friend to get her a gun (154), and blackmails another man to plant the gun at Zebra Drive (158-59). But the second friend double-crosses her and the police catch her with the gun and send her to prison (167). This is reminiscent of Isis and the use of a weapon, which also backfired.

In contrast, and in keeping with the method of the wise tinsmith, Precious Ramotswe used indirection to confront gently a government official who was denying a permit for a dry cleaning shop, and just happened to be marrying the sister of a woman who owned an already established shop.

> …All that Mma Ramotswe had needed to do was to point out to the official that there were people in Gabrone who were saying—surely without any justification—that he might allow his business connections to influence his judgement. Of course, when somebody had mentioned this to her, she had disputed the rumour vehemently, and had argued that there could be no possible connection between his dry-cleaning associations and the difficulty which anybody else might be having over getting a licence to open up such a business. The very thought was outrageous, she had said (McCall Smith 2000:20).

This approach "stopped the nonsense" satisfactorily (ibid).

The psyche usually seems to work through indirection, giving hints and insights through dreams and synchronicities. It rarely says directly: "You must take that job," or, "You must not marry that person." It may even work through jokes or puns. And it may take a series of hints for the ego to understand what the psyche is indicating. Even more interesting, it often works in a compensatory manner, which means the ego must work out the "right" thing to do by examining the extremes (like the king and the tinsmith).

Disguise and Shape Shifting

In the Grimm's fairy tale, "The Twelve Huntsmen," a king's son has a bride whom he loves very much. But at his father's deathbed, the prince promises to wed the woman his father has chosen for him, forgetting his previous bride in his filial consternation. The first bride hears of this and is very sad. Her father agrees to give her whatever will cheer her up, so she asks for eleven girls who look like her. They all put on male huntsmen's clothing and go to seek employment at the court of the prince who has forgotten her. He hires them and does not realize

that they are disguised women.

But that new king had another in his court who was wise in the ways of the canny feminine, a lion who "knew all concealed and secret things" (Grimm 335). He tells the king several times that the huntsmen are really girls, but the king will not see it, and the girls pass the various tests designed by the lion to expose their femaleness because another servant tells them what to expect. The lion loses favor with the king after they pass two tests.

One day as they are out riding, the new bride approaches, and the first bride faints because her heart is breaking. When the king goes to the prone huntsman and takes off "his" glove, he sees the ring that he had given to his true bride. He suddenly comes to his senses, and sends the second bride back to her kingdom. Also, he realized the lion had been telling the truth and restores him to his previous high favor (Grimm 334-36).

In this tale, the wronged woman uses a disguise to remain close to her beloved, and waits for him to recognize her. Here, as with Mma Ramotswe's case of the "false father," the protagonist used a literal disguise. But we could imagine that there could also be a psychological version of disguise: holding back one's feelings until the situation changed and the time was right to reveal the truth. In a way, the analyst does this typologically, especially at the beginning of an analysis, as she attempts to "learn the language of the patient" (Jung 1963:131) and understand that person's world, perhaps working in a mode that is not her main function. But Jungian analysts perhaps use disguise less than some other styles of analytical work, as Jung thought that analysis consisted of a meeting of two psyches, both of which would be altered by the experience. A classical Freudian uses disguise more, in the sense of necessarily hiding behind the analytical persona as a part of the methodology.

Bricolage, Patchwork

Bricolage is building something out of bits and pieces, not from uniform materials with a clear design. It is how Isis restored Osiris, using the scattered originals, and making a substitute for the missing piece. Psychologically, it is how a traumatized person creates a life out of the healthy bits and pieces that are left over after the disaster. And it is how human solutions come together in the real world—not in neat, ideologically consistent packages, but in messy compromises.

One of the several narratives that interweave in *Prodigal Summer* by Barbara Kingsolver

concerns the tensions that develop when Lusa, a sophisticated city-girl and graduate student in biology, marries Cole and goes to live with him on his family farm. His Appalachian relatives do not like Lusa, nor she them. And even though she loves her husband deeply, she disagrees with him about almost everything on the farm. She resents his use of poison on any plant, animal, or insect that gets in his way (Kingsolver 2000:35). She is an entomologist, and his relatives consider her extremely strange for looking at bugs instead of squashing them (42). One day, Cole is tragically killed in a traffic accident, and of course the family assumes that she will leave the farm and go back to the city. But time passes and she does not leave. They greatly resent her for living in their family house, for not having taken Cole's surname when they married, for refusing to plant tobacco, and just for not being one of them.

Jewel, one of Cole's sisters turns out to have two very "strange" children who defy the local gender stereotypes. Everyone thinks that the girl is a boy, she dresses like a boy and has serious anger outbursts; the boy is considered a "sissy" and a mama's boy. Lusa ends up babysitting for them after she learns that Jewel has cancer. Even though she is not particularly interested in children, she likes these children and treats them with respect, to which they respond well. She begins to teach the girl about insects and Jewel's sisters are astonished that she can deal with the little "polecat" (305).

The two imminent disasters are Jewel's death and the financial survival of the farm. Somehow, it all comes together as Lusa's Palestinian and Jewish-Polish backgrounds allow her to realize that three religious holidays, Easter, Passover, and Id-al-Adha, will all fall during early April that year. She decides to raise goats, and sell the kids to a butcher she knows in New York. Later she asks Jewel if she could adopt her two children, and explains that this way, the farm will go back to the Wideners after her death. She has also decided to change her surname to that of her late husband, since everyone calls her by it anyway. It is the perfect solution to Jewel's terror about her children after she dies (her other sisters don't want the children anyway), and the family resentment of a stranger living in their family farm. But of course they also warm up to her as she fumbles toward these patchwork solutions. After she learns she will get an excellent price for the goats, she thinks:

> By her wits she had made something succeed here, where there seemed to be no hope. It didn't even matter that no one would ever properly admire her canny ingenuity. Nobody would realize that the major holidays of three of the world's major religions coincided in the week she sold her goats, like stars aligning for

> a spectacular horoscope. Only a religious mongrel like Lusa could have seen it coming and hitched her fortunes to it (440-41).

There is no overarching plan, and she realizes that every year will be a new and different challenge that will require new solutions. "She'd have to be resourceful for the rest of her life" (441). The canny feminine is not idealistic, it is realistic. Her background gives her certain skills and information that will help, and gradually these ideas and hard work also forge an eros connection with her husband's family.

Jung's refusal to construct a logical theory resonates with this aspect of the canny feminine. Ironically, his propensity to develop his system as a series of logical opposites may have obscured some aspects of how the psyche works, particularly the psyche of women. But in general, I think Jung worked in the spirit of the canny feminine; his insistence on empirical observation rather than theoretical consistency resulted in his system being more of a patchwork than a seamless cloth. But this keeps it alive and able to develop in the way that a more theoretically rigid system could not. Margit van Leight Frank expresses this nicely:

> Jung did not systematize his work. He stood firmly in the stream of life and refused to live in an ivory tower of abstract thought, divorced from reality. Life, in the last analysis, is not completely comprehensible in the sense that our intellect can fit its varied ramifications into a rational system. Similarly, the human psyche in its depths and what pertains to it cannot be captured in a system (Frank in Fordham 1963:194-95).

Behind the Scenes; Invisible Successes

The above solution by Lusa is an invisible success—people may be impressed by the result, but will not really understand the cleverness of how it came about. But she accepts this as the way her life will be on the farm in Appalachia. When Mma Ramotswe stole back the stolen car, this too was invisible—something that could not be broadcast.

Another example of the quiet, "everyday" kinds of victories that characterize the canny feminine is the film "Bagdad Café."[8] A plump, middle-aged German couple is having a fight on their road trip through a particularly unattractive bit of the American southwest. Jasmin, the wife, takes her suitcase and walks away; the husband speeds off in the car. She ends up at a nearby truck stop called "Bagdad Café," a dirty motel and restaurant run by Brenda, a very

[8] This film was directed by Percy Adlon and released in 1988. It is frequently used in Jungian classes as an example of individuation.

unhappy African American woman. She is the opposite of the canny feminine and literally drives away eros: she angrily throws cans at her boyfriend when he does not immediately do as she wishes. Brenda, at the nadir of her despair, is shocked when Jasmin walks in out of nowhere, a well-dressed German woman with a feather in her Tyrolean hat: a female Hermes with a suitcase. Brenda is always shouting at her children, boyfriend, and employees and seems to do nothing constructive at all. Jasmine immediately borrows the vacuum cleaner and cleans her room. Brenda is highly suspicious of a woman with no man and no car and calls the sheriff, who can take no action as she's done nothing wrong. Jasmin cleans Brenda's office too, and after her furious initial reaction, she seems to like it. Gradually Brenda's children warm to Jasmin, who plays with them, listens to them, and cares for them. The turning point comes when Brenda sees her children having a good time in Jasmin's room. She drives the children out in a jealous rage, and screams, "Play with your own kids." Jasmin responds quietly, "I do not have any." Brenda storms out but soon returns and begins to speak about the problems in her life, begins to confront her problems instead of just acting out her fury. It is as if she finally appreciates what she does have after hearing about Jasmin's lack of children. Soon Jasmin works as waitress in the restaurant, which gets cleaner and busier. They all get along well and learn to do magic tricks from the kit that was in Jasmin's suitcase. A brief hiatus occurs when Jasmin's visa expires and she is forced to leave, but she comes back finally and harmony returns to the Bagdad Café.

Jasmin's role here is similar to that of "the Rainmaker"[9]—she is more or less in harmony with herself and so she slowly brings harmony to those around her. But she too is affected by the place and relationships. As Brenda's Medusa-like hair becomes increasingly less chaotic during the film, Jasmin literally "lets hers down" from the tightly controlled bun in which she first appeared. So they learn from each other, although Jasmin has the stronger influence and transforms the place completely. But she did nothing special, only simple, everyday acts: cleaning, being physically affectionate, helping, listening, appreciating music, and making good coffee.[10] She never preaches, judges, evaluates, or uses the word "should." In fact, she does not speak very good English, and doesn't talk much. Again, it is only a small victory: a truck stop in the middle of nowhere is now cleaner and the people happier. But it brings a small piece of life into the Tao and transforms the lives of those who live there, restoring the relatedness that had

[9] Quoted by Jung in CW 14:¶604, n. 211.
[10] In this case, the canny feminine works mostly through the sensation function. But it can work through any of the functions or some combination of them.

gotten lost in all the problems.

Establishing a genuine connection and then listening without judgment are, of course, key tasks for the analyst. And the more the analyst is centered in who he or she truly is, the more this also affects the analysis. Joseph Henderson describes Jung as "the most deeply rooted man I ever met" (Henderson in Fordham 1963:223).[11]

Direct Truth, Direct Action

Dialogue can be a kind of eros, even when it concerns a difficult or unpleasant topic, for it links two or more people who are listening to each other. It is when Jasmin and Brenda have their brief but heartfelt exchange about children that everything changes—now they have an emotional connection. In fact, Mma Ramotswe wonders why her (literary) mentor in detecting uses it so little:

> If she ever wrote a book like *The Principles of Private Detection* she would add to what Clovis Andersen had to say. He suggested all sorts of clever ways of finding out facts—following people, looking at what they threw away in the bin, watching the sort of people they mixed with, and so on—but he did not say anything about asking them to their faces. That was often the best way of getting information, and in her book, if she ever wrote it (*Private Detection for Ladies* might be a good title) she would make much of this direct method (McCall Smith 2004:57).

Of course asking questions may not be as difficult as having to give some delicate or unpleasant news to someone, but there are certain ways to mitigate the harshness. Mma Ramotswe never lies to clients as a matter of principle, but

> …then there were ways of presenting the truth in a gentle way. Often all that one had to do was to get clients to work out conclusions by themselves, merely assisting them by pointing out things that they might have found out for themselves had they been willing to confront them (2004:59).

In one complicated case, she has perhaps her biggest challenge in giving difficult information to a client, as it is a psychological indictment of his personality and he is a rather high-ranking Government Man. He is also a bully—he hints that he will get her in trouble for not having a license when she hesitates about taking the case, but she stands up to him even at the beginning (McCall Smith 2001:59). He is concerned that his younger brother, who married a

[11] Precious Ramotswe has this same quality of rootedness: "Mma Ramotswe stood quite still; a woman on a rock in Africa, which was who, and where, she wanted to be" (McCall Smith 2001:225).

woman that the family did not approve of, is being poisoned by this wife because she is after his money. Their mother is extremely hostile to the wife also, suspecting that the wife wants to kill him and inherit all the money and the farm before she has children who would then get the money (48-56). The Government man and Mma Ramotswe agree that she will stay as a guest on the family farm for a few days to try to see what is happening there.

She goes out to the farm and chats up the man's mother, the maids, and the other servants. But after the first meal there, she realizes that she has been poisoned (172). But so have the wife and mother (192), so it does not seem that one person is being targeted. She meets the cook the next morning and learns that he far prefers working with cattle to cooking, but because he is so skillful at it, they require him to cook (he was actually hired to be the Assistant Manager of the farm) (197). She has a sudden intuition and says that she saw him put something in the food yesterday, and assumes the wants to be thought a bad chef and allowed to work with his beloved cattle—that he was not trying to kill anyone. He admits that this is correct. She agrees to speak with the brother and get his job changed, but this is only the first part of her work (200).

After returning to Gaborone, she has to confront the Government Man. Before she leaves the farm, she has long conversations with all the family members. "At the end of it Mma Ramotswe felt raw; she had taken such risks, but her intuition had proved her correct and her strategy had paid off" (210). He is particularly arrogant when he comes to her office to hear the results of her investigation, so she refuses to begin until he is more polite (216). Finally she begins the difficult narrative, but tells it indirectly as a story about "a family," taking the sting out of her insightful understanding of his character. She describes how the first-born loved his younger brother, but was always afraid that the brother would receive the love from the family that had previously gone to him. He was angry about the brother's wife because he was afraid that she would take away more of the brother's affection. "He began to believe that she was planning to kill his brother, the brother whom he loved so much. He could not sleep for thinking of this, because there was so much hate growing up within him" (217). She summarizes the problem to him in this way in her third person narrative:

> Then this lady said to the family that she would talk to the brother in Gaborone and that she was sure that he would understand. She said that she would pass on to him any words that they might wish to say. She said that the real poison within families is not the poison that you put in your food, but the poison that grows up in the heart when people are jealous of one another and cannot speak these feelings and drain out the poison this way (218-19).

After she conveys the messages of love they all send, he ends up in tears. It was a canny way to deliver the truth, as an "as if" story, which provided some distance and allowed him to listen.

When the women help Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni confront another bully, they use a more direct approach. Mma Ramotswe's husband is a good man and a scrupulously honest car mechanic. When he realizes that another garage, First Class Motors, has completely defrauded a customer by putting random parts inside a vintage car and not taking proper care of it, he offers to fix it for free, because he loves mechanical things and hates to see them abused. When he goes to the rival garage to complain that they are giving mechanics a bad name, they threaten to "sort him out" (McCall Smith 2003:161-62). It turns out that the bully comes from the same area as the orphan farm, so Mma Ramotswe rushes there to ask the matron, Mma Potokwani, to help with this crisis. The women arrive back at the scene just in time. The bully is trying to intimidate the gentle J.L.B. Matekoni and seems to be succeeding at it. When the matron of the orphan farm first speaks, he is very rude to her, basically telling her to go away. She steps up and says, "I know you, Herbert Molefi. I know your mother. She is my friend. And I have often felt sorry for her, with a son like you." He is dumbfounded and she continues that she might have to tell his mother and his uncles (who "might just give their cattle to somebody else when they die" (166)) about his behavior. He completely deflates and agrees to refund the customer's money. After he leaves, Mma Ramotswe's assistant asks Mma Potokwani if his mother was really that fierce?

> "I have no idea," said Mma Potokwani. "I've only seen his mother; I've never met her, and I took a bit of risk with that. But usually bullies have severe mothers and bad fathers, and they are usually frightened of them" (167-68).

Here some direct action was necessary. It was undergirded by a good knowledge of human psychology and a canny trick, and it worked. The canny feminine prefers to avoid confrontation, but when it is necessary, undertakes it.

In analysis too, difficult insights must be conveyed, and may seem horrible at first to the recipient. Von Franz mentions that people misunderstood this about Jung; they thought he was being sarcastic when they heard him make a caustic remark. "But if you knew what was really going on, you realized that he always said those things in situations that needed a cold determinedness in order to wipe out a wrong attitude" (von Franz 1997:51). When difficult things need to be explained, as in the case of the Government Man, it can have the effect of

healing the effects of psychological "poison," (a complex). Von Franz gives us another example of the positive effects of the Logos functions in healing:

> …Actually, we have constantly to use our mind and intelligence to imprison djins and other demons. For instance, let's go back to the young man who wants to take a room alone [away from his mother]. He comes to the analytical hour and says he feels funny, he thinks he is going to have the flu, and he's feverish. Then it might be a very good thing to say, "Oh, that's your mother complex regression tendency. Ignore it!" Then he will pull himself together and carry on. But what have you really done? You have rationalized this regressive impulse, you have called it "nothing but a mother complex regression." You have, as it were, slapped it into the container and labeled it "Mother Complex Regression" and thus cut its effectiveness (von Franz 1990:94-95).

The logos functions of cutting, labeling, clarifying are necessary, but must be carried out in a related way to constitute the canny feminine. In the Tao Te Ching it says, "If you attack with compassion, you will win" (J. Stevens 2001:25).

Local Knowledge, Close Observation of Daily Minutia

Mma Ramotswe and her assistant both scour the newspaper down to the smallest details for "you never knew when some snippet of local knowledge would be useful" (McCall Smith 1998:232); even the small advertisements are full of "social detail" (2006:6). In one early case, she needs to know not only the human soul, but also the complexities of the ecosystems of Botswana.

Mma Malatsi requests the No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency to find her missing husband. Mma Ramotswe immediately suspects that he has run off with another woman; this is usually how these cases turn out. But the wife insists that that was not the case. In fact, he had recently become a Christian, and had disappeared on a Sunday, when he had gone off to his new church. Mma Ramotswe tracks down the particular church and speaks to the minister, who tells her that he has "gone to the Lord." During a baptism of six "sinners," Peter had disappeared. As she had not seen any news about an unidentified drowned body, Mma Ramotswe realizes there is another explanation. She borrows a neighbor's dog and goes to the river during the night, where she stakes the dog's leash near the river's edge. Then she waits several hours until the dog begins growling and she sees a crocodile slowly emerging from the water. She shoots the crocodile with her old rifle and removes the collection of items from its belly, including a man's watch. Mma Malatsi later identifies this as Peter's, and seems relieved that he is dead rather than with another

woman! (McCall Smith 1998:65-72).

Gossip is another valuable source of information, and Mma Ramotswe and her assistant exchange it over their morning tea. This is how she was able to solve the problem of the refused permit for the dry cleaning shop, for example (McCall Smith 2000:19-20).[12]

Empathy

Empathy maintains the human feeling for the other even when they are not particularly likeable or have done something bad. Mma Ramotswe thinks about this during a complicated blackmailing case. A young woman named Poppy comes to tell her that her employer, Mma Tsau, is stealing food from the college cafeteria where the women work as cooks, and giving it to her fat husband (McCall Smith 2006:38). When Poppy confronts the employer about it, Mma Tsau threatens to have her dismissed from her job (42). But it gets worse, because some days later, Mma Tsau accuses her of having sent a blackmailing letter and says that no one will believe her and she will now surely lose her job. Poppy was just going to let the matter go, so now she is worried about her job and has no idea about a letter (44). When Mma Ramotswe goes to meet Mma Tsau, her negative predisposition quickly melts away:

> She had been prepared to dislike this woman who had been stealing food from the college; this woman who had so unfairly threatened the inoffensive Poppy with dismissal. But now, in the flesh, with her laboured breathing and her odd walk, it was difficult not to feel sympathy. And of course it was always difficult for Mma Ramotswe not to feel sympathy for another, however objectionable his conduct might be, however flawed his character, simply because she understood, at the most intuitive, profound, level what it was to be a human being, which is not easy. Everybody, she felt, could do evil, so easily; could be weak, so easily; could be selfish, so easily. This meant that she could understand—and did—which was not the same thing as condoning—which she did not—or taking the view—which she did not—that one should not judge others. Of course one could judge others, and Mma Ramotswe used the standards of the old Botswana morality to make these judgements. But there was nothing in the old Botswana morality which said that one could not forgive those who were weak; indeed, there was much in the old Botswana morality that was very specifically about forgiveness. One should not hold a grudge against another, it said, because to harbour grudges was to disturb the social peace, the bond between people (100-101).

[12] For a fascinating examination of the value of gossip in analysis, see Mary Wells Barron, *Gossip—As Language of the Goddess*, Diploma Thesis, C.G. Jung Institute, Zürich, 1993.

Further adding sympathy for Mma Tsau's situation, it turns out that her husband sleeps around with younger women; at first she thinks Mma Ramotswe is the mother of one of these girls (101-2). But she loves him and feeding him well is probably how she thinks she can keep him with her. Mma Ramotswe explains she has come about the blackmail, and that Poppy did not write the letter. They do not know who did, but finding the person is the key to the problem—somebody else knows about the theft of food (104). Mma Ramotswe has an intuition suddenly of whom Poppy had told about the problem, and realizes that that person is now blackmailing Mrs. Tsau. In fact, Poppy had sent a letter to the new advice columnist in the newspaper, "Aunty Emang," so Mma Ramotswe also sends a letter to her hinting that she knows about blackmail at the newspaper. She realizes that the advice columnist happens to be in a very good position to hear bad things about people. They set up a meeting in the Detective Agency, and Aunty Emang does come to meet them. Even though she is horrified at her behavior, Mma Ramotswe still treats her with courtesy, for "after all, she was her guest, even if she was a blackmailer" (218). She realizes that this woman is truly evil, and tricks her into admitting what she has done. But Aunty Emang taunts her that nothing can be proved. Nevertheless, Mma Ramotswe threatens that if she does not quit the job, they will work hard to find proof and then will take it to the police, so Aunty Emang agrees to give it up (221). In the first instance, Mma feels a human connection with the wife of the philandering man, who tries to protect her marriage by getting rid of Poppy. But in the second case, she recognizes that the woman acts not out of any kind of self-interest, but because she is cut off from human connection. But she still tries to understand her.

> And she thought, How might I think if I were in this woman's shoes? How do you think if you are so heartless as to blackmail those who are frightened and guilty? And the answer that came back to her was this: hate. Somewhere some wrong had been done, a wrong connected with who she was perhaps, a wrong which turned her to despair and to hate. And hate had made it possible for her to do all this (221).

Empathy for the woman does not stop her from confronting the blackmailer and putting a stop to her behavior. But she does try to understand what went wrong, how a person could behave like this. This is a much different feel than stories in which the "bad" person is portrayed as somehow completely different and unconnected with the "good" person who catches him.[13]

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[13] This will be discussed more fully in Chapter 5.

It is the same in analysis—it is important that the analyst acknowledges her own woundedness. Otherwise she identifies completely with the healer archetype, which means that the analysand must carry all the "sickness." Anthony Stevens explains:

> …Modern doctors split the archetype of the wounded healer into its two poles, identifying themselves exclusively with the healer and projecting their wounds into their patients. In this way, doctors bask in the illusion that they are entirely healthy while their patents are entirely sick…. For their part, the patients are encouraged to renounce the healer at work within themselves and to project it instead onto the person of the doctor, thus adding to the doctor's power and self-satisfaction (Stevens 1993:104-5).

Silence and Deliberate Non-action

In our final example of styles of the canny feminine, we will see that sometimes doing nothing is the best answer, even when there are plenty of things that could be done from a "rational" point of view. The orphanage matron, Mma Potokwani, calls Mma Ramotswe to come and see a new arrival who is a special case. He is a little boy who does not speak, destroys any clothing they give him, and has to be locked up or he would run back to the bush. He responds to no African language, and growls when Mma Ramotswe approaches. The matron wonders if Mma Ramotswe can find out anything about him. But the police had asked everyone in the area he was found, and no one knew him at all. The ones who found him said that when they found him he smelled strangely, of lion (McCall Smith 2001:99-110). In the meantime, the fiancé of Mma Ramotswe has become clinically depressed and will not take his medications. So she arranges that he stay at the orphan farm where he can be lovingly bullied by the matron and house mothers there. Gradually he begins to work with that little wild boy, and somehow they seem to be helping each other. The ladies agree that it is likely that the boy is one of the wild children who are said to be raised by animals, even though there is little proof for such stories. If they make it public, there will surely be a big fuss, and maybe the boy will even be taken away from Botswana. So they agree that the situation will simply stay as it is.

> They sat silently. Then Mma Ramotswe spoke. 'I think that there are some matters that are best left undisturbed,' she said. 'We don't want to know the answer to everything.'
>
> 'I agree,' said Mma Potokwani. 'It is sometimes easier to be happy if you don't know everything' (223).[14]

[14] In the movie *Nell* about a woman who had grown up alone and far from other people after her mother and twin sister die, the psychologist reaches a similar conclusion after seeing her, terrified, in laboratories, being treated

In analysis too, it is sometimes good to "do nothing," and let the unconscious work for a time. Anneliese Aumüller tells how she learned this directly (and rather painfully) from Jung after the war. She went to Zürich "brimful of problems and…important dreams" (191), but Jung was not interested in any of her "urgent" issues to which she wanted immediate answers.

> He just glanced at me, and then looked out of the window into his garden and started to tell me quiet little stories: about the long preparations the Bushmen took the evening before a hunt; of how many years of learning it took a disciple of Zen Buddhism before he dared to try to hit the target. He also said something about the pitch-black darkness of a tower where there is no chance of any light, and what fertile ground that was for the unconscious to enfold.
>
> I was rather close to despair when I left Jung and did not understand at all what he meant. That night I had the following dream: I had a small, very dirty, iron ball, and my task was to polish it so that it would shine. I did my utmost. I tried everything because it seemed terribly important to succeed. The ball stayed dirty and dull. Full of anger, I threw it in a corner. After a while I heard a cat playing with something. Looking closer I saw a kitten circling around my ball and warming it with its soft fur. The ball shone like pure gold!
>
> Next morning Jung greeted me with a little sarcastic smile saying, 'You were quite unhappy last night, and thought me a nasty ununderstand-ing man, didn't you?' I had to admit at least the latter. Then Jung went on and told me very seriously that in our Western civilization we had very little idea about letting things happen He told me about the Chinese Wu-Wei, the balance or middle between activity and passivity. R. Wilhelm and E. Rousselle translated this We-Wei as 'Doing nothing, but also not doing nothing'; hard to understand and terribly important for analytical practice (Fordham 1963:191-92).

In the Logos world, problems are to be solved, to be presented to experts for resolution. But sometimes just letting things be is the better solution. And sometimes "doing nothing" also means "holding the tension" with a seemingly insoluble problem until the unconscious may produce an unimagined answer.

Summary of Styles

Canny feminine ways of doing things are both clever and compassionate—although not always kind. Kindness focuses on making the other person feel good, assuaging their anxieties in the moment. But although it may be emotionally satisfying in the short-term, kindness does not have the lasting effects of compassion, which may also teach a difficult truth and allow the

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like a guinea pig. He takes her back to her home and lets her live in familiar surroundings in nature—but maintains his friendship with her.

person to develop some insight about the problem. A Zen story illustrates this well. An old woman supported the religious efforts of a young monk. She built him a hut and brought him food so that he could spend all of his time meditating. One day she sent a young attractive woman to him to ask him a question. He replied coldly and sent her away. Furious, the old woman burnt down his hut and sent him away, realizing that he had mastered the forms, but none of the content of Buddhism. He had no compassion for the young woman, and simply dismissed her as a threat to his "purity." It is the old woman in the story who exhibits the most compassion—but not kindness—by rudely awakening the monk from his complacency and giving him another chance to learn this lesson.

As we saw in Chapter 1, a purely Logos style will very likely solve the problem, but with little regard for the feelings or situations of the people involved. The Wild Child might be taken off to a scientific institute to be studied, the man with the stolen car sent to prison, the bureaucrat humiliated. But these solutions will also cause problems for the people involved and their families, and may invite retributions that reinforce cycles of violence and escalating mistrust.

In the next chapter we will consider some of the ethical implications of the canny feminine.

Chapter 4

Ethics and the Canny Feminine

> But again that troubling issue of means and ends raised its head. Was it right to do the wrong thing to get the right result? Yes, it must be. There were wars which were just wars. Africa had been obliged to fight to liberate itself, and nobody said that it was wrong to use force to achieve that result. Life was messy, and sometimes there was no other way.
>
> --Alexander McCall Smith, *Tears of the Giraffe*

> It is better to be wise than good.
>
> --C.G. Jung, *Dream Analysis Seminar*

The ethics of the canny feminine is a very tricky subject because it is sometimes not the same as the agreed upon ethics of the collective. We have seen that in service to the canny feminine, people lie, trick, steal, impersonate, and manipulate others, all behaviors frowned upon or prohibited in the general morality. However, in the stories we saw in Chapter 3, these behaviors resulted in satisfying outcomes, where the greater good benefited. But does this mean that someone working in the canny feminine mode can simply do as she likes, without regard for social rules?

In this chapter, first we will consider when the canny feminine ceases to be the canny feminine and moves into its shadow side: meddling in the lives of others. Next we will examine three aspects of the ethics of the canny feminine: how it deals with evil, how its solution may be correct but "illegal," and finally, how it relates to Jung's concept of the transcendent function.

The Shadow of the Canny Feminine

When Isis fashioned the harpoon and was too directly aggressive, she was not employing the canny feminine. Conversely, when she ended up as a Great Mother figure who contained the attributes of all goddesses, she equally was not a good example of this style of behavior. The

canny feminine requires a delicate balance. Too much eros and it loses objectivity; too much logos and it lacks warmth. Without this critical calibration, the person slips from using the canny feminine to insensitive meddling at best, playing God at worst. The result may get the job done, but it does not have the satisfying feel of the canny feminine, and indeed, the recipient probably feels bullied and rather dehumanized.

One figure in Alexander McCall Smith's *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series usually works in the "benevolent bullying" mode. Mma Potokwani, the matron of the orphan farm used the canny feminine in helping Mr. J.L.B. Matekoni to deal with the unscrupulous mechanic (Chapter 3), but usually her tactics are more direct and manipulative. Because she works for the good of the orphans, no one really minds her style. But it is in decided contrast to the more subtle workings of Precious Ramotswe and her assistant, Grace Makutsi. When Mma Potokwani accomplishes something, the person involved usually feels roped in or tricked.

> One had to watch Mma Potokwani, then, so that she did not manoeuvre people into positions in which they felt uncomfortable. This was always the case with pushy people; their pushy schemes were sometimes put into effect without one's being aware of what was going on. And then suddenly one would discover that one had agreed to do something one had no wish to do (McCall Smith 2004:103).

This is *not* the canny feminine. It is not easy to state formulaically the difference between these positions. But eros is not fully honored in the "pushy" interaction, even if the outcome is "good."

I will give two novelistic examples of the shadow of the canny feminine, one with too much eros, the other with too much logos. Interestingly, the examples come from the same two authors who have given us such superb examples of the canny feminine, Stella Gibbons and Alexander McCall Smith. Perhaps it is coincidence; perhaps they consciously wanted to explore the other side of the canny feminine. But the heroines in the stories below are, in my reading, insufferable, even though both mean well.[15]

In *A Pink Front Door*, by Stella Gibbons, the heroine, Daisy, likes helping people, as did Flora Poste, who sorted out Cold Comfort Farm. However, Flora did this smoothly and with mutual benefit for the people who helped solve the problems. Daisy, on the other hand, blindly inconveniences everyone around her in taking care of her "projects," who infuriate her when

[15] Some readers might find the novels to be humorous, but I find them rather sad, at least from the perspective of the canny feminine.

they do not go along with her plans for them. She has a kind husband and a small child, often ignored in her do-gooding chaos. James, her husband, always enters his home cautiously,

> …not always sure of who or what he would find in the hall when he got in. It might be someone in tears, or someone asleep while they filled up time waiting to catch a train, or someone drunk (Gibbons 1959:22).

He fantasizes about living in Canada because none of Daisy's friends live there. Daisy has an excess of eros—she wants to help others—but a decided lack of logos insight about what this help entails. Even her father muses that she shows "throughout these experiences few, if any, signs of possession of a trained mind" (50). She takes care of her charges by putting her father, friends, and even vague acquaintances in difficult positions by asking them to do favors for these strangers. When she helps a former college friend in difficult circumstances to find a flat, then begs pieces of furniture from other friends to furnish it, the donors resent her and the soup is cold for her own family with whom she is quite irritable (128). Worst of all, she has no discretion about these delicate matters of people's problems and hardships: when her friend Susan calls and asks to hear "all about your ghastly friends," Daisy and she shout with laughter about all the "broken engagements, outraged feelings, personal quirks and solemnly imparted confidences" (158).

The plot development involves Molly, who Daisy is trying to pry away from what she considers an inappropriate boyfriend, and Daisy's husband James. Molly begins feeling very sorry for James, abandoned most evenings when Daisy is out "helping" people, and so begins to spend time with him. He accepts her help with cooking and babysitting as a gesture of friendship, but she falls in love with him. Daisy comes home to find them in an embrace, but she sees at a glance that her husband's affections are still with her. She tells Molly not to be an ass, and talks her back into seeing the inappropriate boyfriend. Daisy sorts it all out, but at the expense of Molly's dignity and feelings. Finally James tells her that he has accepted work in Canada and she is quite shocked. He finally becomes angry and says that she must choose between him and all her hard luck cases. She realizes that she has been "playing God abroad" which has been better for her self-esteem than domestic duties (243). Although his scheme for her to have six or seven children and look after them instead of random unhappy people may or may not be the best solution, she does accept it.

The canny feminine finds solutions that benefit both the helper and the one to be

"rescued." For example, in *Cold Comfort Farm,* when Flora introduces Seth to the film producer, Seth escapes the stifling farm into his dream profession and Mr. Net gets a new star. This is very different from Daisy imposing upon old friends of the family to do things for people they do not know. Rather than helping people achieve their own goals, she decides what is "good" for them. And worst of all, she seems at some level to despise those she helps, laughing about them with her friend as she betrays their confidences. I described her above as having too much eros, but it is not a deep eros of true relatedness, perhaps because there is no logos to put her behavior in perspective. When her husband finally puts his foot down, she does get some insight on her behavior, and perhaps this will continue to develop.

In *Friends, Lovers, Chocolate* we find Alexander McCall Smith's version of the anti-canny feminine (in my reading). This woman also gets involved in people's lives and often goes too far with her meddling, but elaborately justifies it all through complex logos ratiocinations. Isabel Dalhousie is a 40-year-old single philosopher who lives in Edinburgh. Independently wealthy, she edits the *Review of Applied Ethics* and dotes on her niece Cat. She has a crush on Jamie, Cat's ex-boyfriend, who still hopes to reunite with Cat, but he is only interested in Isabel as a friend (he is 15 years younger than she).

Isabel thinks that by being able to explain her own behavior through sophisticated intellectual theory, she has understood it, and perhaps she has (after the fact), but her intellectualism seems to actually cloud rather than clarify her own behaviors to herself. She does have concern for people, but thinks too much. Her emotional reactions are her weak point, for she thinks she has them under control, but of course, they burst out in hugely inappropriate ways. She attends a concert in which Jamie is performing, sees him speaking rather intimately with an attractive blonde woman, and leaps to the conclusion that he is involved with her. Her evening is ruined and she returns home in tears. The next morning she has an elaborate chat with herself about this "inappropriate" behavior:

> Of course it was much better in the clear light of day. When she went downstairs the following morning, Isabel might not have forgotten about her momentary weakness, but at least she was back in control of herself. She knew that what she had experienced the previous evening was a sudden rush of emotion—the emotion in question being jealousy, no less. Emotional states of this sort came on quickly and were difficult to manage when first experienced, but the whole point about being a rational actor was that one could assert control. She, Isabel Dalhousie, was quite capable of holding negative emotions in check and sending them back to where they belonged. Now, where was that? In the dark reaches of

> the Freudian id? She smiled at the thought. How well-named was the id—a rough, un-house-trained, shadowy thing, wanting to do all those anarchic deeds that the ego and super-ego frowned upon. Much Freudian theory was scientifically shaky, even if it was such a literary treat to read, but Isabel had always thought that of all the Freudian conceits the id was probably the most credible (24).

But in spite of all this "rational control," when Jamie brings over his new, married (but still younger than Isabel) girlfriend for Isabel to meet, she is astonishingly rude, and tactlessly begins to question the woman about her husband. And actually her thinking is not as rational as she thinks, for she often jumps to conclusions that are not correct, as she did with Jamie's orchestra-mate.

The main story of the novel is about a man, Ian, who has had a heart transplant and thinks he may have received cellular memory from the donor along with it, for he has occasional jolts of pain and a vision of what he takes to be the heart donor's death. Isabel had met him by chance in the delicatessen and he asks if he could talk to her about it.

> There was something in his tone which spoke of vulnerability, and Isabel thought that she could not refuse his request, even if she had wanted to. But, in fact, her curiosity had been aroused; curiosity, her personal weakness, the very quality which had led her into such frequent interventions in the lives of others and which she simply could not resist (66).

Isabel begins to investigate the situation. She finds the name of a young man who was killed by a hit and run driver on the same day as Ian's heart transplant, and now thinks that Ian's vision may be the face of that driver. Isabel feels it is her duty to get involved even though Jamie urges restraint, saying, "Just be careful. You can't go charging into people's grief, you know" (122)—he realizes that her ideas of justice and the like often blind her to the feeling side of life.

She goes to the home of the young man who was killed, and speaks to his mother. When the mother's partner arrives, Isabel "knew, immediately and with utter certainty, that this was the man whose face had appeared to Ian" (129). So now she cannot tell the mother her real business and pretends to be a psychic. Then she has a period of agonizing about whether to tell the mother that her partner had killed her son or not. Later, she runs into the mother at the delicatessen and confesses that she is not a medium, and it comes out that the boy's organs had not been donated after his death. So Isabel had again leapt to conclusions and acted on them, with rather distressing consequences for the people involved, but at least she never told the mother her

suspicions that her own partner had killed her son.

Jamie does some research and finds out that another young man had died on the same day, and it might be that it was his heart that Ian had received. Now Isabel goes to meet that mother, and again finds a person who fits the image of Ian's vision, "a man with hooded eyes," in a photograph of the boy's father, now divorced from the mother. Finally, and rather anti-climactically, Isabel concludes that there was no cellular memory, having discovered that Ian had stayed during his recovery in the village where the father now lives. She thinks that he must have heard talk of the tragedy and seen the boy's father, and all this became an image in his mind, without conscious knowledge of how it got there (250). In the end Isabel does something worthy of Precious Ramotswe: she organizes a meeting between the father, who had not known that his son had donated his organs, and Ian, who wanted to thank his donor even though it is forbidden. The meeting seems cathartic for both men.

The story ends well, but almost in spite of Isabel's interventions, for it was Jamie who actually got the name of the donor right. Similar to Daisy who has an excess of relatedness, but not of genuine caring, so Isabel has an excess of analyzing, but sometimes a very large blind spot about herself in her own thinking.

> I am not a meddler, Jamie, I am an *intromitter*. Yes, that's an old Scots law term which I rather like. It describes somebody who gets involved. A person who gets involved without good excuse is called a *vitious intromitter*. Isn't that a wonderful term? I, though, am *not* a *vitious intromitter* (239).

Isabel Dalhousie's tragedy is that she seems quite unaware of the emotional effects of her mistakes on others, so she continues to blunder around in people's lives, and sees these interventions as virtuous, her duty. When Mma Ramotswe feels sure of something, she is usually in touch with her intuition, which seems to spring from a deeper source than mere thinking. Isabel is very intelligent, but not in very good connection with her soul. She consciously believes in rationality and the scientific method, and hence is not interested in (and actually quite dismissive of) these other sources of information. She cannot imagine how her housekeeper can attend séances and considers this lapse in the otherwise down-to-earth person to be the housekeeper's weak point (97). She would also not be interested in patchwork solutions, preferring to see the world through grand theories of whole cloth. And it seems as if her desire to "do the right thing" trumps empathy. She means to be kind, but often her direct, blunt speech

causes just the opposite result.

In summary, then, the canny feminine rests upon a very important balance and may be less easy to achieve than its masters make it look. There is a real danger of slipping into the shadow side of "playing God." Psychologically, this is called falling into an inflation and it is quite dangerous. This is what Jung sees as identifying with an archetype, which is tantamount to being possessed by it. In the case of the do-gooder, the archetype might be that of the savior, healer, or saint. Analysts and others working in the helping professions try to be alert to the danger of inflation caused by identifying with the healer archetype. One way to mitigate this tendency includes both eros and logos features: the need for both social sensitivity and critical self-awareness.

> Hence it is of the greatest importance that the ego should be anchored in the world of consciousness and that consciousness should be reinforced by a very precise adaptation. For this, certain virtues like attention, conscientiousness, patience, etc., are of great value on the moral side, just as accurate observation of the symptomatology of the unconscious and objective self-criticism are valuable on the intellectual side (Jung, CW 9ii:¶46).

It is crucial that the helper monitor the eros connection, for its absence will probably be replaced by the power drive. Jung notes, "Where love reigns, there is no will to power; and where the will to power is paramount, love is lacking" (CW 7:¶78). Another antidote to this kind of inflation is humility and groundedness. We mentioned the rootedness of Jung and Precious Ramotswe in Chapter 3, and we can also see this feature in Miss Poste, literally in the dirt at Cold Comfort Farm, planting seeds as she plants ideas, helping others to bloom. It may be that such mundane tasks are symbolically and literally useful in staying grounded. It was critical for Jung to visit Bollingen periodically and engage in the earthy tasks of living; Precious Ramotswe also delights in the simple tasks of cooking, gardening, and drinking tea as part of the necessary fabric of her life.

Dealing with Evil: The Aikido Style of the Canny Feminine

Although the canny feminine never, by definition, initiates evil or hostile action, it has a moral responsibility to respond to it. The way this usually happens is by deflecting the evil back at the evildoer. There is a delicate balance here—the negative energy is turned back just enough to get the problem stopped or solved. This is not "an eye for an eye" retribution because it is not

retribution but restitution, attempting to correct the injustice, not punish the perpetrator. We saw that Precious Ramotswe more or less blackmailed a blackmailer and stole a stolen car. But she did this, first, not for her own sake, but to help others. Second, she did not directly punish the evildoers, but used their own methods to stop their behaviors. This turning the attack back against the attacker is the central philosophy of the Japanese philosophy and martial art called Aikido.

Figure 13: The Chinese Characters for "Aikido"

Aikido (see Figure 13) literally means "the way of harmony with ki."[16] Ki (chi in Chinese) is the character for the life force. Founded by Morihei Ueshiba (1883-1969), Aikido is more of a spiritual path or philosophy than a competitive sport, and in fact, it refuses to have competitions, winners, or rankings because "such things are seen as fueling only egotism, self-concern and disregard for others" (Ueshiba 1984:15). The founder stated:

> The victory we seek is to overcome all challenges and fight to the finish, accomplishing our goals. In Aikido, we never attack. If you strike first, to gain advantage over someone, that is proof that your training is insufficient, and it is really you who has been defeated (Stevens 2001:15).

It is a training that is full of relatedness to the attacker, based on its philosophy of non-contention: "Non-contention means to deflate the aggressive, combative, destructive instincts within a person and to channel them into the power of creative love" (Ueshiba 12). It is paradoxically quite spontaneous within its fixed moves that were borrowed from other forms of martial arts. In the founder's words:

> The techniques of Aikido change constantly; every encounter is unique, and the appropriate response should emerge naturally. Today's techniques will be

[16] Literally: "harmony – spirit – way".

> different tomorrow (Stevens 19).

Two examples from the fixed techniques show the "love" for the attacker. First, in *irimi*, "entering and blending," Stevens explains,

> When confronted with an attack in Aikido, a typical response is not to retreat or to deflect the aggression but to enter right into the face of the attack: "When an opponent comes forward, move in and greet him." Sometimes we end up facing the same direction as the attacker, in close proximity—so close that it is difficult to discern the difference between attacker and defender. Often the best way to deal with opposition is to go right to its source, and then blend with it, rendering further aggression impossible (Stevens 20).

In the canny feminine, this happens when, for example, Precious Ramotswe can identify very closely with the wrong-doer as a human being and does not stand apart and condemn him from a superior moral position. She often solves her cases by identifying with the person of questionable behavior. This means that all of the "bad" is not projected onto the other, but one is very aware of one's own potential for doing something similar under the right circumstances. Knowing one's own shadow and capacity for evil is essential so that it does not get entirely projected.

The second move that resonates with the canny feminine is *kaiten*, "opening and turning."

> Sometimes it is better to avoid an attack by opening to the side and then redirecting the attack toward the aggressor. The concept of "opening" is central in Aikido, and encompasses being open to possibility, open-minded, and openhearted (Stevens 20).

This is the move that we will investigate below. These movements were originally designed in Aikido to defend oneself against a superior, stronger opponent (Ueshiba 40). The key movement is spherical, and we can see the psychological truth that parallels this physical strategy.

> In the spherical movements of aikidō, this becomes, "when pushed, pivot and go around; when pulled, enter while circling." This means that one moves in circular motion in response to the opponent and while moving spherically, one maintains his center of gravity to create the stable axis of movement. And at the same time the opponent's center is disturbed, and when he loses his center, he also loses all power. Then he is subdued swiftly and

decisively (Ueshiba 41).[17]

Fairy tales provide some good examples of this turning back of aggression. When they are read literally, they may seem brutal, but symbolically, they show an effective way to defeat an ill. "Gold-Tree and Silver-Tree" is the Celtic version of "Little Snow White." Silver-tree is the mother, and her daughter is called Gold-tree. Here, in place of the magic mirror, is a trout in a well in a glen. The mother asks if she is the most beautiful queen in the world, and the trout replies that, no indeed, she is not, but Gold-tree is. Silver-tree becomes enraged, and demands of her husband that he give her the heart and liver of her daughter to eat. Instead, the king gives his daughter in marriage to a prince from abroad, and tricks his wife with the heart and liver of a goat to eat. One year later, the queen asks the trout in the well if she is not the most beautiful queen in the world, and learns that she is not because Gold-tree is still alive. She asks the king to put the long-ship in order and she sails off to see her daughter. When Gold-tree sees the long-ship approaching, she says to the servants, "Oh! …my mother is coming and she will kill me" (Jacobs 1994:90). They lock her in a room so the mother may not harm her. But Silver-tree convinces Gold-Tree to stick her finger out through the keyhole so that she may kiss it. Instead of the kiss, she stabs it with a poison stab, and Gold-tree dies.

When Gold-tree's husband sees what has happened he is heartbroken. Instead of burying her, he locks her in a room. In time, he marries again, and the second wife has the keys to all the rooms of the house except for one. One day she finds the key, enters the room, and sees an astonishingly beautiful woman. She sees the poison stab in the finger, removes it, and Gold-tree returns to life. The husband is overjoyed, and the second wife offers to leave, but he says he will keep both of them.

The next time Silver-tree consults the trout and comes to her daughter in the long-boat, the husband is again away hunting. Gold-tree says that her mother is coming to kill her, but the second wife is calm and together they go to meet the mother.

> Silver-tree came ashore. "Come down, Gold-tree, love," said she, "for your own mother has come to you with a precious drink."
>
> "It is a custom in this country," said the second wife, "that the person who offers a drink takes a draught out of it first."

[17] It is interesting that the work of individuation is also circular: the Pelican effects a "circular distillation" in alchemy (CW 14:¶8); the process itself is described as circular (¶10). The mandala expresses the circle and the Hermetic vessel (¶12). And: "There is no linear evolution, there is only a circumambulation of the self" (Jung 1963:196).

> Silver-tree put her mouth to it, and the second wife went and struck it so that some of it went down her throat, and she fell dead. They had only to carry her home a dead corpse and bury her (Jacobs 92).

The mother drinks her own poison and dies. The second wife uses the Aikido ethics of the canny feminine to prevent this evil woman from killing her daughter. She does not instigate hostile action, but rather redirects the mother's own form of hostility against her, makes her "swallow her own poison."

In the well-known fairy tale, "Hansel and Gretel," the same method of defeating evil is used. It too is about a very negative mother (here, stepmother) who decides to sacrifice her husband's two children when there is not enough food for four. She convinces her husband, and they take the children into the woods, build a big fire to keep them warm, and abandon them there. Hansel had overheard the plan, and stuffed his pockets with shiny white pebbles, with which he marked the path. Following this trail, he is able to lead his sister home in the moonlight. But the second time that the stepmother tries to abandon them, she locks the door so that the boy cannot gather the pebbles. So he uses his portion of bread as markers, but the birds eat the crumbs and instead of returning home they end up going deeper and deeper into the woods. They follow a beautiful snow-white bird and end up at the house made of bread and cake with sugar windows, and immediately begin to eat pieces of the house. The owner of the house is a wicked witch who lures children to her house, then boils them and eats them: she is literally the devouring mother. She tries to fatten up Hansel, but he tricks her by letting her feel a bone instead of his finger every time she tries to determine if she is fat enough. Finally after a month she decides she can wait no longer, and instructs Gretel to bake the bread first, before they boil her brother. When she asks Gretel to climb inside the oven to see if it is hot enough, Gretel knows she is to be baked and eaten, so she plays stupid, and says that she does not know how to do that. When the witch sticks in her own head to show her, Gretel gives her a shove and locks the door, and the terrible witch burns to death. Hansel and Gretel manage to find their way home with the help of a white duck, whom they treat with consideration, and when they arrive at home, the stepmother has also died. They have taken many jewels from the witch's house, and never want for food again (Grimm 1970:86-94).

Similar to the canny second wife in "Gold-Tree and Silver-Tree," Gretel does not initiate the murderous act, but turns it around so that she does to the witch what the witch would have

done to her. Psychologically, in both stories there is a huge negative mother complex, the energy of which can "kill" or "devour" the child. In both cases, the mother's narcissism is fed by the sacrifice of the children; from the child's point of view this is absolutely devastating. With a complex this terrible, strong medicine is necessary—the internalized negative attitude that poisons or devours the self-worth must itself be poisoned or incinerated. Of course the negative mother is not always the problem. In Chapter 2 we saw that Isis helped Horus retaliate after Seth raped him. Rather than replicate the violation, Isis places the semen of Horus on the lettuce in Seth's garden, and he internalizes it in this harmless, even healthy way. But it still gets the job done, for when the other gods see that he is the "recipient" of the semen, he is humiliated before them. This is a gentler example of the Aikido style.

A final example of Aikido ethics comes from an American popular culture classic, *Columbo*. This television drama ran for nine seasons in the 1970s and is still being shown in reruns around the world today.[18] The structure of the show is always the same: in the first twenty or thirty minutes, we see the murder committed, then for the next hour, we watch the rumpled detective figure it out. There is no suspense, for we know in exacting detail who did it and how it was done. But there is something very compelling about watching Lt. Columbo, and I think one reason is that he uses the canny feminine. In contrast to detective shows of today that clearly distinguish the "good guys" from the "bad guys," *Columbo* showed an intricate dance of eros between the murderer and the detective in each show. Dennis Bounds explains:

> For Columbo, each guest villain becomes something of an ironic "Watson". Columbo and the murderer spend most of the story playing off each other. The Lieutenant discusses the twists and turns of the case, the possible motives, the implications of clues with his primary suspect, always rich, powerful, and arrogant, always happy to match wits with the apparently witless policeman on the doorstep. In the end the working-class hero overcomes the wealthy, privileged criminal (Bounds, Museum of Broadcast Communications).

He identifies with the murderer to understand how the murder took place and why, and there is always a mutual respect between him and the criminal. In "Sex and the Married Detective" from Season 8, the murderer asks him in the final scene, "Now that I've confessed all this, I want to know, do you think less of me?" Columbo replies, "I'm only a policeman. Judging people, that's all up to somebody else. But I can tell you, I've enjoyed our talks very much. And I think I do

[18] At the time of writing, an episode is aired in Switzerland every Friday evening on Channel TSR.

understand." They hold each other's gaze for a moment, and then he takes her hand to arrest her. It is a beautiful moment, where two human beings come together. Good "wins," but the murderer is not demonized. In several episodes he catches the criminal by using exactly the trick that he or she used to commit the murder.[19]

The Difference Between Morality and Ethics

In a late essay, "A Psychological View of Conscience" (1958), Jung distinguished between his conception of morality and ethics.[20] Morality has to do with *mores,* the customs and habits of society, which are usually codified into rules of behavior for the collective. It has similarities with Freud's superego, but one critical difference is that for Jung, conscience does not result from the rules of society; it preexists and gives rise to them. In most cases, one gets a bad conscience when one feels one has deviated from the moral norms of the collective. But sometimes it is necessary to reject the moral code because one's conscience impels one to. This voice of conscience is often felt to be "the voice of God" (Jung CW 10:¶842-43) and compels one to take a stand against the general morality. His example is a situation in which, if one tells the truth, it will result in the death of another person (¶837). Simply following the codified rules of not lying will get the person killed. We must listen to a deeper voice, but must not simply accept it uncritically (for it could be speaking from the positive or negative side of the constellated archetype), but must use our conscious cognition to make our judgment (¶845). This, for Jung, is the ethical position, and is necessary when one is caught in a conflict of duty: in his example, should one lie, or should one be complicit in the killing of another? Sometimes, one can choose the lesser of the two evils, and suppress one of the opposites. Lying to save a life might fall into this category. But when the two options are equally weighed, "the deciding factor … proceeds not from the traditional moral code but from the unconscious foundation of the personality" (¶856). Here Jung is speaking about the transcendent function, "the creation of a third standpoint" that emerges from the constellated archetype and "embraces conscious and unconscious and therefore transcends the ego" (¶856). I will speak more about the transcendent

[19] "The Columbo technique" has actually become a method in some contemporary therapies. It basically consists of the therapist acting like she knows less than she does when asking questions, but includes taking a genuine interest in the details of the client's life.

[20] See also Murray Stein's *Solar Conscience Lunar Conscience* for an explication and elaboration of this idea.

function below.

The novels that will illustrate the ethics of the canny feminine are by Barbara Kingsolver. *The Bean Trees* begins the story and takes it to its first conclusion; the sequel, *Pigs in Heaven,* works out a more ethical solution that I believe uses the transcendent function.

A young woman named Taylor comes from a poor, rural, fatherless background in Kentucky, but has a strong sense of self because her mother, Alice, always fiercely believed in and supported her. One day, about five years after graduating from high school, she decides she has to get away and find a new life, so she drives off with her mother's blessing in her Volkswagen bug. Her car finally gives out in Oklahoma on the Cherokee reservation, and she has a meal at a bar after it is repaired. As she gets back into the beetle, an Indian woman comes to the car, puts a baby wrapped in a blanket on the seat, and says, "Take this baby" (Kingsolver 1988:23). Taylor does not understand, and argues with the woman, who says it is her dead sister's child. Finally, the woman just leaves the child and walks away. Taylor thinks of going into the bar to straighten this out, but its lights go out and it closes. She is exhausted and decides to go somewhere to think about what to do.

It is many miles before she comes to a motel, where she barters maid services for a room for the night. When she picks up the child, it holds on for dear life like a mud turtle, so she names her Turtle. Taylor is sick when she sees the bruises all over Turtle when she gives her a bath—she had never imagined that such horrible things could be done to a girl baby who had also been sexually abused. They stay at the motel for a time, then move on to Arizona. A flat tire takes them to Jesus is Lord Used Tires in Tucson, where they meet Mattie, quite adept at the canny feminine, which comes in handy as she helps to hide illegal immigrants and find them safe places to live. Eventually, Tylor works for Mattie in the tire shop and Mattie slowly lets her know about her sanctuary work. One couple staying with her are Guatemalan Indians named Estevan and Esperanza. Esperanza latches onto Turtle, who looks like her lost daughter for whom she is still in deep mourning.

Taylor takes Turtle to a doctor and finds out that she is probably three, not two, as she looks. It seems that the abuse had caused the condition "failure to thrive." Meanwhile, Esperanza tries to commit suicide, not for the first time. Taylor begins to learn about the torture and hardships the refugees endure. In Estevan and Esperanza's case, they had been members of a clandestine teachers union, and knew the names of 20 other members. In a raid, their daughter

was taken and three members of the union were killed. They could have traded the names of the 17 remaining teachers to get their daughter back, but those people would have been tortured and killed. So they had to let her go. Now it seems that Immigration is getting suspicious and Estevan and Esperanza need to be moved to Oklahoma or Oregon, far from the Mexican border.

In the nine months that Turtle had been with Taylor she had been gradually emerging from her near comatose state, beginning to talk and laugh. But while Taylor was at work, their blind neighbor had taken Turtle to the park and someone had tried to grab her. Now she was back in her shell. But she was resilient and in a few weeks she was talking again. Because the incident had been reported to the police, a social worker is now working with them to monitor Turtle's situation. But then it comes out that Taylor has no legal claim to be Turtle's mother, and that legally, Turtle is a ward of the State of Arizona. Taylor may be able to adopt her, but she will have to prove she has sufficient income and stability—both of which are sorely lacking in her life. She becomes depressed and doubts her ability to care for Turtle, thinking that maybe the State would do a better job. Learning that the rules are somewhat different on an Indian reservation, she begins to hatch a plan. She will drive the Guatemalan refugees to a safer place in Oklahoma, and while there, try to find Turtle's relatives and see if they will sign her over to Taylor. She takes a risk: transporting refugees could get her five years in jail and a fine if she is caught.

Early in the journey they must pass through an Immigration check point. She replies to the officer that they are all U.S. citizens: she, her brother, and his wife. When he asks whose child it is, Estevan says his. Finally, they are near the sanctuary church and Taylor can take them straight there, or they can stay together for another day and help her look for Turtle's family. They choose the latter. When they arrive near the Cherokee Nation, she realizes that the Guatemalans, who turn out to be Mayan, blend in well. Estevan says that really they do not look like Cherokees, but a white person would not know that. Turtle and Esperanza have been playing together the whole trip, and Taylor gets a cold feeling when she hears Esperanza call the child by her missing daughter's name, Ismene. They find the bar, but it has changed owners, so she can get no information there. She hears that the reservation proper is closer to the mountains, so she decides, on a whim, to go there. Estevan and Esperanza relax as they get to a place where there are no white people; even the police are Indian here. And something about Esperanza seems to be changing, as if she is thawing out. Taylor asks them to do her one last, big, favor, and they

agree.

They go the next day to a notary public, an old man who is very hard of hearing, to draw up the "legal" documents for the Cherokee couple, "Mr. and Mrs. Too Too" to transfer the guardianship of their daughter to their friend because they cannot take care of her. Often birth certificates are not issued on the reservation, so this accounts for the lack of documentation. Esperanza cries but hands Turtle over to Taylor—it actually seems to be a deeply cathartic event for her. In about six months, Taylor will receive the official birth certificate, and now Turtle is really hers. The two of them drive back to Tucson.

Ethics and The Transcendent Function

I wonder if the author felt somewhat uncomfortable with the conclusion of this book. It solved the problem in a canny way, using a loophole and a trick, and feels like a happy ending. But there is still the matter of removing a child from her cultural roots, a vexed problem in the United States, where many Indian children were taken away for adoption by whites even when they had living relatives who wanted to care for them.[21] For whatever personal reasons, Barbara Kingsolver continues the story of Taylor and Turtle in *Pigs in Heaven.*

Three years have passed and the two are visiting Hoover Dam. Miles down the highway, Turtle asks, "How will he get out?" (Kingsolver 1993:14). It turns out that she has seen a retarded man fall into the spillway as he tried to pick up a soda can in a dangerous spot. Taylor believes her daughter and they return and report the problem to the police who are not very helpful at first; they do not believe "this skinny Indian kid" (41). When the man is rescued, they appear briefly on television, and this brings them to the attention of Oprah Winfrey who wants them to be on her show for an episode of "Children Who Have Saved Lives." And when the show airs, it happens that a tough Cherokee lawyer, Annawake Fourkiller, happens to see it, realizes the child is Cherokee, and hearing the story of how Taylor was given the baby, knows that the adoption was illegal because there was no tribal permission. She is particularly sensitive about this issue, as her twin brother was taken away and adopted by whites. She begins to investigate, and learns that the "parents" of Turtle are not Cherokee or even registered citizens.

She has a conference in Tucson, so decides to meet Taylor while she is there. Her boss tries to discourage her from meddling, telling her that there are "a lot of hearts involved" (67).

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[21] Kingsolver's father claimed to be 1/64th Cherokee, so she may also feel a distant but personal connection to the problem (KYLIT internet site).

But she feels it is important that Turtle know who she is and so perseveres. Taylor is upset by the visit, and later that day packs up and flees with Turtle, leaving her musician boyfriend Jax behind. When Annawake comes back, she talks to Jax, tells him she is trying to see Taylor's side.

> "You can't," Jax says. "And Taylor can't. It's impossible. Your definitions of 'good' are not in the same dictionary. There is no point of intersection in this dialogue" (89).

And here we have the impossible situation that will require both the canny feminine and the transcendent function to solve. If Turtle loses her mother after so much trauma and dislocation, it is would be terrible and might have profound psychological consequences. But if she was illegally taken from a people with a culture that she shares in, that deprives her of a critical part of her identity and possibly happiness, too.

Alice, Taylor's mother, flies to Las Vegas to meet the fugitives. Meanwhile, Annawake sends a letter to Jax describing the racial discrimination that Indian children who grow up in white families face. They identify with the family, and so when they are made fun of in school, they have no tribal pride with which to fight back. She describes her own heartbreak about her brother Gabriel who was adopted by a white family in Texas through the social workers who were supposed to "help" the family. He was treated as a Mexican in school, and could not understand the teachers who spoke to him in Spanish. His adoptive mother told him that he was letting them down. She concludes, "Now I only know where he is when he's in prison" (149). Jax read Alice and Taylor this letter over the phone, and Alice decides that she needs to go and talk to Annawake. Taylor feels betrayed by her mother, but Alice says that running away might not be the best way to handle it. She assures Taylor that she's "on Taylor's side," but she also feels deeply Annawake's pain for her lost brother. Alice is the one who holds the tension between both positions and tries to make the eros connection to the other side. It turns out that she has a second cousin, Sugar, in the town where Annawake lives, so goes to visit her.

Taylor goes to Seattle, where she drives a van for the blind and struggles to pay the rent and bills. Alice has settled in with her relatives who are part of the Cherokee Nation, and meets Annawake for a talk. Before Alice gets to the restaurant, Annawake is so nervous that she spills the sugar. The waitress tells them that this means someone will get a new sweetheart. The two women talk, and try to understand each other's position. But they cannot agree. As the waitress

sings “Here Comes the Bride” as she notices the spilled sugar again, Annawake “hatches the most reckless plan of her life” (232) based on an intuition from this synchronicity. She tells Letty, the town gossip, that this visitor, Alice, has a crush on Letty’s brother, a man called Cash Stillwater, whose wife has died of cancer. Word gets around, and he asks Alice for a date. By their second date, they realize that they have been set up by Letty (they have no idea it was really Annawake). Alice finally asks Annawake if it would help if she and Taylor enroll in the tribe, for she had a Cherokee grandmother. Annawake is stunned, and says it would be good, but that she is more concerned about the cultural context of Turtle’s upbringing. She also admits that she has found a possible relative of Turtle, and may now subpoena Taylor to bring the child in. Alice says, “Maybe you and me are just going to have to be enemies,” but Annawake replies, “I don’t think so” (284). And they do seem to have some kind of bond even though they cannot agree about the best course for Turtle.

Meanwhile, Taylor and Turtle are living in hiding in fairly desperate circumstances. Turtle’s stomach always hurts, and Turtle tells Taylor that she seems angry all the time. Suddenly Taylor realizes that just keeping a child is not enough; one needs family around as well. The last straw is when she learns that Turtle is lactose intolerant and the milk that she has been giving her is what is making her ill—and that this is a common condition of non-white people. She remembers with chagrin Annawake saying to her, “I bet she hates milk,” and decides that she needs to go and talk to the Indians.

Now Cash and Alice have become lovers. But as they talk, he tells her that he has a granddaughter who was given to a stranger at a bar. Alice tells him that her daughter has that girl. They are dumbfounded, and then figure out that it was Annawake who set them up. Alice is furious at Annawake for meddling, but Annawake denies meddling and says that for once, she just “followed her gut.” (More about this below.) Taylor arrives and meets Annawake and Cash and learns that the woman who gave away the child was the alcoholic younger sister of Turtle’s mother, who died in a car accident. Taylor confesses that the life she was able to provide for Turtle was not good for her, and that “Turtle needs the best in the world” (320), and that was why she came here. She feels she has not been being a good enough mother to Turtle. When Alice and Turtle arrive, the girl recognizes her grandfather.

Annawake speaks to the medicine man, Uncle Ledger, about what she should do. He notes she has never asked for help before, and she says she always felt she knew what she was

doing. He bluntly tells her to call her brother in Leavenworth Prison—astonishingly she has never thought of doing this as if they did not have phones there. She asks him for a story about a mother who will give her child away rather than have "any more hassle with Annawake Fourkiller" (330).

> "I'll tell you." He leans back in his chair…. "Speak of lost children in low voices," he says. Annawake pulls herself up. He has slid over into Cherokee, and she has to sit up straight to follow him. "They say long ago there was a child claimed by two clan mothers. They carried the child to the Above Ones. They came with long cries and moans, both of them saying the child belonged to their own people. The mother from the plains brought corn, and the mother from the hills brought tobacco, both of them hoping to sweeten the thoughts of the Above Ones when they made their decision."….
>
> He goes on suddenly: "When the Above ones spoke, they said, we will send down the snake Uk'ten."….
>
> "We will send the snake Uk'ten to cut the child in half, and each clan can carry home one half of the child."
>
> "Wait a minute," Annawake says.
>
> "The mother from the grassland happily agreed. But the mother from the hill clan wept and said no, that she would give her half of the child to the plains clan, to keep the baby whole. And so the Above Ones knew which mother loved the child best."
>
> Annawake pulls off a moccasin and throws it at Ledger, hitting him square in the chest. She pulls off the other and just misses his head, on purpose.
>
> "What, you don't like my story?" He sits up startled, crossing his hands over his chest.
>
> "Some old Cherokee story you've got there. That's King Solomon, from the Bible."
>
> "Oh. Well, I knew I got it from someplace," he says, patting his pockets for matches to relight his pipe.
>
> "It's a *yonega* story," she says.
>
> "Is that true? Did a *yonega* write the Bible? I always wondered about that. It doesn't say on there, 'The Bible, by so-and-so.'"
>
> "I don't know. Maybe it wasn't a *yonega*. I think it was a bunch of people that lived in the desert and fished for a living."
>
> "If they lived in the desert and caught fish both, you better listen to them" (330-31).

Ledger tells her that he's noticed that she has changed, that she is developing sense, not just wanting her side to win all the time. We can say that she is beginning to balance her logos with some eros.

Next there is an informal hearing to decide what to do. Annawake spells out the legal situation: that Turtle was adopted illegally, though through no malice on Taylor's part, and in

addition, she is Cash Stillwater's granddaughter. But although legally the obvious thing is to assign guardianship to her grandfather, there is a complication: Turtle has formed a deep bond with Taylor Greer, and it would be traumatic to break that relationship. She speaks about the importance of the tribe for a time. Then she says she is going to go out on a limb. Everyone had been thinking of Taylor OR the tribe, but Annawake says that they will grant joint custody, so that she can live with Taylor, but come to spend time with her grandfather for three months a year. And then Cash announces that if Alice will marry him, Turtle can see her grandmother in the summers, too. Now we have a truly satisfactory ending in a situation more complicated than the one that faced Solomon. Recognizing both the biological and emotional ties honors the importance of kinship and "fictive kinship." In a way, everyone wins.

The transcendent function chiefly came into play here in the psyche of Annawake Fourkiller. She was a woman who was very logos-driven and competitive, and liked to win at all cost. Seeing the anguish of Taylor and the ends to which she would go to protect the child surprise her. The talks she had with Taylor's mother never ended in agreement, but they made a good eros connection, especially because Alice understood Annawake's own pain at losing her brother. At first Annawake just wanted to the child returned to the Cherokee nation, but gradually, she began to feel the love and pain involved and allowed that to enter into the equation. Most importantly, as the medicine man saw, she began to lose her egocentric position. Jung explains:

> If one is sufficiently conscientious the conflict is endured to the end, and a creative solution emerges which is produced by the constellated archetype and possesses that compelling authority not unjustly characterized as the voice of God. The nature of the solution is in accord with the deepest foundations of the personality as well as with its wholeness; it embraces conscious and unconscious and therefore transcends the ego (Jung CW 10:¶856).

When she got the idea to get Alice and Cash romantically involved, she later says, "To tell you the truth, Alice, I couldn't tell you what I was thinking. I don't think I was thinking, for once" (311). Thinking is clearly this woman's dominant function, and it seems that the unconscious sent her an impulse or intuition completely from the other side, that attempted to connect people instead of sever them. It appeared first in the synchronistic event of Annawake spilling the sugar and having the waitress speak of romance and marriage. It was a canny hint and not a direct action, also not Annawake's usual style, but it did work out. And she was deeply transformed in

the process, for now she can reach out to her brother again. Her previous bitterness against his fate caused her to treat him as if he were dead, but the medicine man asks why she doesn't call him or visit him, and suddenly something shifts inside her. The transcendent function emerged: she did hold the tension in the Turtle situation for quite a time, and did not simply handle it through legal means, which she could have. She did not deliberately work with an inner image (as one familiar with Jung's method would), but it seems that her own inner anguish resonated with this story in a way that meant that working on Turtle's situation was working on her own story too. In his essay, "The Transcendent Function," Jung notes that dealing with the inner "other" helps in understanding others in the world. Annawake did it "backwards," but her being able to respect the outer other gave her access to her inner block as well.

> The present day shows with appalling clarity how little able people are to let the other man's argument count, although this capacity is a fundamental and indispensable condition for any human community. Everyone who proposes to come to terms with himself must reckon with this basic problem. For, to the degree that he does not admit the validity of the other person, he denies the "other" within himself the right to exist—and vice versa. The capacity for inner dialogue is a touchstone for outer objectivity (Jung CW 8:¶187).

The whole problem resonated with a deeply human story about true and false parents, which the medicine man noted in telling the story of Solomon with a twinkle in his eye. The task of determining correct action in this kind of situation seems to require the canny feminine, not just precedent and DNA tests. Solomon ascertained who was the true mother, Mma Ramotswe unmasked a false father, but here it was not a simple yes or no situation, for the biological mother was dead, a stranger had effectively become the mother, but the grandfather had a stronger legal claim to the child. In this case, the answer emerged both through the decision for joint custody, but also in the more synchronistic falling in love of Taylor's mother and Turtle's grandfather which brings together the two groups in a bond of eros. Alice has some credit in the resolution of this case, too, for although she was loyal to her daughter, she reached out to the other side and made human connections with them.