Towards A Post-Secular Educational Paradigm: Contextualizing James Macdonald's 1974 Transcendental Ideology of Education in 2021

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Abstract

Most current educational systems are reflections of modern secular consciousness, characterized by rationality, individualism and rejection of religious/spiritual consciousness or insistence on its separation from public life. It assumes that rational thinking develops in stages and that "more developed" is better than "less developed" in individuals and cultures. A rising post-modern consciousness asserts that many modernist assumptions are flawed and leading to an overdeveloped materialistic trajectory. It questions modernism's dependency on objectivist rationality by also valuing subjective ways of knowing and suggesting that accepted "reality" is socially constructed. It also rejects both scientific and religious truth claims, negating views that posit an ultimate ground of being. The post-secular suggests that scientific and religious/spiritual consciousness can be reconciled; they operate at different levels of cognition. It implies that young people have a right to study and discuss diverse religious beliefs and to learn about spiritual and contemplative ways of knowing. James Macdonald's 1974 publication, "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education" is an example of a post-secular curricular framework. It posits "centering" in self and world, resulting in both personal enlightenment and social justice. This article reflects on it from a 2021 post-secular vantage point.

Keywords: post-secular education, transcendental, spiritual, religious

Centering as the aim of education calls for the completion of the person or the creation of meaning that utilizes all the potential given to each person. It in no way conflicts with the accumulated knowledge of a culture; it merely places this knowledge in the base or ground from which it grows. As such, centering is the fundamental process of human being that makes sense out of our perceptions and cognitions of reality (Macdonald, 1974 in Pinar, 1995, p.88).

It is important we do not turn away from examining the idea of centering because it is connected with spirituality. This term simply is the best one available in the attempt to refocus our fundamental educational concerns, even though is fraught with heavy cultural biases in our society (Macdonald, 1974 in Pinar, 1995, p.88).

Introduction

The world is at a critical turning point because of human failures to stem the pandemic; confront the climate crisis; challenge rising economic inequality; combat racial, gender and cultural bias and discrimination; and guard against consequences of unchecked technological innovation. We can either alter our course or continue our downward ecological and social spiral. It's difficult for our brains to quickly and functionally adapt to this combination of massive challenge and rapid change; toxic stress and anxiety are becoming endemic. Young people are particularly vulnerable to damage from these and related stressors, but they are also especially resilient because of their brains' great capacity for neuroplasticity, and because youth are by nature hopeful and creative if these qualities are supported. In these turning, burning times, I believe that a transcendental developmental ideology of education-- such as the one James Macdonald described in 1974 -- is more significant than ever. If this had been a prevailing view in the last half century, we could currently be living in a greener and more equitable world. At this time, it's urgent to evolve beyond a secular model of education and turn toward the centering approaches of post-secular holistic curriculum and teaching that find a place for spiritual, religious, and contemplative ways of knowing.

The Relationship Between Spiritual, Mystical, Religious, Contemplative and Ethical

Dictionary definitions of spirituality usually describe it first as the incorporeal aspects of life, in contrast to physical ones. In academic research on spirituality, most definitions emphasize the search for meaning, purpose, and participation in something greater than self with the common theme of "connections." My own research (Johnson, 2011, 2016) on diverse perspectives on spirituality found clear themes associated with educators' definitions of spiritual. They can be divided into those that use the word in a more secular way, referring to feelings of connection with self, others, and the earth (secular contemplative, self-reflective, meaning-making, emotional, creative, aesthetic, ecological and ethical) and those that refer to a belief in or felt-sense of consciousness underlying the material world, whether called God, Allah, Great Spirit, Being, or many other names (religious and mystical contemplative).The latter group shares ground with many religious believers.

Mysticism is a particular type of intuitive spiritual experience. Intuition, defined as the ability to apprehend something immediately without conscious understanding of its origins, contrasts with logical, analytical thought. The derivation of the word *mystical* is associated with the Greek root meaning, "to close," referring to closing the senses to intake and the lips to speech; historically, the mystic closed to the external world in order to be more open to inner experience. Mystical knowing is often described as simultaneously intuitive, emotional and cognitive, and seems to surround ordinary rational knowing, contrasting with it but not invalidating it. William James, the founder of Harvard's psychology department and an early scholar of the psychology of mysticism, describes mystical experiences as personal encounters with a state of consciousness that, although usually not experienced in everyday life, is actually part of the structure of human consciousness that connects us with a non-material reality underlying and animating the material world, in which all things seem connected, rather than separate (James, 1902/1985; Johnson, 2002).

Spirituality can't be completely untangled from religion; they have overlapping definitions. Religions explore questions about origin, purpose and meaning also at the core of spiritual, but they also imply a shared belief system defining, limiting or illuminating the search. The world's major religions began with transcendent mystical experiences of individuals; they have rich and diverse histories of spiritual experience at their core. But the intense experiential root often becomes muted or suppressed as social institutions with their hierarchies and power struggles form around the origin, and then become intertwined with political systems. Sometimes established religious traditions end up opposing individual spiritual experience and expression that challenge dominant beliefs; the negative side of religion includes the oppression of opposing views of the "truth" to preserve the status quo. History offers many examples of wars and injustices based on religious ideology. Religion is so significant to human beings that they go to great lengths to make sure their own belief system prevails.

Optimally, religious traditions provide a vision of a deity or transforming power, a blueprint for spiritual experiences that invoke it, a code of ethics for living, and a community for sharing and practicing these. Religious practitioners often believe that spiritual experiences are most valid within established traditions that provide context and structure for them. They may also believe that their religion is the truest or "best," or simply the best path for them. Those who assert that their particular religion is the only valid way to access ultimate truth are often referred to as fundamentalists. Every religious tradition contains a range of these beliefs and believers.

Contemplative ways of thinking and knowing are relevant to secular, spiritual, and religious settings, although understood or emphasized differently in each. Meanings include thinking or reflecting deeply, observing thoughtfully, meditating, and opening to God or ground of being. In each of these, contemplative attention is anchored in interior dimensions of being and allows for the integration of inner and outer. Contemplative studies is an emerging cross-disciplinary focus of academic and popular interest, perhaps because of a dawning realization that contemplative capacities are critical not only for human well-being, but also for the survival of the planet. Human capacity for focused attention and in-depth reflection seems to be diminishing due to prevailing cultural trends, especially constant technology fueled multi-tasking. High-speed, high-stress, outer-directed, acquisition-oriented ways of living are taking an enormous toll on all life forms, and contemplative practices are one antidote. As the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society states, "Contemplative practices are practical, radical, and transformative, developing capacities for deep concentration and quieting the mind in the midst of the action and distraction that fills everyday life" (Center for Contemplative Mind and Society, n.d.).

Spiritual, religious and contemplative secular perspectives find common ground in the ethical realm. Ethics relates to the principles, ideas, rules and emotions governing how human beings should relate to each other and to the world. While religions embody ethical messages that directly shape their practitioners (for better or worse), the relationship between ethics and spirituality is less clear. Many who emphasize spirituality over religion criticize religions for their hypocrisy, pointing out that they have supported or ignored some of the most inhumane conduct in history. Spiritual seekers often claim that by connecting with depth of being, which might also be connected with God or "ground of being," they are contacting the most authentic source of positive ethical behavior, that because our values rise out of

this depth, profound spiritual experiences result in inspired, peaceful, loving, caring actions. However, religious critics of "ungrounded spirituality" argue that without guidelines of a religion to anchor it, spiritual experience often degenerates into an individualistic "feel-good" quest feeding into modern ego-oriented, consumeristic culture. And secularists who dismiss the validity of a transcendent power underlying the material world probably see both of these approaches as misguided, believing that humans should rely solely on reflective rationality to guide behavior.

Secular Modern, Post-Modern and Post-Secular Consciousness

Most current educational systems are reflections of "modern consciousness," characterized by rationality, empiricism and individualism, with a corresponding rejection of religious/spiritual consciousness and/or insistence on its separation from public, communal life. Modernism assumes that rational thinking develops in stages leading to progress, and that "more developed" is better than "less developed" in individuals and cultures. Ethical thinking and behaving are based on rational thinking and therefore linked to higher stages of development. This view results in the undervaluing of both children's more sensory based, emotional, imaginative ways of knowing and the knowledge of indigenous cultures, including an ecological understanding of the interconnectedness and sacredness of all life forms.

Modern consciousness can be highly reflective and capable of sustained attention, deep consideration and self-reflection. The brain is structured to make meaning, and the need to make sense of the world and our place in it is at the core of analytical thinking and knowledge generation in every academic discipline, including religion and philosophy which pose core existential questions. Children are born primed to explore the world around them and equipped with cognitive mechanisms to discover how it works. Even very young children are capable of highly reflective thinking. In his book on teaching philosophy to children, Gareth Mathews says: "…for many young members of the human race, philosophical reasoning—including, on occasion, subtle and ingenious reasoning—is as natural as making music and playing games, and quite as much a part of being human." (Mathews, 1980, p. 36). Self-reflection focuses reflection inward, allowing human beings to examine their thoughts, emotions and motives; assess their strengths and weaknesses; set and monitor goals; and develop a sense of personal identity. However, highly reflective thinking requires a sustained concentration that increasingly seems out of harmony with the rapid pace of modern life. Modern educational systems rarely seem to center on or fully develop these contemplative dimensions of rationality.

Modernism refers both to a way of understanding the world and to a historical period. Theories about pre-modern, pre-rational forms of consciousness suggest that in "original" or "participatory" societies, perceptions and thought were experienced physically and emotionally as an essentially undivided world, with no conception of "nonspiritual" and little sense of individual separation from group consciousness or earth (e.g. Berman, 1984 and Sloan, 1983). Berman refers to this as an enchanted world view. Sloan describes it as "a knowing that comes not from detached looking on, but an immediate participation in the known, a kind of indwelling in the surrounding reality of nature and cosmos" (p. 85). Spirit infused and connected everyone and everything; this was represented in symbol and myth as a web.

In later stages of pre-modern consciousness, a concept of separate God/Mind/Intelligence/Being gradually arose, but it was understood as the source of meaning and value and as the living matrix of material forms. Along with this, the individual ego self gradually separated from community, earth, spirit and God, but could be re-connected by interventions such as ceremonies, rituals and prayers. Competition about the source and authority of these interventions led to rivalries between various groups based on gender, "tribe," culture, occupation, socio-economic status and, eventually, religion. In a sense, spirituality was replaced by competing religious "truths" until modern consciousness replaced both with the material world as ultimate reality. The world became disenchanted.

Although secular consciousness is the dominant paradigm of contemporary life, a post-modern consciousness, rising since around the mid-20th century, asserts that, while scientific progress has been beneficial to humankind, many of its assumptions are flawed and leading to mental anguish, social injustice and environmental calamity. Postmodernism questions modernism's dependence on objectivist rationality and scientific empiricism by also valuing subjective ways of knowing including emotional, intuitive and aesthetic. Additionally, it suggests that there is no ultimate truth, that "reality" is constructed through experience and discourse in a particular social context in which the dominant power controls what is believed to be true. The current recognition of the precariousness of our overdeveloped materialistic trajectory is fueling skepticism about overreliance on scientific empiricism and progress through development. More people are becoming wary of power hierarchies based on gender, race, culture and socioeconomic status, where those at the top tend to legitimize and act on their own interests, thus consolidating and increasing their power. Post-modernism rejects both scientific and religious metanarratives and dismisses any notion of absolute truth. However, rejecting ultimate reality also negates spiritual and religious views that posit a ground of being, or consciousness beyond/beneath the material. The post-secular perspective suggests a possible reconciliation (Johnson, 1999).

There isn't a singular definition of post-secular, but overall, it challenges modern and postmodern devaluing of religious and spiritual understandings, reclaiming and conserving some aspects of premodern consciousness while continuing to value scientific thinking. It suggests that scientific and religious/spiritual consciousness are not oppositional but can be reconciled; religion and science operate at different levels of cognition and consciousness. At the very least, it recognizes that religious questions shouldn't be relegated to the private sphere, but should be publicly recognized and discussed. Instead of disavowing the secular, post-secularism places it in a larger context. The secular isn't neutral; it's a particular way of understanding the world with its own strengths and weaknesses. The post-secular acknowledges these, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of various religious and spiritual perspectives, and it highly values reflective thinking. As David Lewin says, "The development of critical thinking must be uncoupled from assumptions around secularization since religions themselves are nourished by their own sense of creative criticality" (Lewin, 2017, p. 30). Post-secular doesn't require any particular belief, but rather an openness to learning about the beliefs of others. By encouraging dialogue about differences, the post-secular provides a space that might ease current cultural and political tensions.

From a secular perspective, religions are largely understood as competing cognitive belief systems which can be defined and contrasted, but they are probably better understood as practices and symbolic systems that give meaning to the lives of believers. Religious people are often drawn to their tradition for reasons other than doctrine, at least initially. Their belief or faith may be based more on spiritual, emotional, intuitive, or aesthetic experiences inspired by ceremonies, texts, talks and/or relationships with leaders and community members. The promise of life-changing meaningfulness that religions offer can be fulfilled without deep knowledge of or belief in a religion's doctrine. It's also true that the doctrines or teachings of religious or spiritual traditions offer specific practices and guidance intended to nurture inner growth and lead to a more fulfilling life. Some combination of belief and experience may lead religious practitioners to extreme life-affirming or life denying actions.

As in modern and post-modern, post-secular is used to delineate a historical sociological period as well a way of knowing, and there are indications that we're entering such a period. The term has been used with increasing frequency since the early 2000's. These troubled times are spurring a search for a sense of security and meaning offered by religious and spiritual sources. Religions on the fundamentalist side of the spectrum are proliferating across the globe, but there is also a rising interest in spirituality. Many people consider themselves "spiritual but not religious" and are searching for spiritual experience both inside and outside of traditional religions. Though mainstream religious traditions have been diminishing in numbers, some seem to be evolving in ways that meet the needs of spiritual seekers.

Post-Secular Education

What are the implications of the post-secular for education? Before the modern era, it would have been impossible to imagine educational activities which weren't also spiritual or religious and ethical. In the earliest eras, children were informally educated through participation in everyday activities which were inherently spiritual, as well as in community rituals of birth, death, war, hunting and harvesting. When more formal methods of schooling were instituted, they were typically connected with religions and often attached to centers of religious formation in monasteries, mosques, synagogues and temples. The secular assumption of "separation of church and state" in education is relatively new historically, and even today isn't dominant world-wide, although the ideal of "universal modern education," or nationally funded secular education for all, is increasingly promoted as a necessary requirement of a modern democratic society.

The United States has one of the most secular educational systems in the world, at least explicitly. Its earliest schools were privately funded and grew out of the Protestant Christian religion, incorporating those beliefs, practices and values. They gradually evolved into publicly funded "common schools" which continued to include some Christian religious texts and instruction. Eventually elements of catechism, religious practice, and study were formally removed, but in practice many schools ignored this and continued to include Bible readings and prayers (Sears and Carper, 1998). In 1962, the United States Supreme Court ruled that the Establishment clause of the First Amendment to the constitution prohibited prayer in public schools; however, this continues to be legally challenged. Clearly, the separation between church and state has been motivated by the democratic ideal of freedom of religious belief, but the attempt to banish religion from public schools has resulted in a loss of valuable knowledge.

Whether or not to include the secular study of religion in social studies curriculum is frequently contested, although its omission compromises understanding of history and culture, and its inclusion helps students engage respectfully with people of diverse or no religious identities. A 1963 Supreme Court ruling encouraged the study of comparative religion, stating that an education without it is incomplete, and the National Council for Social Studies (2021) strongly supports it, but religious literacy is often neglected because of educators' concerns about parental objections and legal challenges. Resistance comes from many sides: those who think religious education of any kind has no place in a public

secular sphere, believers who are concerned that their religion won't be represented accurately and others who worry that exposure to other perspectives will weaken young people's family beliefs.

However, a secular education that omits religion isn't neutral; from a post-secular perspective, all young people are entitled to an education that gives them exposure to various ways of knowing, including the religious and spiritual. Public schools in the United States could follow the guidelines of the National Council on Social Studies that suggest that students encounter a diversity of religious beliefs, including nonbelief or secular beliefs, without imposing, promoting or denigrating any of them. It should present each religion or belief system as internally diverse, dynamic and changing through time, and embedded in cultures. It should also teach that individuals and cultures construct their identities through belief systems, transcendent experiences, and rites and rituals both inside and outside of religious settings, and that religious identities insect with racial, national, ethnic, familial, gender, and class identities. (National Council for the Social Studies https:www.socialstudies.org).

A post-secular perspective embraces critical inquiry so it's necessary for students to have opportunities to question, discuss and debate religious and spiritual issues, as controversial as this might be in many educational settings. This dialogue could create an opening for more understanding and empathy between students from fundamentalist and secular families. Teachers of religious studies should be well prepared in content, effective methods of instruction, and conflict resolution, whether as a separate subject or as part of the social studies curriculum. Private religious schools will likely understandably privilege their own belief system, and they might also include experiential and devotional practices. Depending on their position on a liberal/fundamentalist spectrum, they might be reluctant to expose students to different possibilities or to debate their own, but hopefully they will overcome this; an open and reflective approach could strengthen rather than weaken religious loyalty. Private non-religious schools can additionally choose to provide opportunities for students to participate in ceremonies and contemplative practices of many traditions.

Mindfulness is a rapidly growing movement that reflects current interest in contemplative ways of knowing. Broadly speaking, it's a combination of thinking, attitudes, emotions, and intuitive abilities developed through practices that support living with focused attention and presence, non-judgmental awareness, and deep reflection. It has historic roots in the contemplative traditions within all major religions, with the most direct in Buddhism; however, it's largely presented as a secular practice, divorced from its religious roots. It is being adapted for young people, with programs expanding in private and public schools. Hundreds

of articles and books about teaching mindfulness to students from pre-school through university levels have been published, and many types of programs are available for both students and educators. In addition, many teachers are independently incorporating some aspect of mindfulness into their classrooms. The approaches vary, depending on the age/stage they were created for, the religious/secular beliefs of the creators, and the way they interpret mindfulness; however, there are broad similarities. Most complete programs include "watching the breath" (using breath as one attention anchor); "watching thoughts and feelings," (noticing the tendency of thoughts and feelings to come and go and learning not to identify with them); and learning to moderate reactions to life events using these techniques. Many include body relaxation techniques, visualizations, "loving-kindness" meditations (imagining sending love and healing energy to self and others) sensory awareness exercises, and arts and nature-based practices, and some are paired with emotional skills training curricula and/or physical disciplines such as yoga, and tai chi. Researchers have studied some of these programs, and documented evidence for their effectiveness is accumulating, showing at least short-term positive emotional, social, physical and academic benefits. (e.g. Weare, 2013; Zenner, Herrnleben-Kurz, &Walach, 2014; McKeering and Hwang, 2019).

In the forms in which it is usually offered, mindfulness education can be classified as a secular contemplative method, as it focuses on reflective understanding of self and others. It is sometimes labeled as a social/emotional method, and this seems accurate, if not complete. It can be described as spiritual if that is meant to refer to secular spirituality, lacking an assumption of a being or consciousness underlying the material world. It can certainly be a spiritual/mystical religious practice if it is presented in the context of a particular tradition, integrating specific meditative practices meant to connect to an underlying being or consciousness. Its designation as secular is significant for its acceptance in public schools, and even so, its inclusion is sometimes challenged by parents who see contemplation as antithetical to their beliefs or simply frivolous in academic secular education. It would be beneficial for all educators who lead mindfulness activities to understand its history and relationship to religious traditions. Those in private schools, whether religious or not, may choose to teach about the religious connections to mindfulness education and/or to offer a spectrum of meditative techniques to students.

Educators, whether administrators or teachers, most likely have varying reasons for choosing to include mindfulness programs or practices in their curricula. Several prominent

ones seem to be as a calming response to students' increasing stress symptoms and behavioral issues, and as a way of achieving better student learning outcomes and assessment results. Educators may have become mindfulness practitioners themselves and desire to share their perceived benefits with students. Research- based evidence for the effectiveness of these programs is adding to incentives to adopt them. Given these results and the needs of contemporary youth, it seems likely that mindfulness in schools will continue to spread. This is a hopeful post-secular trend, as mindfulness highlights interior dimensions of consciousness and can be an opening to deeper experiences. But also, several issues call for some critical examination of the movement.

My theoretical research suggests that contemplative capacities are optimally developed in a long-term context that includes and holistic curriculum and teaching methods and an emphasis on educators' contemplative development (Johnson, 2011). Many current mindfulness programs are relatively short-term and taught in the context of a segmented fact and skills-based curricula. In addition, a critique of the overall movement asserts that mindfulness is reaching mainly middle- or upper-class professionals who are utilizing it for self-improvement and personal social and economic advantage. Reflection on the following questions could further the long-range prospects for the transformational possibilities of mindfulness education. How long-lasting are the benefits? Do the programs change the ways in which educators relate to students and effect the way they teach in other curricular areas? Are children of all socioeconomic and ethnic groups being offered these programs? Is the ultimate goal for their inclusion primarily individual well-being and success or is mindfulness also seen as a way to cultivate caring behaviors for others and contribute to a more just and sustainable society?

At this time of environmental crisis, it's critical for young people to study sustainability and ecology contemplatively and comprehensibly. One core of ecological knowledge is a holistic understanding of the interdependent nature of the earth and its life forms. An aspect of this is the contemplative felt sense of physical, embodied connection with the earth embraced by many indigenous cultures. This is nourished by sensory engagement with the natural world and by experiencing a sense of place: a personal connection to a specific geographical area. Children are as curious about the outdoors as they are about everything in their world, and until recently in human history, it was their main playground and exploratory laboratory. Outdoor play and investigation facilitate the bonding with nature that becomes fertile ground for later cognitive understandings of sustainability principles, practices, and values, potentially leading to productive action

toward attaining ecological balance. A post-secular education invites spiritual, emotional, physical and reflective approaches to sustainability education.

Macdonald's Transcendental Ideology of Education in A Post-Secular Time

James Macdonald's transcendental educational ideology is an example of a holistic approach to education anchored in a spiritual worldview that encourages religious literacy, embraces both secular and spiritual contemplative methods, and prioritizes ecological understanding (Macdonald, 1974). Macdonald was a prominent curriculum theorist whose overriding educational concern was always ethical: how can schools support a society in which "the good life" is attainable for all? In the last few years of his life, he offered one possible map: a transcendental developmental curricular framework. This was inspired by Kohlberg and Mayer's 1972 "Development as an Aim of Education," in which they argued for progressivism as the best educational ideology for the times, after reviewing the prevailing cultural transmission and romantic ideologies. Rather than dismissing these, Macdonald suggested that they were limited by their views of consciousness and proposed two additional ideologies, the radical and the transcendental. These are particularly significant for currently emerging global post-modern/post-secular sensibilities.

Two of these ideologies, the cultural transmission and the progressive, reflect modern consciousness. The transmission model is based on behavioral and materialistic assumptions, asserts that all knowledge is objective and measurable, and uncritically adopts the value system that surrounds it. It rejects "inner dimensions" because they aren't observable or quantitatively measurable. Learning is understood as extrinsically motivated and occurs through transmission and direct absorption of information. The natural world is studied scientifically and is largely understood as raw material to be used for material gain. Progressivism, with the aim of cognitive development, represents an evolved form of modernism. Piaget's developmental theory, along with John Dewey's educational theory, epitomize it. (In fact, curriculum theorist William Doll (1993) suggests that although they both predated the declared postmodern era, their theories can be seen as precursors of it because of the primacy of experience in both.) In this view, cognitive structures develop in stages through a dialectic process with the environment, so that appropriate stage specific experience is the key to optimal development. Children learn to think scientifically through experimentation. All problems, including environmental ones, can be eventually solved using the scientific method. There is an inner emotional self but it should always be guided by the rational mind because ethical behavior is based on philosophically derived principles. Thus, higher levels of cognition lead to more just behavior and will result in a

better world; "more developed" is more valued than "less developed" for both individuals and cultures.

By contrast, romanticism questions rationalism and materialism and embraces subjective, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic and, in some versions, spiritual ways of knowing. In this sense, it's compatible with post-modern and sometimes post-secular views, but because it often undervalues critical rationality, its understanding of the impact of social structures on development is limited. Development is seen as emerging naturally in stages propelled by an inborn biological impetus, with self-awareness/self-actualization as the optimal outcome. The developing child requires nourishment and protection but flourishes best with maximum freedom to pursue her interests. Individual fulfilment leads to social harmony and equity as each person discovers and contributes their gifts and talents to the whole. Nature is a pure source of beauty, inspiration and emotional/spiritual renewal, and, to the greatest degree possible, should be left undeveloped.

Macdonald acknowledged the contributions of these three paradigms but proclaimed that new ones are called for as times evolve. He first added the radical paradigm, that, like the progressive, is rooted in a dialectical process between cognitive structures and the outer world. However, rather than emphasizing inner structures, it stresses the influence of social and political forces on the developing mind, especially the hierarchical dominance patterns embedded in culture and mirrored in educational systems, resulting in implicit and explicit racism, classism and sexism. It also questions the hierarchical nature of cognitive stage theory and suggests that developmental models themselves are bound and blinded by hierarchical assumptions. Its ultimate goal is greater economic and social equity, and it points to the devastating consequences of the modern progress paradigm on the natural world, thus reflecting a post-modern sensibility. Macdonald concluded that while the radical model is a significant challenge and corrective to progressivism, it doesn't go far enough. Because it's still largely based on the same objectivist rationality and materialistic worldview as the progressive model it critiques, it's missing a crucial dimension.

Macdonald's transcendental ideology moves fully into a post-secular realm. It posits that beneath our rational mode of knowing lies a vaster consciousness, a ground of being, the source of all knowing and the root of the deepest ethical and ecological understanding. Although it can't be precisely mapped, we can think of it as layered, containing emotional and intuitive knowing, along with spiritual/meditative/mystical/ knowing—which are overlapping, but all of which Macdonald refers to as transcendental. Macdonald names the fundamental cognition arising from this centering, encompassing a "dual dialectic" between two others: one between ground of being and

rational mind and one between outer world and rational mind, but paradoxically going beyond and transcending all dualities.

Macdonald chose "transcendental" to describe this aspect of knowing and being, but he meant it in a way that includes rather than contrasts with "immanent." To him, it meant transcending the limits of linear rationality and environmental conditioning to see the world from fresh, diverse, fluid perspectives, rather than limiting our viewpoint to previously constructed and often sclerosed cognitive frameworks. It also meant fully inhabiting the earth, body, emotions and mind, and penetrating to the center of being which is transcendent by its very nature. This centering connects us to all of life and leads to a deeply realized ecological world view. The transcendental center may also connect us to the ground of being or God or higher power of the religious or spiritual realm which is rejected by the modern mind and therefore viewed suspiciously in secular education.

Macdonald perceived the significance of transcendence in another sense. He saw that technology was transforming human existence and would continue to do so in unforeseen ways, both beneficial and harmful, that the survival of the planet had become linked to our understanding and uses of it. Further, he intuited that it symbolically represents a stage of the spiritual evolution of humanity: "Technology, in other words, is a necessary development for human beings in that it is the means of externalizing the potential that lies within. Humanity will eventually transcend technology by turning inward, the only viable alternative that allows a human being to continue to experience oneself in a world as a creative and viable element" (Macdonald in Pinar, 1995, p.88). The world wide web of the internet was prefigured by the pre-modern web symbolizing an actual energetic connection between all life forms. Global technological interconnectedness can be seen as a material form of the inner centering ability to tap into a connected ground of being underlying the material world. A post-secular perspective encourages technology education balanced by the inclusion of the "spiritual technologies" that mirror and transcend it.

A transcendental or spiritual developmental ideology proposes centering in both inner self and outer world as the dual aims of education—both personal enlightenment and social justice. A transcendental curriculum highlights many types of centering: meditative which connects to the unmediated ground of being; mindful which supports attention, awareness and presence; conceptual, which develops a highly reflective mind; critical, which promotes examining and correcting biases, emotional, which accesses our full range of feelings; imaginative, which invites authentic encounter with others' realities and the creation of new ones; aesthetic, which opens to our personal sense of beauty; ecological, which reveals the interconnectedness life;

and ethical, which encourages action towards social, racial and environmental justice. But the addition of a transcendental spiritual grounding adds depth, breadth, and energy to the others.

This ideology also prioritizes the spiritual development of educators themselves and provides diverse opportunities to support it. The strength of their own centering is central to students' centering: being-to-being connection is a bedrock of this ideology. Transcendental educators create both whole group and individualized curriculum aimed at forming a harmonious community incorporating individual gifts. Each stage of development and every student is honored as inherently spiritual with unique ways of meaning making and being in the world. But this isn't just a romantic ideal about natural unfolding; to the degree possible with multiple students, educators challenge and support each to develop more fully so all can become more knowledgeable, skilled, personally fulfilled, and able to contribute to others and the planet.

Not only do young people have a right to learn about spiritual and religious ways of knowing, but the odds for the survival of the earth might be enhanced by their knowledge. The current world seems to be crying out for both inner realization and outer justice activism. Many individuals and groups are responding with inspiring anti-racist, civil rights, gender equity, poverty reduction, migrant relief, environmental sustainability and other actions. These certainly don't require a spiritual or religious dimension but perhaps the strength of human actions is harnessed by unseen energies when they are open to that possibility. It's important to recognize that the contributions of many powerful activists, including Mahatma Gandhi, Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, John Lewis, the Dalai Llama, Malala Yousafzai and Greta Thunberg are anchored in a spiritual/religious tradition and/or a profound secular ethical spirit.

And at this time, it's paramount to listen to indigenous people whose traditional ways of knowing and educating offer a balance and corrective to widespread modern ones. In speaking of Native American spiritual beliefs, scientist and educator Gregory Cajete (Tewa) (1994) says:

These include the understanding that a universal energy infuses everything in the cosmos and expresses itself through a multitude of manifestations. This also includes the recognition that all life has a power that is wondrous and full of spirit. That is the Great Soul or Great Mystery or Great Dream that cannot be explained or understood with the intellect, but can be perceived only through the spirit of each person. The second perception is that all things and thoughts are related through the spirit (p. 44).

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