

# ENCOUNTER

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## Introduction to the Special Issue

# Education for the Good of the World

## International Whitehead Conference

**The 1999 International Whitehead Conference provided an opportunity to initiate a fruitful dialogue between "holistic" theorists and "process" thinkers.**

When this journal was founded as the *Holistic Education Review* in 1988, the inaugural editorial asserted that "holistic education is not a neatly packaged curriculum, method, or set of guidelines" but "a philosophy, an attitude, which calls into question many basic, and often implicitly accepted, educational and social values." In other words, holistic education goes deeply to the roots of modern culture and represents a revolution in epistemology, ontology, and ethics. Several writers in this field, particularly Douglas Sloan, Parker Palmer, John P. Miller, Joseph Chilton Pearce, and Jeffrey Kane have begun to describe the nature of this more holistic way of knowing and being in the world. Yet even so, we have not yet fashioned a comprehensive theory of holistic education.

Many of the philosophical ideas that underpin holistic education have been explored and developed in other contexts. For example, a group of scholars connected to John Cobb and David Ray Griffin at the Claremont School of Theology in California have produced a literature of "constructive postmodernism" grounded in the insights of Alfred North Whitehead's "process" cosmology, which offers, potentially, a philosophical foundation for holistic education.<sup>1</sup> Constructive postmodernism articulates an alternative worldview to that of the Enlightenment, not by attempting to eliminate the validity of all worldviews *per se*, as does the *deconstructive* formulation of postmodernism à la Derrida and Lyotard, among others, but by revising and integrating modern and premodern conceptions of the world. Central to this shift to a constructive postmodern worldview is a *process* view of the cosmos, which is a direct refutation of the mechanistic orientation of modernity. A process cosmology posits, perhaps unveils, the holistic, interrelated nature of the universe (Griffin 1989, xi-xiv).

The dominant epistemology of modernity is sci-

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ence. However, from the perspective of process philosophy, science is defined, not in terms of a Newtonian paradigm that is premised upon mechanistic determinism, but is conceived in terms of indeterminacy, nonequilibrium processes, dissipative structures, self-regeneration and self-organization of systems, ecological interdependence, chaos and complexity. What these developments suggest is a fundamentally different way of thinking and knowing: a more process-orientated, synthetic, dialogical mode of thinking wherein the recognition of interrelationship, uncertainty, and novelty are central.

Constructive postmodernism has attracted the serious attention of scholars, scientists, and social theorists in many parts of the world who perceive that process thought points toward a more spiritually authentic, ecologically sustainable, humanly fulfilling culture than the Enlightenment-based modern worldview. In significant ways, the work of Whitehead and his interpreters does provide a coherent epistemology and cultural critique consistent with many of the perspectives articulated by holistic educators.

In 1996 Ron Miller visited Cobb and Griffin to explore possible areas of collaboration. A few months later, Griffin invited Miller to organize a symposium on "Education for the Good of the World" to be held at the International Whitehead Conference at Claremont in August 1998. The conference brought together 300 scholars from over twenty nations, and gave several of us in the holistic education movement the opportunity to explore the relevance of Whiteheadian philosophy for our work. At the conference, we met members of the Society for Process Philosophy of Education, and found that they were as unfamiliar with our work as we were with theirs.<sup>2</sup> We were reminded that Whitehead's relevance to educational theory extends well beyond his explicit but brief treatment of teaching and learning in his famous collection of essays, *The Aims of Education*, and includes his dense and profound writings on the creative, evolving process of the cosmos. (See the review of Malcolm Evans's book on page 74 below.)

We learned, too, that Whitehead's ideas provide

an important starting point for later thinkers who are extremely relevant to holistic education, such as Ken Wilber, whose work is discussed comparatively in this issue with Whitehead by Jeff Sanders. This is significant because it gives holistic thinking a basis other than romantic reaction to the modern worldview for its claims about transpersonal and transrational dimensions of reality.

In this issue of *ENCOUNTER*, we offer a collection of papers from the symposium on "Education for the Good of the World" at the International Whitehead conference, and trust that it constitutes the beginning of a fruitful dialogue between "holistic" theorists and "process" thinkers. Although not all of the papers are explicitly Whiteheadian in their orientation, the ideas expressed are consistent in many ways with process philosophy and many fall within the constructive postmodern perspective. We each have approaches, criticisms, and insights to offer the other. The task is not to merge our perspectives but to enrich them. Holistic education will not become strictly Whiteheadian, because if it remains true to holism, it cannot be strictly indebted to the views of any one person, however broad or brilliant his or her ideas. Still, holistic education is clearly consistent with many of the tenets of the evolving worldview of "constructive postmodernism" and this association can only be helpful in the further development of a comprehensive theory of holistic education.

—Ron Miller and Dale T. Snauwaert

### Notes

1. Griffin has edited an excellent series on constructive postmodern thought for SUNY Press, which includes ground breaking books on science, spirituality, political and social theory. David Orr's important contribution to the holistic education literature, *Ecological Literacy: Education and the Transition to a Postmodern World* (1992), is one volume in this series.

2. Actually, although few of our colleagues have had contact with SPPE, many of us were familiar with two works on curriculum theory highly influenced by a reading of Whitehead: *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning: Toward a Process Theory of Teaching and Learning* by Donald Oliver and Kathleen Gershman (Albany: SUNY Press, 1989), and *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum* by William E. Doll, Jr. (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

### Reference

- Griffin, D. R. 1989. Introduction to the SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought. In *Primordial Truth and Postmodern Theology*, edited by David Ray Griffin and Huston Smith. Albany: SUNY Press.

# Towards Integrality

## Gebserian Reflections on Education and Consciousness

Bernie Neville

**Jean Gebser's speculations about the emergence of integral consciousness invite teachers to think and act positively in a world without certainties.**

Jean Gebser's theory of the origin and structure of consciousness has rarely been applied in discussion of the theory and practice of teaching. Nevertheless, Gebser's work provides an immensely rich, illuminating and challenging perspective on consciousness and, by extension, on education. This paper represents an attempt to think some of Gebser's findings and speculations through to their implications for teachers.

### A Transformed Continuity

In his preface to *The Ever Present Origin* (1985), Jean Gebser gives us the context for his research and speculation on the evolution of consciousness.

The crisis we are experiencing today is not just a European crisis, not a crisis of morals, economics, ideologies, politics or religion. It is not only prevalent in Europe and America but in Russia and the Far East as well. It is a crisis of the world and mankind such as has occurred previously only during pivotal junctures — junctures of decisive finality for life on earth and for the humanity subjected to them. The crisis of our times and of our world is in a process — at the moment autonomously — of complete transformation, and appears headed towards an event which, in our view, can only be described as "global catastrophe." This event, understood in any but anthropocentric terms, will necessarily come about as a new constellation of planetary extent.

We must soberly face the fact that only a few decades separate us from that event. This span of time is determined by an increase in technological feasibility inversely proportional to man's sense of responsibility — that is, unless a new

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factor were to emerge which would effectively overcome this menacing correlation. (Gebser 1985, xxvii)

The work which follows this preface is an exposition of this "new factor, this new possibility" as Gebser observed it — the possibility of "integrality and the present, the realization and the reality of origin and presence," an integrality which implies

a transformed continuity where mankind and not man, the spiritual and not the spirit, origin and not the beginning, the present and not time, the whole and not the part become awareness and reality. It is the whole that is present in origin and originative in the present. (Gebser 1985, xxviii)

The two decades in which Gebser's observations and insights developed into a theory of this emerging "integrality" were not such as to give him romantic notions about humanity and its future. He had concrete experience of the dominance of a totalitarian ideology and a mass pathology which appeared to him to represent a regression to a primitive form of consciousness. (He fled from Germany to Spain in 1931, from Spain to France in 1936, and from France to Switzerland in 1939.) He does not present us with a romantic vision. What he does give us is documentation of an emerging "possibility," and a theory of consciousness and culture which is consistent with it. In the half century since he wrote this we have come considerably closer to catastrophe. But we can also find signs of an emerging integrality which might enable us to deal with the crisis.<sup>1</sup>

### Structures of Consciousness

In Gebser's model of structures of consciousness he distinguished between four discrete mutations<sup>2</sup> of consciousness: the *archaic consciousness* of primal human beings, the *magical consciousness* of the stone age, the *mythical consciousness* which developed after the ice ages, and the *mental consciousness* which emerged with the great classical civilizations and which has dominated European culture since the middle ages.<sup>3</sup> These evolutionary mutations are fundamentally different ways of experiencing reality. The central premise of his work was that a new structure of consciousness was beginning to emerge in the twentieth cen-

tury, a structure which he called *integral consciousness*.

While Gebser's major work, *The Ever Present Origin*, sets out these structures in evolutionary sequence, he did not wish to imply that they are historical developments leading to integral consciousness as the ultimate human achievement. He maintained rather that they are intertwined and ever-present, and that it is the dynamic interplay between them which constitutes culture. While he presents his theory as a theory of the evolution of consciousness, he is adamant that he is not doing so within a fantasy of historical "development" or "progress." Our tendency to think in such terms is an artefact of our dominant mental consciousness, in which our experience of time is linear and quantified. Rather, reality is an unfolding process, and the archaic, magic, mythical, mental, and emerging integral structures are all valid ways of apprehending it. In Gebser's understanding we are shaped and determined not only by the present and the past but by the future. Most significantly, all of the structures have both "efficient" and "deficient" forms and we have no basis for being romantic about either past or future.<sup>4</sup> We have no assurance that we will experience the emerging integral structure only in its "efficient" form.

Gebser's investigations and speculations were guided by two principles: *latency* and *transparency*. For Gebser, *latency* is "the demonstrable presence of the future" (Gebser 1985, 6). Each phase of evolution contains in itself the seeds of all subsequent ones. This is the principle that guides his investigation of previous and present forms of consciousness, seeking to uncover the trajectory which might enable him to make sense of emerging phenomena. He describes *transparency* as "the form of manifestation of the spiritual" (Gebser 1985, 6). In his understanding, the "ever-present origin" from which everything springs is a spiritual one, and the various mutations are more or less efficient ways of apprehending it. The mental structure, now in its deficient rational-technocratic phase, has attained the limits of its possibilities. This opens up the possibility of another mutation, as a consequence of which the spiritual can be perceived as the energy which projects itself

transparently throughout the whole. This possibility already exists in us, in a more or less latent form.

Gebser understood the dominant structure of consciousness in European civilization since the enlightenment to be not the supreme achievement in human development but rather the deficient form of the mental structure which emerged about three thousand years ago. He saw the deficiency in the rational consciousness of the past four centuries as deriving from its arrogant devaluation and suppression of the earlier structures. In the apparent collapse of this structure in the twentieth century he saw both the danger of slipping back into a deficient magical-mythical structure and the promise of evolution to new structure. The unwillingness of the rational-scientific civilization to acknowledge the validity of more primitive structures in no way makes them go away. The past structures are still present in us. We still think magically and mythically as well as rationally, whether we acknowledge it or not. We may be inclined to equate consciousness with the sense of self we experience at the mental level, yet we constantly shift between this mental-rational consciousness and the less complex structures on which it is built.

In Gebser's model, our contemporary consciousness is multi-structured or, to change the metaphor, multi-layered. We may thank Freud and Jung for pointing out to us that even when we are acting "rationally," our magical and mythical consciousness is hard at work. The complexity of human behavior comes out of the interplay of these several "layers" or "levels" of consciousness in whatever we do.<sup>5</sup> From the point of view of rational-scientific culture, magical and mythical thinking are primitive and inferior forms of thinking which have limited value in the contemporary world. However, we can argue that it is our capacity for mythical, and even magical, thinking that enables us to find meaning in our lives and gives us a grounding in the concrete world (both human and nonhuman), which rational thinking seems bent on destroying. Magical and mythical consciousness are neither better nor worse than mental-rational consciousness. They are simply older and different. Re-owning and re-valuing them is a necessary step towards their integration in a new structure.

### The Archaic Ground of Consciousness

*Archaic* consciousness can hardly be called consciousness at all. It is a state in which the individual is only minimally aware of self as separate from environment, a state of undifferentiated unity with all that is, controlled by instinct and having no sense of either past or future. A fundamental characteristic of this earliest modality of consciousness is its dimness. Gebser speaks of "identity," the undifferentiated unity with all that is, as its essential feature. We still slip back into our archaic, undifferentiated unity-consciousness in deep sleep, or enter it voluntarily or involuntarily through trance, drugs, or certain kinds of meditation. Julian Jaynes<sup>6</sup> argues at length that humans have been unconscious for most of their time on the planet, and that most of our experience is still unconscious. Certainly, a great deal of our behavior is automatic and unconscious, and we seem to be able to do quite complicated things without any awareness of doing them. Neumann, in discussing the original "uroboric" state of primal human beings, argues that unconsciousness is our "natural state."

One has no need to desire to remain unconscious; on the contrary, one is primarily unconscious and can at most conquer the original situation in which man [sic] drowns in the world, drowns in the unconscious, contained in the infinite like fish in the enviroing sea. (Neumann 1973, 16)<sup>7</sup>

The unity-sense of the archaic structure is suppressed by our rational consciousness, but persists nevertheless, manifesting itself in deficient forms as individuals seek to regain their primal unconscious state through awareness-diminishing drugs or by dissolving their ego-boundaries in group behavior.

Wilfred Bion's observations of the ways groups function suggested to him that individuals in groups are constantly seeking to regain within the group their infantile relationship with mother.<sup>8</sup> For Bion and the group relations theorists, this explains the irrational and emotional behavior we observe as the group frustrates the need of its members to experience mothering warmth, comfort, and security. Gebser, Jung, and Neumann suggest rather that in explaining such apparently regressive behavior we should look beyond the individual's attachment and

separation from uterus and breast to the experience of the species losing its primal "participation mystique" in the life of Mother Earth herself.<sup>9</sup> Where Bion and his school depict the regressive, infantile attachment to the Mother in largely pejorative terms, contrasting it with the "real work" which groups can perform when they suppress it, Gebser and Jung see this attachment to Nature as the source of strength and creativity.

In classrooms, whether of children, adolescents, or adults, the archaic structure of consciousness is overlaid by the magical, mythical, and mental structures. Yet, the archaic structure provides the ground of group experience. Following Gebser, we might argue that the natural basis of group life is our "oneness" not only with each other but with the earth itself. Gebser argues that our very capacity for empathy is grounded in our essential oneness not only with the species but with the world and universe. Where mental-rational consciousness constructs us as individuals, and separates self from other, so that empathy with another person involves a conceptual leap, archaic consciousness knows no such boundaries, either between one individual and another or between humans and the non-human world. Our capacity to understand one another, feel for one another, love one another, and identify with one another is grounded in archaic consciousness, which knows nothing of authority structures; goals; roles, reason; ethics; personal, tribal, or species boundaries; or even verbal language.

The archaic structure of consciousness is profoundly passive. The world of archaic consciousness is a world where "things happen" without any understanding or control by human beings. We can detect the drag of the primordial archaic consciousness in the inertia of collective habit and fixed ideas, and in the stress experienced by those who begin to doubt the basic, unstated, unreflected assumptions of group or culture. However, following Gebser, the archaic structure of consciousness contains the seeds not only of the magical structure which emerges from it directly, but of the integral structure which is currently emerging.

## Magic

Magic consciousness has no sense of personal self. The individual has no existence except as member of a clan. And the clan does not separate itself from nature. The clan exists in a world where everything is connected to everything else, where there is no notion of logical cause and effect. The clan participates in the life of this world and deals with its dangers through magic and ritual. In our contemporary clans we are still doing this, though we generally cover it up with all sorts of rationalizations. Underneath the contemporary education system or institution's rationally stated policies and strategies and decisions, there is a "groupthink" which tends to respond to the world in the same way our stone age ancestors did — through magic.

Gebser's speculations about mutations of consciousness were stimulated by his experience of Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy and Spain in the thirties and forties. It appeared to him then that Europe as a whole was regressing to a primitive magic consciousness in which individuals gave up their personal identity in return for participation in a group identity, a situation which was maintained and reinforced through ritual, taboo, and incantation. In recent years we have been witnessing the same phenomenon repeated again and again where the breakdown of an imposed patriarchal political structure has opened the way for a return to tribalism.<sup>10</sup> The magic structure is evident also in the personal regression we refer to as psychosis.<sup>11</sup> However, the magic structure is not manifested only in spectacular group or individual pathology. The inability of the magical structure to distinguish between the whole and the part, between similarity and identity, or between self and group is the basis of much of the pathology of everyday life. The "ordinary" psychological phenomena of projection, transference, and inflation are readily explained in terms of the magic structure.

It would be a distortion of Gebser's thinking to associate contemporary manifestations of the magic structure only with pathology. It is predictable that where the magic structure is energetically suppressed by a culture it might appear in its "deficient" form when the mechanisms for controlling it are in-

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adequate. However, the magic structure also has its "efficient" form.

One aspect of magic consciousness observed by Gebser is what we might call "psychic giftedness." Phenomena which we now call "paranormal" are common in cultures in which the magic structure has not yet been suppressed. So also are effective magic techniques of healing. For Gebser, such phenomena as telepathy, clairvoyance, and synchronicity are explainable in terms of the magic structure's timelessness and spacelessness, and its lack of boundary between self and other.

This argument also provides an explanation for our capacity to know "in our bones" what is being experienced by another, without direct communication or conscious processing. It is a capacity which appears to be most obvious in people closely connected physically, as in mothers and infants, or identical twins, but it is also commonly reported in other intimate relationships, as between lovers, or between therapists and their clients, or in intense group experiences, or, for that matter, between people and animals. Our ability to communicate symbolically makes us less dependent on such empathic identification as we grow older, and we presumably learn to ignore such somatic signals unless a particularly powerful or unusual experience brings them to our attention.

In a culture where primary groups have largely disappeared (except for the family, which is itself under the threat of disintegration) people still experience a primal urge to seek group membership, and largely find it in institutions such as schools, which are actually designed for quite other purposes than for simply giving people a group to belong to. In such institutions, no matter how "rationally" structured, we find responses to people's need to be bound emotionally to a group and participate in its rituals. The "closedness" of a school or classroom, the development of clear distinctions between those who belong and those who do not, the distrust of or antagonism towards strangers, the strong notions of correct behavior, the taboos, the punishments meted out to those who offend against usage and custom, are as manifest here as in the stone age clan or the medieval village. In schools as in other institutions of an apparently rational culture, group identity is main-

tained and reinforced by such magic means as the wearing of uniforms, the chanting of incantations, the worship of icons, the ritualization of behavior, and the casting of spells and curses. And, often enough, the magic works. Ritual successfully controls instinct and impulse which might cause the community to fragment. All this, of course, takes place in an individualistic, rationalistic school culture which largely denies the influence of the magic structure and the pull of collective consciousness. Being intellectually sophisticated people, we have perfectly good and logical explanations for taking our courses of action, no matter how irrational or superstitious they may actually be.

In our magical consciousness we are not initiators of our behavior, but controlled by external forces which we must use magic to keep in check. If something terrible happens in a magical community it is because someone has broken a taboo, and it is of no significance whether the infringement was conscious or not. The magical structure is deeply conservative. Magic tends to be used to keep things the way they have always been, rather than to change things. Many of the rules and procedures which are taken for granted in schools or classrooms are maintained simply because *this is the way we've always done it*. Sometimes the situation that the procedure was designed to deal with has long ago changed, but the procedure is still followed because it provides the security of magical ritual. Suggestions for trivial changes (e.g., allowing children to address teachers by their given names, breaking a dress code, changing the time of an annual ritual event) are met with irrational resistance. *We've done it this way for thirty years and we've always been OK; if we stop doing it, something terrible will happen!*

The individualistic thrust of conventional education in Western democracies insures that the magic clan-based structure is largely suppressed. If the culture of the classroom is such that the drive to belong goes unattended, it becomes vulnerable to a takeover by a regressive magic consciousness. As "productivity" considerations push schools to become larger and more impersonal we should not be surprised if we find children's and adolescents' primitive response to separation manifested in collective panic, fear, or rage.

Magical behavior was a perfectly adequate way of dealing with the world in primal communities, and there are still aspects of our experience that we deal with through our magical consciousness. Technology, the conventional magic of our era, has transformative power attributed to it. The power of group religious ritual to heal and transform, and the success of diverse alternative therapies attest to magical consciousness being a valid response to the world. (We can argue plausibly enough that conventional medicine also depends largely on the magic structure for its efficacy.) And because we can bring our rational consciousness to bear on our more primitive ways of behaving, we can have some control over them. We can create rituals to express commitment to a common enterprise or to shared values, and this ritualizing can create or transmute energy for a specific end. We can invest particular icons with the power to express our identity and the meaning of our group activity.

Of course, if we start reflecting on, explaining, or manipulating icons we have moved beyond magic consciousness. In magical consciousness there is a complete interweaving with nature, no self-reflection, and only a rudimentary separation of subject and object. Such a separation, which is a characteristic of mental consciousness, begins to develop in the mythical structure.

### Myth

Where archaic consciousness experiences undifferentiated oneness, and magic consciousness experiences a world where all things are connected, mythical consciousness experiences the world as numinous.

Mircea Eliade describes the world of pre-rational humans as one in which everything has happened already in the lives of the gods *in the beginning*. Because every human act repeats and imitates the primordial acts of the gods, every human act participates in the sacred:

Rituals and significant profane gestures ... acquire the meaning attributed to them, and materialize that meaning, only because they deliberately repeat such and such acts posited *ab origine* by gods, heroes or ancestors. (Eliade 1991, 5)

If this was so in mythical consciousness, as Gebser would also argue it was, the behavior of human beings was not only numinous but determined. They lived their lives embedded in the stories of the gods, which were played out over and over again. Their connection with this primordial world is through imagination, just as magic humans connected to the world through emotion and archaic humans did so through instinct and presentiment. Whereas in the magic structure of consciousness humans were entirely interlaced with nature, mythical consciousness is distinguished by an emergent awareness of soul, that is, of a psychic dimension of life.

To be in mythical consciousness is to be enmeshed in a particular way of imagining the world, to be enmeshed in a story, and the stories we are enmeshed in are the collective stories, the "big" stories, of our tribe. From the standpoint of our rational consciousness we are inclined to see story and images as something we have, something that is in us. In our mythical consciousness it is we who are in the story, a story which is constantly repeated. Mythical consciousness, as Gebser and Eliade describe it, has no sense of measured, sequential time. Time is rhythmical, always returning to its beginning. It was only with the development of mental consciousness that history was invented.

As far as our mythical consciousness is concerned, the old stories are still true, and we are still in them. We are always in one archetypal fantasy or another. From the perspective of archetypal psychology as enunciated by James Hillman,<sup>12</sup> the very notion that we are reasonable beings able to observe the world objectively, reflect on it rationally, and deal with it scientifically is simply one fantasy among many. This is a way of imagining the world, a story, a myth. It has been a dominant story in European culture for some time but, as stories go, it is relatively new.

Conventionally, schooling is embedded in such a fantasy. Learning is understood (or rather imagined) to be an intellectual process. Information is presented and remembered, problems are solved, concepts are comprehended within this fantasy of transcendent observation. However, the practice may be rather different. Effective teachers depend on imagination rather than "thinking" for the transmission and recall of information. They depend on their own

and their students' imaginative empathy to enable understanding between themselves and their students as partners in dialogue. They depend on imagination to provide the vision which makes transformation possible.

Myths are powerful in shaping individual behavior. Both Freud and Jung pointed to specific scripts that we are predisposed to act out. We can argue that they are even more powerful in shaping group behavior. Gebser argued that it was in the very nature of the prerational mythical consciousness to be a group consciousness. We can now see readily enough that it is a shared story that shapes behavior in areas of intercultural or interethnic conflict. We can see how a shared story gives identity and meaning to a group of people, and how the conflict between two stories resists rational analysis and rational solutions. In the context of the classroom we need to be aware not only of the way in which particular unexamined narratives may shape our own behavior and that of our students, but how the whole enterprise of education has been enmeshed in an "old story." For the past couple of centuries of the industrial era education has been dominated by the "Promethean" story, with its themes of technology, emancipation, individualism, and progress. It is this myth which has functioned as a vehicle for the dominant values and meanings which have characterized European culture of the modern era. But it is a myth that is becoming incongruent with our experience. During the past couple of decades of this century, the most loudly stated "truths" about education have increasingly belonged to the myth of Hermes — the god of boundaries, the god of thieves and liars, of the marketplace, of travellers, of information, and of change.

In a deficient rational culture, myth is dishonoured and suppressed. However, mythos manages to survive, disguised as logos. When we engage in what we habitually refer to as "thinking" about our consensus reality we are highly likely to be functioning within the mythical structure, living in an imaginal and personified universe which we simultaneously experience and deny. Our beliefs and our reflections on them are a rationalized mythology. Our thinking is collective, not individual, enmeshed as it is in the taken-for-grantedness of our tribal narratives. Much,

perhaps most, of our thinking is what Robert Kegan (1994, 170f) calls "third order thinking."

Kegan's neo-Piagetian constructivist-developmental model of cognitive functioning has a number of points of contact with Gebser's model. In Kegan's model, adolescence marks the stage when schools and the broader culture demand of people that they become capable of the cognitive complexity which Kegan calls "cross-categorical" or "third order" thinking. The adolescent reaches this level of complexity by making a subject-object distinction not possible previously. In infancy (first order consciousness), subject and object were not differentiated. In later childhood (second order consciousness) the immediate perception moves from being the subject of experiencing to the object of experiencing. In early adolescence cross-categorical meaning-making (third order consciousness) becomes the subject which acts on the objects of experiencing. The adolescent can reason abstractly but cannot disidentify from her own reasoning. She lives within a set of truths and the narratives which embody them. She is capable of holding a coherent set of assumptions about life, a coherent disposition towards ultimate reality, but she is not capable of standing outside of it. Kegan's focus here is on cognitive development, not imagination, but the kind of thinking he is talking about belongs to the mythical structure. It is not self-reflective or critical, and it is essentially collective. Third order thinking rationalizes a particular consensus view of reality, a particular way of imagining the world which is common to the family, tribe, or culture. To stand outside this narrative, the adolescent must "leave home", and experience the isolation and exhilaration of "fourth order" thinking, that is, of the mental-rational structure.

### Mind

While Kegan's model is a developmental one, not an evolutionary one, he does make the occasional suggestion that the phenomenon he is writing about is not a purely individual one. He surmises, for instance, that the fourth order thinking demanded by the modern world is more common now than it was some generations ago. And his depiction of fourth order thinking is consistent with Gebser's depiction of the mental-rational structure of consciousness that

is characteristic of modernity. Where mythical consciousness is embedded in the group, mental consciousness is specifically individual. Where mythical consciousness looks only to the past, mental consciousness is characterized by a purposeful looking to the future. Mental consciousness introduces another level of subject/object differentiation. I no longer identify with my thoughts, ideas, opinions, attitudes. They become something I have, not something I am.<sup>13</sup> The function which enables these thoughts we call *mind* and distinguish from its opposite, *matter*.

Since Galileo and Descartes, European high culture has been content to define humanity within the *rational* (deficient *mental*) structure. Through this structure we perceive ourselves essentially as individuals. We have a sense of history as a sequence of events starting at a beginning and moving towards an end. We quantify both space and time. We find ourselves standing apart from an objectified world and acting upon it. We dichotomize our experience of the world in all sorts of ways: subject/object, self/other, true/false, matter/spirit, mind/body, good/bad, male/female, progression/regression. Our way of perceiving the world is shaped by an awareness of three-dimensional space, through the metaphors of hierarchy, perspective, quantity, scale, and progress. Whereas the mental consciousness of classical Athens or renaissance Florence combined conceptual thinking with a rich imaginative life, the rational-scientific age has seen the reduction of the universe from living organism to a collection of objects, the body from the temple of the soul to a piece of matter. It has seen the privileging of the intellect over other human capacities, the identification of intellect and spirit with the male, and the relegation of the devalued physical-emotional (magical) and imaginative-intuitive (mythical) to the female. And it is this dualistic and hierarchical thinking which has made possible both the extraordinary achievements of science and technology and the imminent catastrophe towards which science and technology have led us.

Mental-rational consciousness is anthropocentric and egocentric. Man stepped out of his entanglement in the nonhuman world and learned to relate to it as an object *out there* to be explored and controlled. He escaped from engulfment by the taken-for-grantedness of tribe and myth and gloried in his con-

sequent isolation. His sense of self separated subject-mind from object-body. In the full bloom of rational consciousness he arrogantly perceived himself to be the highest achievement of creation (whether creation was religiously or scientifically imagined), and assumed that his capacity to observe, measure, and categorize the world would in due course give him understanding and control of it.

The development of formalized and institutionalized education over four centuries of enlightenment has been based in these same assumptions. It came to be accepted without argument that schooling should be based on scientific principles, that is, it should be rational, objective, individualistic, and impersonal. In the context of schooling, community and relationship, if valued at all, have been valued instrumentally for their contribution to control and achievement. The success of technology in the nineteenth century made it inevitable that schools would come to be imagined as machines, designed to deliver designated products.

It is through our mental-rational structure of consciousness that we detach ourselves from the group consciousness and assert our separateness. Our individuality and our capacity to manipulate ideas are inextricably tied together in the mental structure of consciousness. The latent archaic structure predisposes us to lapse into an instinctual and unreflective oneness with the world. The magical structure predisposes us to be caught up in collective impulse and emotionality. The mythical structure gives our actions meaning and value by keeping us uncritically embedded in a narrative. The mental-rational structure makes us individuals and sets us free from the diminished responsibility attendant on the other structures.

The capacity and inclination for independent reflection and directed thought has been cherished by the science-dominated culture of the modern European era. However, this capacity is acknowledged only in the context of a single reality which is ultimately discoverable by thinking persons. Not only modern science, but modern organizations — educational, political and cultural — have been built upon the assumption that there is “one truth.” The rational structure of consciousness is, in Gebser’s language, “perspectival”; the egosubject must take a vantage

point from which to see the universe and accordingly sees it from one direction only. It has no possibility of observing the whole.

The deficient rational, perspectival consciousness of the modern era has led us to assume that the maintenance of order depends on the acknowledgment of a single reality. This assumption has been used to justify political and intellectual oppression for centuries. This assumption is still dominant in classrooms, schools, and education systems where difference is feared as a threat to order. Students are encouraged to think, and if they "think right" they will arrive at consensus truth and enjoy the order which depends on it; the alternative is chaos and disintegration. We must note, however, that in the students' acceptance of culturally conserved truths the mythical structure will be more dominant than the mental. Under the threat of chaos and disintegration, which is the inevitable consequence of the deficient rational structure's ongoing quantification and fragmentation of reality, we find a reversion to the simpler structures. We find avenues of escape to the warmth and security of archaic consciousness in the burgeoning drug culture. We find a proliferation of magical explanations of our predicament (e.g., magical "market mechanisms"), a search for magical solutions (to AIDS, to the environmental crisis, to overpopulation) and a magical glorification of power. We find a proliferation of rationalized mythologies in the various fundamentalisms — religious, economic, technological, ecological, racial, political — which declare that there is one truth and condemn all heresy as evil. Archaic identity, magical power, and mythical embeddedness offer salvation from the terrors of a dissolving mental consciousness structure.

Gebser's observations of the dissolution of the mental consciousness structure and the emergence of a new structure in the mid twentieth century predated those of the analysts of postmodernity such as Lyotard, Baudrillard, and Derrida, who have observed that the consciousness of advanced capitalist culture of the late twentieth century is characterized by an unending flow of information, the exteriorization of knowledge, a global marketplace in which everything is commodified, the dissolution of the old orthodoxies and the relativization of value and belief, the abandonment of the heroic fantasy, the crisis

of dualistic thinking, and the dominance of image in a world of chaos, paradox, indeterminacy, and discontinuity.<sup>14</sup> While such a worldview appears to lead readily to nihilism, there are elements in it which parallel closely not only Gebser's observations of the dissolution of the rational structure but also his speculations about an emergent structure of consciousness.

### Integrality

Gebser suggests, logically enough, that just as magic humanity could not feel what the experience of mythical consciousness might be, and just as mythical humanity could not imagine what mental consciousness might be like, rational humanity cannot conceptualize the experience of the structure of consciousness which is at present emerging. Gebser himself claims only to have observed the past and present trajectory of consciousness and on this basis to have guessed at its future direction. The nature of his guess is implied in the label *integral* which he gave to this structure. Also, it is manifested in the methodology and presentation of his own researches on the subject, in which he attempts to transcend the limits of conventional scientific method and its privileging of quantified data and linear logic.

Gebser observed that not only were the magic and mythical modes of perceiving the world being once again being accepted as legitimate by the intellectual culture, but that the magical and mythical structures of consciousness were being integrated with rational consciousness to produce a totally new way of perceiving and thinking. It is central to Gebser's understanding that all the structures are co-present in us, whether acknowledged or not. Moreover, the integral structure of consciousness, which is latent in all of us, is not merely the simultaneous and collaborative functioning of the four previous structures. It is an entirely new structure which enables us to apprehend not just the parts but the whole, a whole which is spiritual.

The grand and painful path of consciousness emergence, or, more appropriately, the unfolding and intensification of consciousness, manifests itself as an increasingly intense luminescence of the spiritual in man. (Gebser 1985, 542)<sup>15</sup>



Our latent capacity to perceive the aperspectival,<sup>16</sup> acategorical *whole* depends on the integration of archaic presentiment, magic attunement, mythical image, and mental-rational concept in an act of prehension which is not just a synthesis (which would be an exercise of mental-rational consciousness) but a *synairesis*.<sup>17</sup>

Three elements stand out in Gebser's analysis of the integral structure.

The first is time-freedom. Archaic and magical humanity seem to have no sense of time at all. For mythical humanity, time is rhythmical, constantly returning to its beginning. For mental-rational humanity, time is continuous, sequential, and mechanically quantifiable. Integral consciousness is time-free. The re-integration of pre-rational, magic, timelessness and irrational, mythical, temporicity with mental, measured time "makes possible the leap into arational time-freedom." (Gebser 1985, 288) "Time-freedom" is not timelessness. What Gebser observed was a new way of experiencing time, not as quantity but as intensity and quality.

The integral structure of consciousness also has a new sense of space. Archaic and magical humanity lack all spatial consciousness, because it lacks a defined sense of a self as observer. Mythical humanity has emerged from this enmeshment in nature, aware of an external world, but self-consciousness is still too weak to experience objective space. It is only through our mental consciousness that human beings are able to locate events in objective space. Central to this experience is perspective, which demands a point from which the world is viewed and an individual to view it. In the emergent, four-dimensional, integral consciousness, it becomes possible to view the world "aperspectively," without locating the viewer in a particular position in space. We are no longer constrained to see only the parts, but have access to the whole.

A third element in Gebser's analysis is the ego. Archaic and magical consciousness are ego-less. Mythical consciousness holds only a vague sense of self as distinct from the clan. Mental-rational consciousness is dominated by ego. Integral consciousness is, in Gebser's language, "ego-free."

The integral structure does not displace the other modes of experiencing.

We would caution here that this does not imply some kind of attempt at spiritualizing the world apart from all reality. Every form of spiritualization is gained at the expense of renouncing or negating or suppressing the previous consciousness structures. But a truly integral perception cannot dispense with the foundation of the mental structure any more than the mental structure can dispense with the mythical, and the mythical with the magic, that is, if we are to be "whole" or integral human beings. We must, in other words, achieve the integral structure without forfeiting the efficient forms of the earlier structures. (Gebser 1985, 299)

On the other hand, it does not simply aggregate them. It exists as a new mode which dominates the others, just as the efficient mental structure does not abolish the mythical structure but rather subordinates it to a more complex mode of experiencing. Rationality, in the context of the integral is not fragmenting or reductive but contributes to our making sense of the space-free, time-free whole.<sup>18</sup> Gebser is adamant that the emerging structure does not represent a *higher* consciousness but rather an *intensification* of consciousness.

Gebser's original insight into the emerging structure came through his discovery in the poetry of Rilke of a mode of experiencing which is no longer perspectival, dualistic and time-bound. He sought and found the same phenomenon in other European poets (notably Eliot and Valéry). From this point he set about his massive accumulation of evidence from other areas of the humanities and sciences, which convinced him that a specific cultural pattern had been emerging in the first half of the century. At century's end we find both in the postmodern arts and sciences and in popular culture abundant evidence that this pattern has intensified.

There is rather more to Gebser's speculations about the nature of the emerging structure of consciousness than this, but this is sufficient basis for some speculation on what form education can appropriately take in this context.

### Towards an Integral Education

Gebser refers to education only once in *The Ever Present Origin*, in the midst of a list of social sciences where we might, albeit with difficulty, find traces of

aperspectival reality (Gebser 1985, 425). He immediately drops the subject. It is not my intention here to trawl the writing of education theorists for traces of aperspectival reality, but rather to speculate on how classroom practice might be influenced by our taking Gebser's ideas seriously.

In this discussion there are certain questions which need to be addressed. The first is the question of maturation. Developmental theorists inform us that the child or adolescent's capacity for thought is stage-dependent. Is there any point in even considering integral consciousness in an educational context, when children and adolescents may not be capable of it? The second is the question of individual pedagogy. What difference does it make to teaching practice if we take seriously the multilevel awareness of the student and attempt to facilitate the integration of these levels? The third is the question of culture. How do we educate children in a world where the rational structure of consciousness is disintegrating and the integral structure is emerging?

### Maturation

Theories of child and adolescent development offer some support for Gebser's model, and warn us that there is a sequence in human development which must be respected if teaching is to be effective.<sup>19</sup> However, models of cognitive (Piaget), psychosexual (Freud), psychosocial (Erikson), and moral (Kohlberg) development are firmly rooted in the patriarchal assumptions of the deficient rational structure, which assumes hierarchy and uncritically privileges cognitive process over relationship, intuition, and feeling.<sup>20</sup>

What happens if we detach ourselves from this notion and the myth of progress in which developmental psychology is embedded?

For one thing, we might imagine the child as an emergent, self-organizing, open system existing in an emergent, self-organizing universe. We might recognize the egocentric and anthropocentric assumptions of conventional education theory as mythically constellated and imagine the emergence of increasingly complex consciousness in the child as a manifestation of the emergence of increasingly complex consciousness not only in the species but in the universe.<sup>21</sup>

In our teaching practice we might acknowledge that our notions of intelligence are socially and culturally constructed and learn to honor other constructions. Instead of imagining the conventionally sequenced developmental stages of childhood and adolescence as a series of hurdles to be jumped before progress to more complex functioning becomes possible, we might acknowledge the plurality of consciousness and appreciate both the promise and limitations of whatever mode of experiencing is dominant in the child at any time. We might imagine students whether children, adolescents and adults — as unfolding process. However, abandoning one myth and its rationalizations for another does not move us any closer to integrality. In our thinking about education we can abandon the heroic metaphors characteristic of ego-psychology or the mechanical metaphors characteristic of "old science" and adopt the organic metaphors more favored by "new science," but if that is all we do we will still be thinking only mythically and perspectively. If our thinking is to be in any degree integral, we must be able, on the one hand, to imagine education from within such a metaphor and construct a conceptual framework consistent with it, and, on the other hand, to relativize our ability to do this. We must engage in what Kegan calls "fifth order thinking."<sup>22</sup>

### Teaching the Whole Child

The notions of holistic education which we have inherited from humanistic psychology and the human potential movement focus on educating in a way which develops all the capacities of the child — intellectual, imaginative, emotional, physical, relational. Gebser's model provides a framework for constructing just this type of educational experience or for justifying its teaching practices.

Holistic educators are inclined to condemn the narrowness of a purely instrumental approach to teaching, and for good reason. But the conventional "humanistic" holism, focusing as it does on personal growth, is another such narrow perspective. If we must talk instrumentally, we can argue that effective teaching will call on the capacities of the archaic structure (e.g., through behavior modification, on the one hand, and trance, on the other), of the magic structure (e.g., through ritual, incantation, and spe-

cific magic techniques such as those developed in suggestopedia or neurolinguistic programming), of the mythical structure (e.g., through imaginal, dramatic and narrative techniques), and of the mental structure (e.g., through logically sequenced presentation and problem solving), of the integral structure (through the celebration of difference in persons and perspectives). We can also argue that efficient myth and magic in the school setting is only possible where the child's magic/mythic need for group identity and empathic relationship is adequately met — something at odds with a trend to larger and more impersonal schools. We can argue that the best of teaching consists in "getting all this together."

If we want to talk humanistically rather than instrumentally, we can argue within the Gebserian framework that education is essentially about developing the child's capacities at every level, and that this is an end in itself. However, in thinking about the development of the child's potential we should not be constrained by Western, modernist, heroic notions of ego-development. Jung, among others, has argued that the development in the individual of a strong ego is only a stage in psychological growth (a particular task of adolescence and young adulthood) rather than the goal of it. The dominance of ego as the controlling center of the personality belongs specifically to the mental-rational structure. The development of an egoic consciousness is assuredly a necessary foundation for the development of a transegoic consciousness, but it is not its only foundation. Integral consciousness depends also on assuring that the child does not lose his archaic, magical, and mythical identification with planet, species, and community. This pre-egoic identification is the foundation of the integral structure's apprehension of the whole, and needs to be sustained and supported.

Postmodern theories of the self postulate that we have many selves, actual and potential, through which to express the fullness of our being, and that rigid identification with a single self is a significant obstacle to our becoming what we are capable of becoming. The unfolding of integral consciousness in children demands a classroom which encourages and honors plurality in children's expressions of their "personality" and talents, in contrast to the in-

creasingly narrow and instrumental vision of mainstream education.

However, integrality in education is not just a matter of facilitating the child's becoming all that she is capable of becoming as an individual. In Gebser's understanding this elicitation of integral consciousness inducts the child/adolescent/adult into awareness of a transparent *whole*.

### The Integral Classroom

Both contemporary science and postmodern social analysis have challenged the feasibility of assuming any longer that there is a single reality. Gebser and contemporary constructive postmodernists such as Capra, Griffin, and Kegan challenge the assumption that order depends on believing in it.

Integral consciousness is, to reiterate one of Gebser's key expressions, *aperspectival*. It is space-free. It does not locate itself (physically or metaphorically) on a particular spot and see the world from there. It sees the world from no spot in particular and from all possible spots at once. This may be beyond most of us most of the time; it is certainly beyond most institutions. However, there are signs of the emergence of at least a multi-perspectival vision.

The variety of educational practice has its roots in a variety of educational philosophies which are, in the main, rationalizations of a variety of myths. The meaning, purpose, and value of education cannot be separated from the mythical structure and the personified universe it experiences. When we have a vision of what education can or ought to be, our vision is shaped by the root metaphors which constellate mythical consciousness in European culture.<sup>23</sup> The loudest voices in the rhetoric of education are currently proclaiming a myth of commodification which announces itself to be the only truth. There appears to be a consensus among politicians regardless of their party affiliation that education is nothing but a commodity whose only value is the value given it by the marketplace. Such an assumption is firmly embedded in the myth of Hermes, god of the marketplace. However, this is not the only narrative in contemporary education. We do not have to look far to find classrooms where educational theory and practice are still constructed according to the values of Prometheus (science, progress), Father-Zeus (tradi-

tion, authority), or his son Apollo (order, understanding). When we look a little farther we may find also the worship of Mother-Demeter (nurturance, growth) or Dionysos (spontaneity, creativity), or Eros (love, community), or Hephaistos (craft, work), or Ares (conflict, competition), or Aphrodite (beauty), or Artemis (Nature), or Athena (democracy, common sense), or Hera (social stability). In many classrooms there is more than one god worshipped. Unfortunately, in many places some of these gods must be worshipped in secret.

The multiperspectival, pluralistic (or polytheistic) classroom worships all the gods equally. It can simultaneously embrace different perspectives and different value systems and tolerate the tensions in this embrace. It has moved away from the perspectival rational consciousness that holds only one truth about education and argues that there must be one internally consistent set of values. This is a necessary step towards an aperspectival consciousness where the one/many duality is transcended and education is focused on the transparency of the whole.

One of the key features of integral consciousness as Gebser imagines it is this transcendence of the dualism that is at the core of rational thinking. Twentieth century science has led inexorably to the conclusion that the rules of rational, dualistic thinking which have been so useful for us in the past may not be universally applicable. Gebser warns us against assuming that the only alternative to rational thinking is irrationality. Integral consciousness is not irrational but arational.<sup>24</sup> We are familiar with the kind of thinking and practice in education that assumes that a focus on tradition and a focus on innovation are incompatible, that there must a choice between attention to content and attention to process, between order and chaos, between self-interest and altruism, between efficiency and compassion, between cooperation and competition, between humanity and technology, (between Apollo and Dionysos, Athena and Ares, Hera and Herakles, Demeter, and Zeus). Such ways of thinking were useful once, but they have outlived their usefulness. In the "proto-integral" classroom difference is valued. The fantasy that "objective truth" has been revealed to the mainstream culture and accordingly must be imposed on all who enter it is diminishing, as is the power to impose it. In

the classroom itself, the magical and mythical structures are forcing themselves on our attention.

We might mention in this connection the impact of multi-culturalism on the schooling culture of the advanced Western democracies. Schools are being forced to adapt to a shift in student population as they incorporate children from ethnic groups in whom the magic and mythical structures of consciousness have not been entirely dominated by a deficient rational structure. Schools are increasingly confronted with a population of students and parents whose culture is oral and communitarian and whose basic assumptions about the meaning and purpose of education are at odds with the individualistic, ego-centered, competitive assumptions and print-centered practices which have conventionally shaped mainstream education. Teachers find their classes filled with students whose habitual modes of thought are imaginal and narrative rather than conceptual, and who do not make the binary distinctions between self and other, fact and image, public and private, truth and error, mind and matter, which have given conventional classrooms their peculiar character. Educators may react to such a situation by asserting their notion of a proper education and marginalizing those students who do not "measure up" to it. Or they may take refuge in radical scepticism and give up on truth altogether. Or they may be tolerant of other people's truths (while preferring their own) and adapt schooling to accommodate them. Or they may be prepared (and able) to relativize their own truths, even to relativize systemic knowing. This demands an ability to perceive not only "my truth" and "your truth" as both incomplete without the other, but even "me" and "you" as incomplete without the other.

We now find ourselves dealing with a school population which has been subjected from infancy to a flood of information and a flood of images in a way which has not been experienced by any other generation. This information and imagery comes through the popular media with no apparent distinction made between fact and fiction or between the significant and the trivial. We also find a broad popular movement (of which "new age" rhetoric is only a symptom) that is convinced of the inability of rationality to solve the personal and global predicament,

and seeks solutions in efficient and deficient forms of magic. It would be surprising if this movement made no impact on young people's learning. From the perspective of the dominant rational consciousness, this shift is regressive. "Children," we hear, "cannot think any more." And it may indeed be regressive. It would not be the first time in human history that the mental structure fragmented and dissolved. On the other hand, we can find in the same phenomena signs that a latent integral structure is emerging.

An integral education is time-free. It is not locked into a particular spot in history, a particular mark on a time line. In an integral education the past and the future are simultaneously experienced with the present. Time can now be stretched or compressed, and it has become possible to talk of the quality and intensity of time as well as its extent. The school is not locked into its history or its traditional ways of categorizing people and events which are a product of both mythical consciousness (through shared narratives) and rational consciousness (through history). Among the products of myth and history in a school are essentialist views of race, gender, class, and cultural difference, including an essentialist view of its own identity. The integral school is no longer trapped in historically-based assumptions about people — assumptions that particular groups of people have particular traits and accordingly are suitable only to fill particular roles. It does not have to limit its students' activities on the basis that they are essentially such and such because of race or gender or geography. It does not have to limit its collective activity because of an essentialist view of what it is and what it does. It no longer protects itself from accepting students or teachers who will not "fit in" because of cultural difference. It is difference which gives the school the capacity to "go with the flow" through ongoing self-organization, and it is contradiction which nourishes the complexity it values. Where the rational school seeks conformity, stability, and planned change, the integral school values the multiplicity, creativity, and spontaneity which come with time-freedom.<sup>25</sup> It is not just a matter of tolerating differences from a position of superiority. Integrality demands that difference itself be valued. Difference is an essential component of *the whole*.

The integral classroom is space-free. Gebser developed his notions of what integral consciousness might be like without being witness to the developments in communications and information technology which are peculiar to the present time. Yet these are highly significant for the intellectual sensibility of a postmodern world and the functioning of educational institutions within it.<sup>26</sup> The integral school does not get stuck as some do in the magical and mythical aspects of information technology, but pays attention to the changes in children's awareness which come with the disappearance of distance, the disappearance of ancient boundaries, and the globalization of consciousness. It seems likely that the deficiency as well as efficiency of integral consciousness will be manifest in the ways in which we interact with and through this technology.

Integral education is not constrained by the limitations of the heroic ego. Not only do we seem to be abandoning the notion that the ego is the center of the personality, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to place human beings at the center of the universe, or even to maintain that they are at the center of the planet. It is becoming incumbent on us to relativize ourselves, to imagine ourselves not only as choosing and acting individuals in our own right but also both as an environment for smaller organisms and as cells of a larger organism. The boundaries of our selves are not as impermeable as they used to be.

For a deep ecologist like Warwick Fox, the "self" is identified with "all that is," in a "deep realization that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality" (1990, 250). He is careful to point out that this realization does not imply that all multiplicity and diversity is reduced to homogeneous mush, but rather "the fact that we and all other entities are aspects of a single unfolding reality means neither that all entities are fundamentally the same nor that they are absolutely autonomous, but rather simply that they are *relatively* autonomous" (Fox 1990, 250). Once we relativise the atomistic individualism which has characterised conventional modernist understandings of education we may see the development of unity-consciousness as a desirable aim for education and teach our students to experience it. We may become aware of the condition of the world (human and non-human) being projected in the be-

havior of our students. We may view the apathy or aggression of our students as an expression of the pathology of the world rather than solely as expressions of their own inadequate functioning. We may teach them to listen to the voices of the earth and take them seriously. We may give up the notion that their inability to learn and to adapt creatively to their world is a function of personal pathology or inadequacy (or of social and environmental demands), and imagine rather that it is connected to our damaged relationship to nature. We may see that an essential aspect of our task as teachers, whatever the content of our teaching, is to connect our students to the resources and rhythms of the natural world. We may acknowledge that we and our students are deeply implicated in Nature and that their emergence as whole, individuated, mindful human beings must be grounded in their identification with *all that is*. Not to return to our dimly experienced symbiotic union with the all-encompassing mother, but to regain an experienced identification with *all that is* which, if sensed emotionally (magically), imaginably (mythically) and conceptually (mentally), may be integrated in a new connection to the ground of our being.

### Living on the Border

This kind of thinking about our place in the universe, even when it does not reach conscious expression, affects the way we think about organizations such as schools. It demands that education institutions see themselves and structure themselves in ways which are consistent with a sense of themselves as open systems in a web of relationships which blur the boundaries between *inside* and *outside*. Integral consciousness constructs no mythical boundary between *us* and *them*, and no rational boundary between *I* and *it*.

Some of us do not particularly like this development. In the condition of liminality and doubt in which we find ourselves, we have a tendency to reach for old certainties, old solutions. Unfortunately, it is old certainties and old solutions which have got us into the position we are in. There is a tendency for alternative education institutions to reinforce the barrier between *us* and *them* rather than dismantle it, to seek the security of an internally cohe-

sive mythology rather than relativize it in a world without certainties. Maybe we have to accept that liminality and doubt is where we have to be right now.

I have argued elsewhere that the late twentieth century global culture is suffering a Hermes-inflation,<sup>27</sup> following the Apollo-inflation of the enlightenment and the Prometheus-inflation of the industrial age, and that the collapse of rationality and the radical relativism, groundlessness, fragmentation, cynicism, and nihilism associated with postmodernity are not a peculiar new phenomenon but would have been recognised in Greco-Roman culture as evidence of the presence of Hermes/Mercury, the god of liminality, the god of markets, the god of magic, the Trickster, the Cowboy, and the Messenger.<sup>28</sup> Whether we call ourselves constructive, deconstructive, reconstructive, or hyperconstructive postmodernists, or simply live unreflectingly in the information society and the unregulated marketplace, we are collectively enmeshed in this "old story." We can extricate ourselves sufficiently from this enmeshment to reflect rationally and critically on the truth of this story. We can, perhaps, abandon this truth and cling instead to the myth and truth of Zeus or Gaia or Aphrodite. Or we can transcend our need to adhere to a single truth and acknowledge that the essential incompleteness of rationally derived truths and the inevitability of conflicts between them are aspects of the truth. If this is our solution, we are of course simply accepting Hermes' advice that all the squabbling gods must be worshipped equally (including himself). The same myth which undermines conventional knowledge and makes education a commodity is the myth which subverts and destabilises the patriarchy and promises a "transformed continuity," for Hermes, the god of boundaries, is also the god of transformation. An integral apprehension of the spiritual whole is grounded in the imaginal reality of the mythical structure as firmly as it is in the critically observed factual reality of the mental structure.

In Gebser's understanding, the everpresent origin is sensed by the archaic structure, felt by the magic, imagined by the mythical, conceptualised by the mental and concretely perceived by the integral. A curriculum for the good of the world will attend to

the unfolding process of the child as it attends to the sensation, feeling, imagining, conceptualisation, and concrescence of a truth which is neither one nor many, a truth which, we may speculate, will become transparent to us as we learn to see through not only the fragments of sensory and imaginal reality, but even through our ways of seeing.

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### Notes

1. In spite of the significance of Gebser's work, there is remarkably little commentary or critique in English. However, see Georg Feuerstein (1987); E.M. Kramer (1992); and Alan Combs (1996). Gebser's ideas were a key source for Ken Wilber (1981).

2. Gebser's concept of "plus-mutation" describes a process of enrichment, in which the earlier structure is not destroyed but added to. For instance the previously dominant mythical structure did not disappear with the full emergence of mental-rational consciousness, but came to be largely concealed by rationalization.

3. Gebser is somewhat coy about dating the mutations. He suggests that since quantified time does not exist in pre-mental consciousness it is meaningless to set the earlier mutations on a linear timeline. Feuerstein (1987) suggests that we date archaic consciousness from the emergence of proto-humans to the emergence of the magic structure about 750,000 BC. The mythical structure emerges about 20,000 BC and mental consciousness some time after 5000 BC. It emerges fully in the eighth century BC (more or less simultaneously in Greece, India, Palestine, and China). After the collapse of the Roman Empire, Europe experienced a regression to magical-mythical consciousness while the mental structure was preserved in the Byzantine and Arab worlds. It was only in late medieval period that the mental structure becomes widely discernible once more in Europe, only to deteriorate to its deficient form, which Gebser calls "rational" consciousness, in the past four hundred years.

The evidence which Gebser draws on to support his theory is mainly archaeological and philological. While he presents his theory as a universal one, most of his illustrations come from Indo-European sources and his focus is almost entirely on the evolution of European culture.

4. Gebser does not give us a straightforward definition of the terms "efficiency" and "deficiency," though he uses the words often and their meaning is clear from the many contexts. For instance, when writing of mental structure of consciousness as it presents itself in contemporary Western culture, he sees deficiency in the "exhaustion" of a structure which has lost its constituting strength and energy. He develops the notion that with each mutation of consciousness there is a sequence in which an "efficient" structure provides a valid means of dealing with the world, only to collapse into "deficiency" before it makes way for a new mutation. Magic turns to sorcery; lived myth turns to narrated myth; a rich mental consciousness turns to a narrow rational consciousness.

5. Gebser himself avoided referring to "layers" or "levels" of consciousness, on the grounds that the terms are embedded in a spatial, hierarchical metaphor. He argued that his model is not a developmental one, that it was not based on a notion of progress. More recently emerging structures should not be valued as "superior" to earlier ones. Nor should they be regarded as determined by the earlier ones.

6. See Julian Jaynes (1976).

7. Gebser does not talk about the unconscious, but rather refers to different intensities of consciousness.

8. See Wilfred Bion (1961).

9. The archaic, undifferentiated union of human and environment was first called "participation mystique" by Levy-Bruhl (1923). In the face of adverse criticism he later modified his theory, but the phrase has been adopted by many later theorists, to refer to the consciousness both of primal human beings and of newborn infants.

10. In mass behavior or mob behavior we see groups of human beings acting out of collective impulse and emotion to preserve or propagate the collective identity. Neumann argues that, since contemporary urban human beings have lost their connection both to the earth



and to a clan to which they might be consciously and unconsciously bound, there is a schism between conscious and unconscious experience. There is still a largely unconscious mass component in modern human beings, but it is irrational, emotional, anti-individual, and destructive, where the primal group consciousness was constructive, synthetic, and creative. Mob behavior as we might witness it today represents a takeover of rational consciousness by a repressed magic structure and accordingly is likely to be negative in its manifestations.

11. See Julian Jaynes (1976).

12. See James Hillman (1983).

13. The use of the masculine pronoun is appropriate here, given the self-consciously masculinist thrust of mental-rational consciousness historically. The gradual breakdown of masculinist assumptions during the twentieth century may be symptomatic of the breakdown of the mental-rational structure.

14. See especially Jean-Francois Lyotard (1984).

15. I have followed Feuerstein's translation here. Gebser carefully distinguishes between *the spiritual* and *spirit*. The latter is dualistically opposed to matter in the mental-rational consciousness. The spiritual, for Gebser, signifies the whole, which is the diaphanous "prior" (but not in a temporal sense) to space and time. See Feuerstein (1987, 161).

16. Gebser distinguishes with the unperspectival magic structure, the preperspectival mythical structure, the perspectival mental structure, and the aperspectival integral structure.

Our concern is with integrality and ultimately with the whole; the word "aperspectival" conveys our attempt to deal with wholeness. It is a definition which differentiates a perception of reality that is neither perspectively restricted to only one sector nor merely unperspectively evocative of a vague sense of reality. (Gebser 1985, 3)

17. Gebser uses this word to denote an integration achieved through integral-arational consciousness, which parallels the synthesis achieved through mental-rational consciousness or mythical symbolisation.

18. Kramer makes an analogy which is useful here.

When we take a material object, a cube for instance, every dimension of it means other dimensions, thus integrating and in turn being integrated by them. The cubeness of a cube is understood as six planes that simultaneously rely on each other in order to form the object known as a "cube." Cubeness is an integral meaning that evaporates the instant one atomises the subject into six plane surfaces. This is why mental reductionism fails as an explanation, for the cubeness of the object depends on the integrated relationships of all the surfaces at once. (Kramer 1992, xxiv)

19. Gebser shows no interest in the "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny" argument which was being postulated by Neumann at the time of his writing, though it would appear to give some support to his model. See Neumann (1973, xx). Neumann and Gebser were both members of Jung's Eranos circle at the time when they were writing *The Origin and History of Consciousness* and *The Ever Present Origin*. They do not, however, refer to each other's work.

20. Even the more holistic developmental models of Wilber and Kegan must bear the same criticism. While they deal in different partial ways with the phenomenon of integrality, they make the culturally bound assumptions that development is individual and linear and that it proceeds from inferior body to superior spirit. See Jean Piaget (1972); Sigmund Freud (1982); Eric Erikson (1965); Lawrence Kohlberg (1984); Robert Kegan (1982); Ken Wilber (1980).

21. Gebser's notion of the emergence of new structures through plus-mutation is consistent with Sheldrake's theory of morphic fields. In such a framework, we should expect integral consciousness to become increasingly common as the field is established. See Rupert Sheldrake (1988).

22. Kegan argues that just as a modern society demands of its members that they be capable of fourth order thinking, a postmodern

society demands fifth order thinking, but few of us appear to be capable of the complex subject-object differentiation involved.

Refusing to see oneself or the other as a single system or form, regarding the premise of completeness as a tempting pretence, constructing the process of interacting as prior to the existence of the form or system, facing protracted conflict as a likely sign of one's own assumptions of wholeness, distinctness, completeness, or priority — all of these ways of constructing reality require that the epistemological construction of system, form or theory be relativised, moved from subject in one's knowing to object in one's knowing. (Kegan 1994, 321)

23. Hillman writes of the Greek gods as root metaphors which still frame our ways of imagining and thinking in European culture.

Within and behind these ideas, making them so instinctually certain, so libidinally charged with excitement and endurance, so universally familiar, so few in number and so repetitive in history, are the archetypes which form the structures of our consciousness with such force and such possession that we might, as we have in the past, call them Gods. (Hillman 1975, 129)

24. Irrationality is a characteristic of the mythical structure, arationality of the integral.

It is of fundamental importance that we clearly distinguish between 'irrational' and 'arational,' for this distinction lies at the very heart of our deliberations.... There is a fundamental distinction between the attempt to go beyond the merely measurable, knowing and respecting it while striving to be free from it, and rejecting and disregarding the measurable by regressing to the immoderate and unfathomable chaos of the ambivalent and even fragmented polyvalence of psychic and natural interrelation. (Gebser 1985, 147)

25. For a discussion of the implications of time freedom for our experience of difference, see John W. Murphy, J.W. and Jung Min Choi, "Jean Gebser, The Commonweal and the Politics of Difference" in Kramer (1992, 20 1-216).

26. The shift in our modes of thought which Gebser was documenting in the forties has been reinforced by an information and communication technology which operates outside our conventional notions of space and time. It is possible now for an entire organization to exist outside the conventions of time and place which we have taken for granted for three thousand years. It seems to be becoming possible through information technology to transcend not only time and space but ego, as information scientists pursue the fantasy of enabling a hundred minds (or ten thousand) in instantaneous communication to function as a single great mind. This transcendence of the limitations of the individual's mental powers is a very different thing from the submergence of the individual in the group which characterizes magical-mythical consciousness. The very fantasy that such a development is possible, or even desirable, indicates a significant shift in our consciousness. We may assume that many of our students have made a more substantial shift than we have.

27. Jung uses the word "inflation" to denote a condition in which the psyche is "blown up" by a particular energy to the extent that it becomes unbalanced. The word can be also used in a collective sense, in that we can witness a "cultural inflation." Jung pointed to what he called the "Wotan" inflation in interpreting the phenomenon of Nazi Germany.

28. See Bernie Neville (1992, July; 1994, December; 1996, December).

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# Education and the Evolution of the Cosmos

Ron Miller

**Whitehead's cosmology of creativity and spiritual purpose is quite compatible with the holistic perspective that the purpose of education, indeed of human existence itself, is not individual success but the evolution of consciousness.**

The heart of my educational philosophy is my conviction that we must replace the reductionist epistemology that dominates the modern world with a holistic understanding of the cosmos. By "holistic" I mean a worldview that is essentially spiritual, but by "spiritual" I do not necessarily mean religious. Describing a spiritually rooted education has been a tricky undertaking, easily misunderstood as implying either some religious belief system, or some "New Age" retreat from intellectual rigor. The fact is that until the early part of this century, notions of holistic education were most often expressed in religious or theological language, and the emergence of a holistic education movement in the 1980s was boosted by interest in "New Age" and "human potential" circles. Those were the languages with which we started — but as our thinking in holistic education has matured, we have found that recent developments in physical science, systems theory, ecology, depth psychology, and philosophy have given us new ways to express the awesome wholeness of reality. Philosopher David Ray Griffin has identified these developments as "constructive post-modernism" and shows how they provide coherent and compelling alternatives to the reductionism that characterizes much contemporary thought.

Griffin and his colleagues have drawn their primary inspiration from the process cosmology of Alfred North Whitehead. The great English mathematician and philosopher of science wrote highly original works on the nature of reality in the 1920s and 1930s. Arguing that the world is fundamentally incomplete, Whitehead observed that creativity, transformation, and evolution are essential, not incidental, aspects of reality. According to Donald Oliver and Kathleen Gershman, "universe-wide emergence into novelty ... is Whitehead's central metaphysical principle;" they point out that this cosmology of

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transformation and emergence challenges modern culture's "technical" epistemology, which "sees survival of self and extensions of self as the purpose of existence" (1989, 121,15).

An education based on process cosmology rejects the modernist view that learning means "acquiring that power necessary to manipulate the substantial world for human comfort and convenience"; this utilitarian view "ignores a basic human intention — to feel involved in nature and the universe as a participant in the continuous creative process which characterizes it" (Oliver and Gershman 1989, 180-181). In essence, an education derived from constructive postmodern philosophy — that is, holistic education — is concerned with the creative evolution of new consciousness, rather than with the pursuit of personal success within established cultural patterns. This is a radical notion; indeed, it calls the entire modern enterprise of schooling into question. In this paper, then, I propose to survey a number of thinkers who support this view that the purpose of education, indeed of human existence itself, is not individual success but the evolution of consciousness. Whitehead is not alone in describing a cosmology of creativity and spiritual purpose.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952), the Italian pediatrician and educational researcher, is primarily known today as the founder of a particular system of early childhood education. Yet it is not widely known that Montessori was one of the truly visionary educators of the twentieth century, whose work was inspired by her spiritual conception of human development and human destiny (Marshak 1997; Wolf 1996). In one of her more obscure books, *Education for a New World*, there is a passage in which she discusses the "pre-established plan" of Nature — in her words, an "occult command which harmonizes all and creates [a] ... better world." She then makes this striking statement: "The world was not created for us to enjoy, but we are created in order to evolve the cosmos" (1989, 21, 22). When we reflect on the implications of this idea we are led to a radically new conception of the meaning of education. We are emphatically pulled from a notion of education for the good of one nation, or one economic system, or one professional/managerial class, and pointed toward a no-

tion of education for the good of the world as a whole.

This perspective completely undermines the dominant educational agenda of modern culture. Our worldview of materialism, individualism, economic growth, and competition has, as its primary goal, the exploitation of the world for economic and technological progress and personal success. Modern schooling, through the narrow content of authorized curricula, hierarchical forms of discipline and management, and the testing and grading of human "capital," aims precisely for economic and technological abundance and personal advancement, mastery, security, and success. If there is a higher and more sublime purpose to our lives than exploitation and enjoyment of the world, it is not evident in our dominant educational policies and practices.

How might we conceive an education that truly serves the good of the world? We must start with a spiritual conception of the human being. What does this mean? Montessori, and other educators who speak of spirituality, tell us that within every human soul a divine creative force is at work; a mysterious transcendent energy, not reducible to our individual personalities, biological components, or cultural conditioning, is seeking expression through our personal lives. This energy is not fully manifested in human existence — far from it — but it is gradually working through history to achieve its culmination, which spiritual masters have called redemption, heaven, nirvana. The story of this unfolding creative spirit against the resistance of the material world is the drama of evolution; it is in this sense that Montessori refers to the evolution of the cosmos and proclaims that we are here to further it.

Montessori's view is not peculiarly mystical, but closely reflects the teachings of accomplished spiritual masters of the twentieth century such as Rudolf Steiner, Sri Aurobindo, and the Sufi master Hazrat Inayat Khan, who all proposed educational approaches that follow the stages of spiritual unfolding in human development. David Marshak of Seattle University, who has specifically studied the educational ideas of these masters, points out that

Steiner, Aurobindo, and Inayat Khan concur that life on this planet is engaged in a process of evolution that is the unfoldment of spiritual en-

ergies that have previously been involved in lower levels of being. Humans are partially divine beings who are evolving toward greater divinity. All three teachers describe the task of human beings as the attainment of divinity or God-realization. (1997, 9)

Although Marshak does not discuss Montessori in as much detail, he does suggest that her ideas reflect "the same apprehension of reality and truth" (Marshak 1989, 223). This apprehension — this direct perception of the spiritual foundation of reality — led the Austrian philosopher and mystic Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) to devise the method of Waldorf education, which specifically aims to assist the unfolding of spiritual forces during the growing child's intellectual, emotional, and physical development. Throughout his numerous lectures and books, Steiner argued that people in modern times have become estranged from the spiritual forces of the world; in our materialistic civilization, he said, we need to deliberately reconnect ourselves to these forces so that human consciousness can play its vital role in the continuing evolution of spirit. In a characteristic passage (we could as easily take a sample from dozens of his other works), he claims that people

have been placed into a soulless, spiritually empty, mechanistic world. From cooperating with nature, they have been led to operating machines.... We must find the way again to give them something to take the place of the old kinship to nature. And this can only be a worldview that speaks to our souls with a powerful voice, making us realize that there is more to human life than what can be experienced outwardly. Human beings must become inwardly certain that they belong to a supersensible world, to a world of soul and spirit, that always surrounds them. (Steiner 1995, 26-27)

In other words, the driving forces of modern civilization, such as science, technology, nationalism, and the pursuit of economic goods, are not the essential endeavors of human existence; they are at best peripheral to our true purpose, and at worst they completely distract us from it. Steiner claimed that when education is harnessed to the goals of the state or the economic system, it cannot adequately serve the spiritual development of humanity, and diminishes rather than nourishes the life of the soul.

Still another great spiritual teacher of our century, Jiddu Krishnamurti, made much the same argument in a classic work first published in 1953, *Education and the Significance of Life*. "Our present education," he claimed,

is geared to industrialization and war, its principal aim being to develop efficiency; and we are caught in this machine of ruthless competition and mutual destruction.... The present system of education is making us subservient, mechanical and deeply thoughtless; though it awakens us intellectually, inwardly it leaves us incomplete, stultified and uncreative. (1981, 13, 14-15)

Krishnamurti argues that the mere acquisition of factual knowledge and vocational skills to secure personal economic success is a partial and limiting understanding of education. "Our technical progress is fantastic," he says,

but it has only increased our powers of destroying one another, and there is starvation and misery in every land. We are not peaceful and happy people.... As long as success is our goal we cannot be rid of fear, for the desire to succeed inevitably breeds the fear of failure.... We all want to be on top, and this desire creates constant conflict within ourselves and with our neighbors; it leads to competition, envy, animosity and finally to war. (1981, 19-20, 43)

The right kind of education, according to Krishnamurti, is one that enables each person to fully and directly understand oneself, and one's relationship to the world. An education that enables each individual to grow toward wholeness and integration cannot be dictated by an ideology or method, but requires a fluid, loving relationship between ourselves and children.

It is because we ourselves are so dry, empty and without love that we have allowed governments and systems to take over the education of our children and the direction of our lives; but governments want efficient technicians, not human beings.... (1981, 24)

For Krishnamurti, a fully developed human being is one who is free of conditioning, free of self-centered ego, free of fear, and who is therefore fully present, creative, and able to discern the essential in his or her experience. Krishnamurti refers to a "state of tranquility in which there is reality, God" (1981: 39). This reality lies beyond the "illusions" that we foster

through our economic, political, and religious ideologies and through our mistaken sense of separation from the world.

If these seemingly otherworldly mystics sound too remote and exotic to our pragmatic American ears, let us consider some of our own teachers who have, in essence, made nearly identical claims about the purpose of human life. We all know that Martin Luther King was a great civil rights leader, but do we appreciate the spiritual basis of his ideas and his activism? Profoundly underlying King's work for racial integration, economic justice, and peace was his authentic faith in a divine presence, a spiritual reality, working through history. King believed that if we are truly to work for the good of the world, we must find guidance and sustenance from this spiritual source. Echoing Montessori's words, King proclaimed that

The end of life is not to be happy nor to achieve pleasure and avoid pain, but to do the will of God, come what may.... I am convinced that the universe is under the control of a loving purpose, and that in the struggle for righteousness man has cosmic companionship. Behind the harsh appearances of the world there is a benign power (1963, 132, 141).

Although King's biblically rooted theology personalizes the divine source of the cosmos ("the will of God"), he is, I think, attempting to portray the same reality to which our more exotic mystics referred. King, too, was pointing to the epistemological contrast between a spiritual and holistic understanding of the cosmos and the rational, materialist conception of reality that dominates the modern age. Like Steiner and Krishnamurti, he argued that our modern faith in science, technology, and human reason has proven to be inadequate to the moral and spiritual aspects of our nature. Materialism, he said,

leads inevitably into a dead-end street in an intellectually senseless world.... Now we have come to see that science can give us only physical power, which, if not controlled by spiritual power, will lead inevitably to cosmic doom.... [T]he old evils continue and the age of reason has been transformed into an age of terror. Selfishness and hatred have not vanished with an enlargement of our educational system and an extension of our legislative policies. (1963, 55, 56, 120)

Here is a clear challenge to the politicians, business leaders, and education policymakers of our time, who demand a technologically efficient, rationally standardized form of schooling that serves purely material ends. Merely "enlarging" our educational system — shaping or reforming it in accordance with some clever theory of education or some pressing political agenda — does not address the heart of human beings' moral and existential struggles. King warned us not to confuse the spiritual purpose of our lives with the material means that simply enable us to survive. "Each of us," he preached,

lives in two realms, the internal and the external. The internal is that realm of spiritual ends expressed in art, literature, morals and religion. The external is that complex of devices, techniques, mechanisms, and instrumentalities by means of which we live.... (1963, 52)

An education for "righteousness" — that is, for the good of the world — cannot be devoted solely to the external concerns of our lives, but must be infused with what King called "divine energy" — the cosmic purpose that transcends our selfish concern for mere survival.

One of the leading Jewish thinkers in recent generations, Abraham Joshua Heschel, marched with King in Selma, Alabama, and in many ways shared King's understanding of the world. In his writings Heschel emphasized that we can only know the world in its full reality through faith — a sense of wonder, awe, and what he often called "radical amazement."

Awe is the awareness of transcendent meaning. ... The world in its grandeur is full of a spiritual radiance, for which we have neither name nor concept.... Awe, then, is more than a feeling. It is an answer of the heart and mind to the presence of mystery in all things, an intuition for a meaning that is beyond the mystery, an awareness of the transcendent worth of the universe. (1955, 106)

"Transcendent worth," again, means that we cannot measure the value of life simply by our own selfish or ideological standards, but must go beyond our rational, self-interested calculations into the realm of the divine. Heschel, too, suggested that spiritual reality is continually evolving, and that we must remain open to new possibilities that are still to be revealed.

We are endowed with the consciousness of being involved in a history that transcends time and its specious glories.... We are still at the beginning of history. There is so much more in our souls than we have been able to utter. What Providence holds in store for us surpasses the contributions made by our people in the ages bygone. (Heschel 1996: 7, 25)

We can say, then, that education works against spiritual evolution when it aims only to inculcate the discoveries of past generations. As Emerson pointed out, as the Quaker mystic George Fox and recent Quaker educators have suggested, truth does not live in the utterances of the past, but in our present sensitivity to the living spirit (Miller 1997, 107, 87). As Krishnamurti put it,

Only by encouraging the child to question the book, whatever it be, to inquire into the validity of the existing social values, traditions, forms of government, religious beliefs and so on, can the educator and the parents hope to awaken and sustain his critical alertness and keen insight. (1981, 41)

Like these earlier spiritual teachers, Heschel asks us to imagine an education that cultivates awareness, presence — in his words, radical amazement.

Our systems of education stress the importance of enabling the student to exploit the power aspect of reality... We teach the children how to measure, how to weigh. We fail to teach them how to revere, how to sense wonder and awe. (1955, 36)

Ultimately, Heschel comes to the same conclusion that Montessori reached:

Man's true fulfillment depends upon communion with that which transcends him.... The most urgent task is to destroy the myth that accumulation of wealth and the achievement of comfort are the chief vocations of man.... [L]ife involves not only the satisfaction of selfish needs, but also the satisfaction of a divine need for human justice and nobility. (Heschel 1996, 31, 32)

For Heschel, human beings can contribute to the good of the world by "enacting the spiritual on the stage of life" — that is, by expressing the splendor of God which is present, but hidden, within each person's soul.

Still, even this language may sound foreign to sophisticated modern ears. Skeptics may treat spirituality as no more than a quaint form of idealism expressed by a few mystics and theologians (even if, in the lives of King and Heschel, we witness the power of this idealism). However, I believe that these thinkers are, in fact, trying to convey a perception, an experience, of a profoundly important dimension of reality that our modern ways of knowing cannot adequately conceive. Along with Whitehead, there are other nonmystic, nontheological sources of a holistic education — an education that strives for the good of the world by nourishing spiritual evolution. In recent years, the work of David Bohm, Rupert Sheldrake, Fritjof Capra, and other holistic scientists, as well as Carl Jung, E. F. Schumacher, Gregory Bateson, Ervin Laszlo, Charlene Spretnak, Huston Smith, Willis Harman, Anna Lemkow, Joseph Chilton Pearce, Charles Birch and John B. Cobb, Theodore Roszak, and many others representing diverse fields of inquiry have contributed to an intellectually coherent holistic picture of the world. One remarkable scholar, Ken Wilber, has developed a comprehensive and integrated holistic theory by drawing on insights from an incredible variety of these sources (including Whitehead's cosmology). His conclusions explicitly support the mystics' and theologians' claims that the ultimate purpose of human existence is to further the evolution of spirit.

Wilber explains, in fine detail, the holistic nature of reality (Wilber 1995). Every entity in the cosmos, he points out, is a "holon" — it is an integrated whole in its own right (it has an identity, coherence, and meaning) while simultaneously serving as a part of some larger whole (it has relationships to other entities within the context of a still more inclusive system). This double identity — whole/part — involves an inherent instability, and holons are pulled toward greater wholeness — that is, greater complexity, inclusivity, integration, depth, and meaning — in order to overcome their partiality. A transformative leap occurs, through which an entity transcends its partial identity and spontaneously creates a new, more complex entity. Agreeing with the masters of all spiritual traditions, he believes that the universe is ultimately characterized by a vast process of evo-

lution, a cosmic force which pulls holons toward ever greater integration and wholeness.

In what sense is this force “spiritual”? Wilber avoids theological language that personalizes the pull of evolution or renders it mysteriously other-worldly.

There is nothing particularly metaphysical or occult about this. Self-transcendence is simply a system’s capacity to reach beyond the given and introduce some measure of novelty, a capacity without which, it is quite certain, evolution would never, and could never, have even gotten started. (1995, 44)

Nevertheless, higher or greater degrees of wholeness disclose dimensions of reality that are invisible (“supersensible” as Steiner put it) to entities at lower levels. These higher dimensions have no meaning for lower order systems — in practical terms, they do not exist. The world as perceived by an animal does not contain moral, cultural, or conceptual reality; human consciousness introduces these far more complex layers of meaning. And as Wilber has shown in several of his provocative books (particularly 1977, 1981), human consciousness is not a simple, static entity but has itself evolved through a wide spectrum ranging from primitive to profoundly mystical levels of awareness. “Spirituality” refers to levels of consciousness that perceive or intuit the vast wholeness and meaning of the cosmos, a wholeness unfathomable in terms of material reality, personal identity, or cultural ideologies. Again we are back to Montessori’s words: The world is not ultimately about our own self-aggrandizement but is an insistent call to self-transcendence. As humanity is carried along by the unfolding of evolution, says Wilber, “we must shift our perspectives, deepen our perception, often against a great deal of resistance, to embrace the deeper and wider context” (1995, 73).

Surprisingly, Wilber has little or nothing to say about education anywhere in his voluminous work. But in this last statement we have a fertile seed for a truly holistic educational theory. An education that serves the evolution of the cosmos toward greater order, wholeness, and meaning must teach us how to open and deepen our own consciousness. The human task is not to become well trained automatons or highly skilled manipulators of the physical world,

but to become growing, questing, self-transcending agents of the evolution of spirit. But make no mistake, this task is not easy! Although the universe does exert a pull toward wholeness (what Martin Luther King identified as a “loving purpose”), Wilber recognizes the fierce resistance that holons engender in their partness. He is very clear about the imbalanced and pathological ways that entities change or react to change, and he explicitly states that evolution is not smooth or painless. Although he believes that at this point of history we are on the verge of “an entirely new structure of consciousness,” we will first have to endure what he calls “torturous birth throes” and “paradigm wars”; there could be false starts that may potentially wipe out humanity (1995, 188, 191). (This would be a disaster for us, of course, but cosmic evolution has the patience to start over.) The best we can do is to be receptive and responsive to the call of spirit. If we are to move beyond our inherent resistance to self-transformation, we need to cultivate radical amazement rather than technological arrogance. This is the task of education in our time.

These considerations suggest the mission, the ultimate goal, of education. But how would we actually practice teaching and learning in light of this goal? There is no single answer to this question; there is no one correct method of holistic education. By definition, an education for spiritual evolution is a creative, transformative, self-transcending engagement between person and world. There is a continuing element of uncertainty, novelty, and freedom in this process. In his book *A Post-Modern Perspective on Curriculum*, education theorist William E. Doll demonstrates why a constructive postmodernist education must be

a living process; it is negotiated not preordained, created not found.... Learning and understanding are made (not transmitted) as we dialogue with others and reflect on what we and they have said — as we “negotiate passages” between ourselves and others, between ourselves and our texts. (1993, 61, 156)

Doll argues that where technologically efficient modern education has aimed to transmit discrete bits of information and sought to measure the effectiveness of this transmission objectively, a post-

modern education would strive for renewal, deepening, and transformation of our identity and knowing. He bases this new vision of teaching and learning on several philosophical revolutions of the twentieth century, including chaos theory, a constructivist epistemology, and Whitehead's process cosmology. (Incidentally, drawing on other, more overtly spiritual sources from the world's religious traditions, John P. Miller (1996) also distinguishes precisely between the "transmission" orientation of modern schooling and the goal of "transformation" at the root of holistic education.)

Living as we do in an age of transition between modern and postmodern cultures, we are not yet very practiced in the attitude of openness to process and novelty, and so we still look for techniques, models, and proven results to bolster our explorations of the new culture. I see evidence of this in the peculiar quality of the Waldorf School movement; on one hand, various scholars, including John P. Miller, Joseph Chilton Pearce, Douglas Sloan, Mary E. Henry (1993), and myself (Miller 1997) have identified Rudolf Steiner's educational model as a superb expression of a more holistic worldview. Yet in an important sense the method as it is practiced fails to meet the test that Krishnamurti or Heschel or Whitehead or Doll — or Steiner himself, for that matter — established as the hallmark of creative self-transcendence: the test of radical openness to new experience and novel conditions. There is an internal coherence to the Waldorf method that it is tempting to mimic, because it offers a nice package complete with grade-by-grade curriculum, songs and stories, festivals and prayers, and guidelines for training teachers and instructing children. But it is the coherence of Steiner's creative response to post-World War I German society. To practice holistic education in a global culture on the cusp of the twenty-first century, must we still divide children by age and feed them a curriculum (however artistically) based on archaic myths? Does it still make sense to place the teacher at the head of the classroom and the children in rows of desks? Maybe it does — sometimes, for some children, in some situations. But to prescribe this (or any other) method as the complete and finished form of holistic education is to substitute technique for transcendence.

Whitehead addressed this issue directly.

The education of a human being is a most complex topic, which we have hardly begun to understand. The only point on which I feel certain is that there is no widespread, simple solution. We have to consider the particular problem set to each institution by its type of students, and their future opportunities. (1951, 6)

If education is to serve the evolution of the cosmos, and thus the good of the world, we must stop looking for techniques or solutions and learn to practice an open-minded, open-hearted relationship to the world that embraces spontaneity and uncertainty. Oliver and Gershman argue that a process education would aim

to allow activity in the presence of knowledge, to let students discover meanings and form novel viewpoints, to develop a sense of shared pursuit of knowledge (which involves risking failure in front of students)... Moving within the multiplicity of complex and unpredictable events (prehensions) that constantly occur in the teaching situation requires that the teacher relinquish long-held notions of control, control of time and control of knowledge. (1989, 167, 198)

In this postmodern perspective, knowledge is not seen as factual truth defined outside our experience, transmitted through the authority of teachers to their ignorant students, but as a mutual act of creation between persons actively and sensitively engaging the world.

Returning, once again, to the religious sources of holistic education, we find one of our most inspiring contemporary educational thinkers, Parker Palmer, offering an identical conception of knowledge.

[I]n Christian understanding truth is neither an object "out there" nor a proposition about such objects. Instead, truth is personal, and all truth is known in personal relationships.... If what we know is abstract, impersonal, apart from us, it cannot be truth, for truth involves a vulnerable, faithful, and risk-filled interpenetration of the knower and the known (1993, 48, 49).

Palmer, too, argues that an education for the good of the world involves the transcendence of our isolated selves and the transformation of our experience into larger, deeper meaning than our modern instrumental ways of knowing can conceive.

In closing, I hope these reflections enable us to appreciate the sublime meaning of Montessori's obscure statement: "The world was not created for us to enjoy, but we are created in order to evolve the cosmos." There are many different ways — mystical, theological, scientific, philosophical — to describe what she called the "occult command which harmonizes all and creates [a] ... better world." It does not matter so much how we label this cosmic urge for transformation; it matters greatly whether we recognize and honor it, or in our modernist arrogance think that economic success is the highest good. Which end shall education serve?

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# THE HEART OF LEARNING

*Spirituality in Education*





# Being Peace and Moral Education

Dale T. Snauwaert

**Moral and civic education can help us become aware of our essential nature and our interrelation with all living beings. By responding to others with genuine care and respect, we can help create peace in our lives and in our world.**

War and peace are basic issues pertinent to any consideration of the good of the world and an education that serves that good. Security of one's person is a basic human right; like food, it is necessary for the enjoyment of all other rights (Shue 1980). Being a basic human right, security is among the most primary of social goods the state is obligated to provide its citizens (Walzer 1997). In the twentieth century approximately 87 million people have lost their lives in war (this figure is to 1987, thus excluding the Gulf war); countless others live scarred lives as a result of its direct and indirect effects (Sivaraksa 1992). If we expand the moral sphere of war to include structural violence (social, economic, and political injustice), or conversely if we expand the definition of peace to include social justice (a conceptual movement from negative to positive peace), its deleterious effects encompass a large percentage of humanity. For example, approximately 20% of the world's population suffers from malnutrition, while 40,000, mostly children, die of starvation each day. Over a two-year period hunger is responsible for more deaths than the total number of casualties in the two World Wars (Sivaraksa 1992).

Some argue that war and injustice are inevitable elements of the human condition; others maintain that they are the result of conditions, both social and intrapsychic, that can be transformed. This paper is premised upon the belief that war and injustice are social conditions that can be transformed. The purpose of this paper is to explore the ontological foundations of an education for peace and social responsibility. This ontological perspective is captured by the often quoted statement in the preamble to the UNESCO charter:

That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.... That a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, last-

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ing, and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind. (Sivaraksa 1992, 136)

As suggested in the above quotation, moral solidarity and, hence, peace are structured in our hearts and minds, in our consciousness, in our being. As Betty Reardon maintains, peace education, while ultimately concerned with changing the structures of society, is directly focused on transforming the structures of consciousness (Reardon 1988). In keeping with this perspective, I will argue that a morality of peace must be ontologically grounded; an ethic of peace cannot be merely an abstract, formal, rational adherence to principle, but must be an expression of one's being. My argument contains the following points:

- War is grounded in *fear*. Fear creates a perpetual state of war, a perpetual state of insecurity.
- Peace is grounded in moral *respect*, defined as the treatment of the other as an end never only as a means. Respect mandates nonviolent and nonexploitive relations with the other, for violent and exploitive action fails to treat the other as an end. Such action violates the inherent dignity of the other. This dignity is based in the sacredness of life (broader than the possession of rationality); thus, respect extends to all living beings.
- Morality and peace require a movement in consciousness from the existential estrangement of the I-It relationship — the ontological structure of fear and disrespect — to the realization of the essential unity of the I-You relationship — the ontological structure of being peace.
- Objectively we exist in a state of existential separation from each other. Implicit in this separation are the tendencies to *objectify* and to *fear* the other. In existential separation the other is experienced as an object, for we are not able to meet the other's subjectivity. That is, we relate to the object as an It; we are in an I-It relationship with the object. As an It we tend to fear the other. Either we treat the other as invisible, in a sense fleeing it, or we manipulate it to serve our own ends, or we respond to the other with aggression. In all cases we *disrespect* the other. The ontological structure of disrespect can thus be con-

ceived as an I-It relationship.

- The ontological structure of respect is dialogical; it is an I-You relationship, an encounter between interdependent, interrelated subjectivities, a relationship between self-aware ends. This interdependence is referred to as Interbeing, and it is realized in the I-You relationship. In encountering the other as a subject who is interconnected with one's own subjectivity, one spontaneously is inclined to treat the other as one's self, with respect. The Golden Rule (Love your neighbor as yourself.) and the Categorical Imperative are grounded in this structure.
- The I-You relationship entails an "I" that is internally and externally wide-awake: self-aware of one's own subjectivity and one's essential subjective interdependence with the other.
- From the perspective of the above analysis, the educational task is the cultivation of a "wide-awake person" capable of responding to the other with respect. What follows from this aim is a dialogical education that mirrors the I-You structure of the moral relationship. This education entails a variety of forms of dialogue: pedagogy as a dialogical encounter, contemplative practice as internal dialogue, moral, multicultural, global understanding, and a democratically organized school.

#### War is Grounded in Fear

In his history of the Peloponnesian War the ancient Greek historian Thucydides seeks the "truest cause" of the conflict between Sparta and Athens with the intention of providing insight to future statesmen. His fundamental conclusion is: "What made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the *fear* which this caused in Sparta" (Thucydides 1951, Bk 1, Para 23). With this formulation of the truest cause of war, Thucydides founded what has become known as the "Realist" school of international relations, a tradition which flows through Machiavelli to Thomas Hobbes to such modern scholars as Hans Morganthau and Henry Kissinger. Simply put, realism posits that war is caused by an imbalance of power inciting fear, which in turn leads to preemptive attack. For the realist the interstate arena is an anarchy, a state of relations without the existence of a sovereign power to enforce

morality and law. Under the conditions of anarchy, law and morality are absent, fear and power dominate; it is a continual state of war, not that there is continuous fighting but that war is always imminent. Under the conditions of anarchy, it is rational to arm one's self out of defense. Others, however, not knowing one's intentions with certainty, will respond with an increase in arms to defend *themselves*. The result is an escalation of arms, tensions, and fears, leading to an increased probability of the outbreak of conflict. This phenomena is referred to as the "security dilemma": to defend one's self is to increase the probability of conflict; defense in order to be secure leads to insecurity (Jervis 1991). This is the nature of the state of war, an inevitable and perpetual state of insecurity under the conditions of anarchy. Under anarchy, at best, only a temporary peace can be assured through a balance of power between states, but this is always a temporary and fragile peace (Doyle 1997). The main point that I would like to emphasize, however, is Thucydides's ontological insight that war is driven by *fear*.

It can also be argued, as the history of war indicates, that *greed* is equal to fear as an ontological force driving war. Wars are fought in the pursuit of territory, resources, manpower, and political control. From this perspective, wars are a manifestation of economic exploitation based in greed. Greed is undeniably a potent force, however, if examined closely, greed is a manifestation of fear. Greed is ontologically grounded in the fear of survival. We do not covet possessions in the abstract, but to cover over, to compensate for, a deeply rooted sense of insecurity. The greedy person and nation are driven at the core by fear.

### Peace is Grounded in Moral Respect

Rejecting the realist view of anarchy and the inevitability of the state of war, in particular the premise that morality and law are absent in the international arena, and thus a lasting peace is impossible without a global sovereign, is the "liberal" school of international relations, emanating from the Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant and the "just war" tradition.

In his essay "Perpetual Peace" ([1795] 1983) Immanuel Kant argues that a state of peace can be

achieved even absent a global sovereign. He maintains that liberal republics will not go to war with each other, and thus the spread of liberal republicanism/liberal democracy will create, in the long run, the conditions for a perpetual peace between liberal nations. This peace is based upon both the structural nature of decision making in liberal republics (e.g., divided branches of government and government by

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***M****oral solidarity and peace  
are structured in our hearts  
and minds, in our consciousness,  
in our being.*

---

consent) and the cultural sharing of liberal morality, such as moral equality, commitment to nonviolent conflict resolution, and the rule of law. In the last decade this proposition has received considerable attention and a significant amount of empirical evidence seems to confirm Kant's insight (Brown et al. 1996; Doyle 1997, pt. 2; Ray 1995; Russett 1993). It seems that liberal democracies have never fought each other, although they are as war prone toward nonliberal states as any other nonliberal state. What Kant's peace proposition suggests is that a shared political morality based upon respect for the inherent dignity of humanity creates the conditions of peace.

At the core of liberal democracy is moral equality. Moral equality is given articulation by Kant's second formulation of the Categorical Imperative: "Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end" (Kant 1956, 96). Kant derives this notion from the Stoic ideal of respect for the inherent dignity of humanity contained within humankind's rationality (Nussbaum 1997a). Respect morally prohibits violence; it demands peace and justice, for any aggressive or exploitive act violates one's dignity, as we will see, by turning the victim into an object and thereby dehumanizing him.<sup>1</sup>

What is of concern here as well is the finding that liberal states are as war prone toward nonliberal states as any other state. This indicates an exclusion

of the other from the moral community. This exclusion is based upon a duality in liberalism implicit in grounding dignity in rationality. If the other is perceived as irrational, as evidenced by their cultural rejection of liberalism, then they are outside the human moral community. This dualism inhibits the complete realization of the moral ideal of cosmopolitan respect, for there is an implicit tendency to objectify the other side of the polarity. This dualism, in turn, sets up another dualism between humanity and other life forms. To avoid these dualisms the principle of respect can be grounded, not on rationality, but on life, and thereby extended to all living things, as Albert Schweitzer does with his "Reverence for Life" principle (Schweitzer 1965), and as do the Mahayana and Zen Buddhist principles of compassion and nonviolence (Abe 1995; Galtung and Ikeda 1995; Hanh 1974). The morality of respect then would read: Respect life, human and nonhuman, wherever and whenever you encounter it.

Moral respect is also at the heart of "just war" theory, which posits in its concept of *jus ad bellum* that war is *only* morally justifiable in self-defense, in response to aggression. Aggression is morally unjustifiable because it violates the other's basic rights to life and security; the crime of aggressive war is unlawful and immoral because aggression disrespects the inherent dignity of the other's humanity. This notion of the criminality of aggressive war is widely shared in the international community, although it is not always adhered to. In addition, just war theory puts forth the principle of *jus in bello*, the morality of the conduct of war which articulates the notions of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Implicit in the principle of *jus in bello* is the protection of the inherent dignity of noncombatants as well as the soldiers themselves. For example, it is unlawful and immoral to shot at an enemy soldier when he is not in an actual combat situation, or to torture him if he is captured (Elshtain 1992; Walzer 1997). These principles of just war theory have led to the internationally recognized Nuremberg Obligation, the obligation of nonparticipation in the crime of war, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.<sup>2</sup>

What becomes apparent from this discussion is that fear generates war and moral respect generates peace. In the realist scenario fear leads to the security

dilemma and thus a perpetual state of war. In the liberal and just war traditions moral equality leads to respect, and thus, a prohibition against violence (accepted in self-defense). This common moral commitment generates the conditions for a state of peace.

### Peace Requires the Realization of Existential Unity

We now turn to the ontological nature and structure of moral respect and peace, on the one hand, and the nature and structure of disrespect and violence on the other. Implicit in this ethics of peace is a conception of being that is the foundation of moral solidarity. In considering this ontology, we move from the macro level to the micro, to the level of human intersubjectivity. Peace is not only a condition between nations but one that encompasses all human interactions and relationships: Peace between nations is grounded in peace between individual human beings. The central position put forth here will be that morality and peace require a movement from the existential estrangement of relationships that objectify and exploit the other to the realization of the essential interrelationship between beings that inspires care and respect. Therefore, the following proposition is offered: *Morality and peace require a movement from the existential estrangement of the I-It relationship to the realization of the essential unity of the I-You relationship.*

### The Ontological Structure of Disrespect is Objectification

On an objective level we are individuals, and being individuated we are *existentially* separated from each other. This separation in fact defines us as individuals. However, the possibility of respecting an other suggests that we may be *essentially* united. We may exist in the situation of being existentially separated but essentially interrelated. This situation constitutes the ontological landscape of morality.

Existential separation creates the possibility of objectifying the other, and thereby excluding the other from the moral community. Such exclusion, in turn, opens the door to exploitation and violence. This is evident, for example, in war propaganda designed to dehumanize the enemy; in racial and gender-based justifications for slavery and exploitation (e.g., the Nazi "life unworthy of life policy"). It is also

evident on an ecological level in the rise of a mechanistic worldview that causes the ideological death of nature, among others. In all of these cases, the Other is turned into an It, and this objectification provides the justification, often unconscious, for exclusion, disrespect, exploitation, and violence (Fornari [1966] 1975; Miller [1983] 1990; Keen 1986; Reardon [1985] 1996).

### The Ontological Structure of Respect is Dialogical

The basic premise of the argument in the section above entitled "Peace is Grounded in Moral Respect," is that morality is constituted by respect: Humanity, and more broadly life, wherever it is encountered, demands respect. As discussed above, respect is conceived in terms of treating the other as an end. To treat another as merely a means is to objectify them, to turn them into an object, an it. Respect is treating the other as an end; disrespect is treating the other only as a means. When one treats the other as a means, one has entered into what Martin Buber refers to as an I-It relationship. By defining morality as the treatment of the other as an end, what is being suggested is that the moral relationship is based upon recognizing the other as a subject, and this recognition signifies the entrance into a relationship based upon the cognition of a primary interrelationship between subjectivities. This is what Buber refers to as an I-You (*Ich und Du*) relationship. In the I-You relationship one encounters the other's subjectivity, and in this encounter one comes to recognize a fundamental interdependence between I and You. This is an experience of "inclusion" rather than empathy (Buber [1916] 1970).

Empathy "means to transpose oneself over there and in there. Thus it means the exclusion of one's own concreteness.... Inclusion is the opposite of this" (Buber 1965, 97). In other words, empathy is the merging of one's subjectivity with another, thereby losing one's own distinction as an individual. One becomes the other and in the process loses one's self. Inclusion "is the extension of one's own concreteness, the fulfillment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates" (Buber 1965, 97). In other words, inclusion is a meeting of subjectivities wherein individual distinction is maintained; it is an I-You relation rather than a

merger of You(s) (without an I). The maintenance of the I, of individual distinction, allows one "to meet and know the other in his concrete uniqueness and not just as a content of one's experience" (Friedman 1965, xv). This suggests that inclusion is *not* conceptual but a direct apprehension of the other in-itself (the essence of conception is to make the other the symbolic content of one's mental experience). Here an I is not experiencing but encountering the other in her concrete uniqueness as a You.

The I-You inclusive encounter allows for the recognition of the other as a subject like ourselves; one recognizes one's self as interconnected with the other, as co-existing in a dialogical web of relationships. In this state in fact there is no objective other per se, only interdependent subjectivities. As Buber suggests, "we live in the currents of universal reciprocity" (Buber [1916] 1970, 67). The web of relationships is recognized in a number of ethical traditions: for example, the perennial philosophy, feminism, ecophilosophy, Whiteheadian process philosophy, Spinoza's ontological ethics, among others.<sup>3</sup> However, the clearest and most comprehensive articulation of this web, in my view, is found in Buddhism in the form of what is variously referred to as Interbeing, dependent co-origination, relational origination, symbiosis, causal origination (*pratitya-samutpada* [Sanskrit], *engi* [Japanese]). As the Zen Buddhist scholar Masao Abe describes it:

This teaching emphasizes that everything in and beyond the universe is interdependent, co-arising and co-ceasing (not only temporally, but also ontologically) with everything else. Nothing exists independently, or can be said to be self-existing. Accordingly, in Buddhism everything without exception is relative, relational, non-substantial and changeable (Abe 1995, 6).

Daisaku Ikeda puts it in similar terms:

The Buddhist concept of symbiosis, or causal origination, is founded not on individuality but on relationships and mutual dependence. Since all things originate from causation, the phenomenal world is formed on the basis of relationships. In other words, human beings, non-human nature, economics and all living things work in mutual interrelationship to create one living world. (Galtung and Ikeda 1995, 149)

This notion of relational interdependence is re-

ferred to by Thich Nhat Hahn (1974) as Interbeing.

From the perspective of Interbeing, to harm the other is to harm one's self. On the basis of the conscious realization of interdependence, nonviolence and compassion spontaneously result. As Paul Tillich suggests, "a moral act is not a act in obedience to an external law, human or divine. It is the inner law of our true being, or our essential or created nature, which demands that we actualize what follows from it."<sup>4</sup> If morality is the inner law of our own being and as such we must actualize what flows from it, and if our being is interrelated with all other beings on an essential level, then what spontaneous flows from our being should be the treatment of the other as our self. This is what Ikeda refers to as the ethos of symbiosis:

Realizing all things are connected and interlinked, the Buddhist disregards discriminatory barriers.... In terms of human society, this means a world of mutual assistance and support, a world in which all people respect all others as being endowed with fundamentally important missions. In such a world altruistic compassion, all-pervasive mutual relationships means that working for the happiness of the other person is tantamount to working for one's own happiness. (Galtung and Ikeda 1995, 31-32)

The doctrine of causal origination amounts to an ethos of symbiosis — an ethos that ought to be share by all peoples.... I defined the ethos of symbiosis as "a psychological tendency to favor harmony over opposition, unity over division, 'we' over 'I'; a belief that human beings should live together harmoniously with each other and with nature, support each other and flourish together." Only when it is seen by all to be such an ethos will the doctrine of causal origination have the power to serve effectively as a basis for global solidarity. (Galtung and Ikeda 1995, 94)

And in turn if we harm the other, then in doing harm we are harmed. As Tillich suggests: "he who turns a human being (in the psychophysical sense) into a mere object suffers distortion of his own personal center.... They all become depersonalized themselves ... the circle in principle includes all human beings" (1995, 38). Morality thus entails the realization of the ontological existence of an interdependent web of relationships. On a subjective level we are interrelated, and a realization of this reality leads

to such moral responses as respect, care, compassion, nonviolence, and love.

### Self-Realization is Necessary for I-You Relations and Respect

The I in the I-You relationship is fundamentally different than the I in the I-It. This difference is key for understanding moral education, for understanding how to cultivate an I capable of entering into and sustaining I-You relationships. Buber maintains that our development as a human species began with a "natural association" of I-You and has evolved into a "spiritual association" (Buber [1916] 1970, 73-77). This evolution of the species mirrors the developmental pattern of the individual. In a natural association one has an unformed, undifferentiated relation to You. One is merged with the You without the distinction of I. This state is reflected in individual development as an infantile oceanic state of unity. What is required for (and what constitutes) growth is differentiation, a forming of an I distinct from the You. The formation of I, entailing a detachment of the I from the You, results in the formation of It and thus the loss of You. This is the development of an ego, which begins with the onset of language and culminates in late adolescence/early adulthood. The egoic I entails a setting apart and thus the creation of a representational It-world. The I has emerged as a carrier of sensations and the environment as their object, erecting "the crucial barrier between subject and object" (Buber [1916] 1970, 74), thereby dissolving the natural association. This dissolution is a necessary stage of development, a necessary separation which allows for the possibility of a reunification with the You without the loss of self, an individuated reunification, a relationship. Only with an I can the possibility of relationship come into existence (without an I there is merger not relationship), and the initial formation of an I entails the formation of It. Thus, we reclaim the You through the It, and this reclamation is a developmental process. Thus the I in the I-It is an ego-self, an identity based in socially constructed concepts of self.

The I in the I-You is not egoic per se, not a self-concept, but a subjectivity conscious of itself as a subject. As Buber suggests: "The person beholds his self; the ego occupies himself with his my: my man-

ner, my race, my works..." (Buber [1916] 1970, 114). The mental ego cannot apprehend a You; its function is to translate and order the world into conceptual representations; its function is to "make sense" of the world and in this process it creates an I-It relationship to the world. The I as self-conscious subjectivity, however, does not attempt to make sense of the world but it "meets" and "encounters" the world. Possessing subjective self-consciousness, one is able to meet the other with complete wholeness and openness, allowing the other her subjectivity.

This encounter is made possible by the maintenance of the I as a self-conscious subjectivity, in the sense that only a self-conscious subject can meet a subject. It is only in self-consciousness that we can be authentically *Present* to another and only in Presence is the You revealed. Encountering the You is not a setting apart but a relation, and only subjects can relate. The emergence of an object will negate the possibility of relationship; it introduces an It that creates separation, not relation. As Buber suggests, "The man who has acquired an I and says I-It assumes a position before things but does not confront them in the current of reciprocity" (Buber [1916] 1970, 80). Relationship is a spiritual association, a communion, a meeting, and an encounter of subjects in relation. However, to have a relationship, distinction of self must be maintained as well, for if distinction is lost there is merger and hence the loss of relationship. Thus, the I-You relationship must entail self-conscious intersubjectivity. This is the only way that the You can be encountered. The I in the I-You therefore constitutes a state of Self-realization — conscious of, awake to, one's subjectivity and thus capable of being awake to and responsive to the subjectivity of the other. Self-realization in this sense is the basis of the realization of Interbeing; they are interconnected and thus both are foundational to moral responsibility.

I emphasize *realization* as the epistemological component of the moral relationship, for on an ontological level the unity of Interbeing already exists. Morality demands the realization, the becoming aware of, of this unity. This awareness is not a conceptual knowing; it is direct, immediate, ontological. The Socratic principle that knowledge is virtue points in this direction. Socrates is not saying that if one has a formal, conceptual understanding of moral principle

that one will always act justly. Socrates knew, as we do, that passion (broadly defined) repeatedly overwhelms what we think we should do. However, what Socrates is suggesting is that knowledge is ontologically participatory. To know the good is to participate in it and thus to be and do good. This transconceptual, ontological knowing is based in awareness, not thinking.

At the end of his influential essay *The Aims of Education* Alfred North Whitehead, makes the following claim:

We can be content with no less than the old summary of the educational ideal which has been current at any time from the dawn of our civilization. The essence of education is that it be religious.... A religious education is an education which inculcates duty and reverence. Duty arises from our potential control over the course of events.... And the foundation of reverence is this perception, that the present holds within itself the complete sum of existence, backwards and forwards, that whole amplitude of time, which is eternity. (Whitehead [1929] 1967, 14)

Reverence for Whitehead is conceived as Presence, being awake to the eternal moment, the eternal Now. Time is relative, and in being relative it is constituted by our experience of it. When we awaken to the depth of our subjectivity the march of time stops, and all there is the present as a function of our being Present. As Buber suggests "The present ... exists only in so far as presentness, encounter and relation exist. Only as the You becomes present does presence come into being" (Buber [1916] 1970, 63). The I of the I-It relation only has a past; the I is not aware of the present, is caught in the conceptual mind which deals with objects which can only be experienced as past, and therefore the I of the I-It does not live in Presence. (Buber [1916] 1970, 64). The I of I-You relation is capable of Presence, and this Presence is the foundation of our moral capacity, our capacity to respond to others.

Building upon Henry David Thoreau's insight that "moral reform is the effort to throw off sleep," "to reawaken and keep ourselves awake," Maxine Greene maintains that "wide-awakeness" is the root of moral agency (Greene 1978): Being awake means attentiveness and sensitivity to the Other and the

World; it is a state of being conscious in the present which enables one to respond as an individual free from the habitual and mechanical. The capacity to respond forms the core of moral agency, for the latter entails, in principle, choice and action in terms of internalized ideals and principles that have been reflected upon and freely chosen. It also entails the capacity to attune to the present situation in as much complexity as possible. This attunement is the basis of the ability to respond.

Greene understands wide-awakeness in terms of self-knowledge, as having an independently formed self-concept. This kind of presence is certainly an important level of awareness. However, Whitehead, Buber, Tillich, and Buddhism point us to a deeper level, a transconceptual, transrational level of awakeness. Greene suggests being awake in the external world. Whitehead and others point us to an inner wakefulness as the basis of being awake in and responding to the external world. Becoming aware of, awake to, our self as a subject entails awareness of intersubjectivity and vice versa. Presence breeds life into moral principle, allowing us to respond, not out of some abstract duty or moral law, but out of enlightened inclination. The source of goodness, the source of our capacity to morally respond to others, is self-realization, being awake to our subjectivity as Interbeing.

As we end this section, we can conclude that the moral relationship entails both internal and external dialogue: *internally* in realization of self as a subject conscious of itself as a subject, and *externally* in dialogical encounter with the "other" not as an "other" per se but as an interrelated subject. Both are interconnected; they constitute the internal and external dimensions of wide-awakeness.<sup>5</sup>

### **An Education for Wide-Awakeness is Dialogical**

There are a number of educational implications that follow from the above analysis. Although I believe that a complete, systematic philosophy of moral education can be derived from the ontological, epistemological, and ethical premises of the above perspective, such a project is well beyond the scope of this short paper. However, a number of implications can be discussed that constitute elements of a systematic philosophy.

### **The Fundamental Aim of Education as Self-Realization**

As discussed above, morality is founded upon the structure of the I-You relationship, which entails an I as a subject aware of its own subjectivity. This self-awareness as a subject opens to the encounter of the other as a subject, as a subjectivity interrelated with one's own subjectivity in the form of the I-You relationship. It opens to the reality of Interbeing. The deeper one's self-awareness, the greater one's consciousness of one's interconnection with others. It is a state of being wide awake internally and externally, to one self and others. If morality as respect is based in the I-You relationship, and if the I-You is contingent upon the awareness of self as a subjectivity, then the aim of moral education would be the cultivation of this awareness. The various means to the fulfillment of this aim are dialogical. Self-awareness is cultivated dialogically, in both internal and external forms. Thus, the following pedagogical, curricular and organizational structures constitute various dimensions of a dialogical education (as forms of dialogue), and in that they mirror the structure of the moral relationship itself.

### **Pedagogy as a Dialogical Encounter**

For Buber (1965, 106) what defines the educator is her being conscious that she presents to the student "a certain selection of what is, the selection of what is 'right,' of what should be." The educator by the quality of her being and presence presents a version of the world to the student. In modern conceptions of liberal education this constitutes a presentation of the It-world and its deconstruction. Thus, many students experience education as dead, irrelevant, not real or what Whitehead ([1929] 1967) refers to as "inert ideas." They often speak of the "real world" in contrast to the inert It-world of education. In contrast to this inertness a living situation "demands presence, responsibility; it demands You" (Buber 1965, 106). By entering into an I-You relationship with students, by meeting them as subjectivities, an actual, alive world is opened to them. Being alive is contingent upon having subjectivity. Death and being dead is the loss of the subjective dimension, the turning into or being inanimate, not animated by subjectivity, no longer being real.



By meeting the student as a You what Buber calls "confidence" emerges. "Confidence means the liberating insight that there is human truth, the truth of human existence .... [H]e accepts the educator as a person. He feels he can trust this man ... and so he learns to *ask* (Buber 1965, 106)." Asking is an active, alive searching; it begins a dialogical relation which is the essence of authentic education. By entering into an I-You relationship provided by the teacher the student feels seen for herself as a unique, worthy, real subjectivity. She then begins to recognize the possibility of a different world, the You-world as embodied by the teacher. As Buber ([1916]/1970, 78) suggests, "In the relationships through which we live, the innate You is realized in the You we encounter." Being opened to her own You and the possibility of a You-world she becomes ready for an encounter, a meeting: She begins to ask. In the act of questioning grounded in the confidence of the I-You relationship provided by the teacher, the It of representational knowledge is transformed into a living encounter. The student can now enter into a relationship with the subject matter as living expressions of her encounter with the world. Through this dialogical process the student experiences what it feels like to be treated as a You, a subject, an end, and through this experience of subjectivity the capacity for inclusion begins to unfold.

### Contemplative Practice

As a means of internal dialogue, as a way to the realization of one's self as a subject awake to its own subjectivity as Interbeing, all of the Wisdom traditions of the world posit some form of contemplative practice. Contemplative practice can be defined in general as a method of becoming aware of the interiority of one's subjectivity through a process of mindfulness. Mindfulness entails both critical self-examination on a psychological level as well as opening to an intuitive apprehension of one's own being. The former includes what Carl Jung refers to as the "shadow"; repressed, unconscious parts of our that we have rejected and split off, but which live on and have powerful influences on our consciousness and behavior. (See Reardon [1985] 1996.) I believe contemplative practice is the forgotten dimension of education. (See Miller 1994.)

### Importance of Understanding Moral Commands and Laws

Prior to (or absent) the achievement of moral respect as an expression of enlightened inclination is the necessity of external rules (laws). Moral command is only a command when it is not an expression of one's own being. However, in an educational setting (and in society at large) external rules are not only necessitated by the immaturity of the students but can also be seen as important sources of moral education. Rules provide necessary boundaries, guides, and standards for one's behavior, including the treatment of others. They are educational, however, if and only if the student understands their meaning as moral guides. Understanding is necessary for the realization of the rule as centered in one's own being. As Paul Tillich suggests,

First, it is necessary to distinguish between demands based on authority and demands based on rationality...; it makes a great difference to the child, if he can understand a parental order as adequate to the situation, or if he feels it as a mere exercise of incomprehensible authority. In either case the child may resist. But in the first, the resistance is not rebellious; it is a primitive form of self-affirmation, weakened by a subconscious acknowledgment that the order was justified. Then the essential nature of the child is partly united with the content of the command, and to the degree to which it is united, the order proves not to be a strange law imposed by adult authority, but an expression of the demand of a practical situation, such as the necessary regulation of hours at home and in school. Therefore, it is of great importance to the educational process to help the child to understand the objective validity of the orders he receives (Tillich 1995, 50-51).

Understanding the meaning of and the reason for the moral rule is a gateway to the realization of the rules as an expression of one's subjectivity. Understanding the meaning of the rule is dialogical in that one does not blindly accept the rule on its face value, but one has encountered it, explored and accepted its meaning and validity as a moral guide. Such an understanding has a critical dimension to it, for it entails the critical questioning of authority. In addition, students should acquire a deep understanding of the

ethical frameworks and laws of not only their own communities and nations, but the international community as well. Students should dialogically encounter the moral and legal principles of their schools, their communities, their nations, and the international community.

Through the encouragement and cultivation of understanding, the apparent duality between rational, principled judgment and enlightened inclination is bridged. Enlightened moral inclination based in wide-awakeness is not irrational per se; it is transrational, meaning that it transcends but includes rationality (Wilber 1995). Moral inclination is aided by rationality, and rational judgment is given moral potency through wide-awakeness.

### Cosmopolitan Multiculturalism

We live in a culturally diverse, globally interdependent world. In this world we are exposed to people who are different from us, perhaps so different that there may be a tendency to objectify them and exclude them from the moral community. A part of a moral education based upon I-You relations with the other, therefore, is understanding the diverse other. In our world this entails multicultural understanding, and this understanding, like moral understanding, is dialogical, in that it entails an encounter with the diversity of cultures. What appears to be the dominant justification for and conception of multiculturalism is the politics of identity. (See Taylor 1994.) This position maintains that one has a right to cultural recognition based upon the acknowledgement of the dialogical formation of one's identity. From this perspective, identity is inseparable from one's culture, and therefore cultural recognition follows from moral equality. However, the politics of identity only justifies exposure to one's own cultural heritage and not to others. This is a monocultural approach, which does not foster understanding of the other, only one's own heritage. While understanding one's own culture is important for healthy identity, this approach leaves one ignorant of the other. The understanding of dialogical identity here must be expanded to include the diversity of others. It must be both internal and external. This would render multiculturalism cosmopolitan and expose the student to a variety of cultural formations in order to increase

one's understanding and thereby one's relationship to the other (Nussbaum 1997b). This approach would also entail an understanding of the international community as a global civic culture: its laws, customs, politics, economics, and ethics (Boulding 1988).

### School as a Dialogical Community

The school is a community, and, being a community premised upon moral respect, it should mirror the structure of the moral relationship. As we have discussed, this structure is dialogical. We should work to make the school a community within which the I-You structure of the moral relationship is the foundation of the organization of classrooms and schools. This speaks to the powerful influence of the social climate on the character of the student. This would entail a school which is democratically organized: open, egalitarian, tolerant, respectful, and critical. It should be a place where dialogue and open inquiry are alive, and where participation in the decision-making processes of the school is robust as a means of human development. (See Snauwaert 1993.)

### Conclusion

Among the questions and issues that are left unresolved are the following:

- The distinction and relationship between personal and collective morality and peace needs to be developed. Do the same principles and structure of morality apply to both levels? What is the relationship between the individual and the collective?
- The existence of the real threat of harm: when an I treats you as an It and intends and/or attempts to harm you, what is the proper moral response? Turn the other cheek? Self-defense? Nonviolent resistant? What should a nation do in the face of an external aggressor? Does Just War theory offer the best answer or the nonviolent tradition?
- What is the relationship between rationality and wide-awakeness? What place does rational moral judgment have in an ontological ethics of enlightened inclination?
- What is the relationship between morality and politics? Does morality always take preference over the pursuit of self-interest?

- The influence of the “shadow” in moral behavior and the importance of making it conscious for being capable of respect.
- Pedagogically, how does the conception of moral education outlined above relate to current concepts of civic and moral education?
- Is there any relationship between a dialogic pedagogy and Whitehead’s notion of the rhythm of education? These questions, among others, reveal the preliminary nature of this paper and highlight the need for the further development. However, in spite of its incompleteness, I believe that this paper points us toward a conception of morality and peace that is grounded in being, and therefore, toward the dialogical nature of morality, peace, and a pedagogy of peace.

In conclusion, war and peace are moral issues. Peace pertains to the nonviolent coexistence of just communities and war and injustice constitute the disruption of this peace. The perspective of this paper is that war and peace are deeply rooted in our being and thereby in our relationships. We relate to other living beings in terms of the depth and degree of our self-awareness. If we are awake to our essential nature, then we are aware of our interrelatedness with all living beings, and thus we can only respond to them with respect. Peace education as moral education, and moral education as peace education, must attempt to cultivate this self-awareness, this internal and external wide-awakeness, through a variety of dialogical practices and forms of organization, so that future generations can enjoy their being as peace and peace as being.

### Notes

1. It should be noted that my conception of “respect” is multidimensional, including respect and care as complementary. See Snauwaert (1996).

2. For a more detailed discussion see Snauwaert (1995).

3. For a discussion see Ken Wilber (1995); Mark B. Woodhouse, (1996), pp 205-249.

4. See Paul Tillich (1995, 20). It should be noted in relation to our discussion of Kant in Part One that Kant is generally taken as the paradigm example of rule-based ethics, an ethics that favors duty over inclination and universal principle over situational particularity. Kant is interpreted as maintaining a formal conception of moral principle, implying its externality to the moral agent. However, Kant is clear that the moral law exists *within* the moral agent. He is interested in cultivating the good will whose goodness is adherence to moral law. This adherence constitutes duty. But if duty is adherence to the moral law, and if the law exists within, then duty is adherence to the dictates of one’s own being; duty is thus an expression of one’s own being. Kant

thus makes an important subjective turn away from external moral commands.

5. The above understanding of morality is appealing because it conserves the virtues of rule-based and agent-based ethics while transcending the fundamental either/or dualisms existing between them, offering a more dynamic and comprehensive understanding of the moral relationship. Transcendence here refers to the process of unification of duality that preserves distinction. It is the Buddhist Middle Way, which does not mean choosing what is between polarities but is the transcendence of the duality itself. There are four fundamental dualisms that are unified by the above approach:

- In the I-You moral encounter the self-other, subject-object duality is transcended. There is no longer an other per se. Yet this is not a merger wherein the self is lost but a dialogical encounter wherein individuality is maintained in the context of interbeing.
- The duality between duty and inclination is transcended, in that in the I-You relationship one acts out of inclination and in so doing one acts out of duty. Duty is inclination; inclination is duty.
- The duality between universality and particularity is also transcended. The form of morality is universal: respect life! The structure of morality is particular in that each dialogical encounter is unique. Thus, the expression of the universal form of morality varies according to the particularity of the moral encounter.
- The duality between rule-based and agent-based ethics is transcended. If duty is internal to the agent, then it becomes an expression of the agent’s being; rules become agent-based, and thus the rule-based/agent-based opposition is solved in favor of a unification that preserves their distinction.

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# A Postmodern Perspective on Education and Spirituality

## Hearing Many Voices

Aostre N. Johnson

**A “postmodern” approach, characterized by an emphasis on a multiplicity of subjectively based perspectives, is useful in framing an inquiry into the topic of spirituality and education.**

Rob, a public high school English teacher, assigned his AP English students an unusual project: He gave them three weeks to ponder “the meaning of life” and then to present their reflections to the class utilizing a creative medium. The results were impressive: presentations included musical compositions, poetry, short stories, plays, dances, paintings, sculptures, and quilts. Students reported being extremely absorbed in the project and emotionally moved by the heartfelt expressions of their classmates. I believe that Rob is offering his students several of many possible approaches to a spiritual education, whether or not he labels it in that way.

This paper offers a “postmodern” inquiry into diverse perspectives on spirituality and education. Rather than attempting a proscriptive definition of spirituality and its relationship to education, I allow diverse voices — of practicing teachers and from the literature — to speak for themselves. This results in a variety of viewpoints on educating the spirit, many of which may be appropriate for public schools. While I briefly explore constructivist postmodern philosophy in terms of its theoretical support for this research methodology, I emphasize the results of the inquiry.

### **Spirituality and Education: The Historical Context**

While “spiritual” has many possible definitions (which this paper will explore), all tend to refer to some “expanded” aspect of human possibility, whether this is seen as an actual, nonmaterial essence or as qualities of being, such as vitality, authenticity, courage, compassion, or hope. For most of human history, spirit was understood as a literal and integral aspect of all of life; until the modern era, it

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would have been impossible to imagine educational activities which were not also spiritual or religious. Premodern consciousness is often characterized as *participatory*, experienced as a unity of body, mind, and spirit with the outer world. With the shift towards modernity, consciousness became more divided, moving towards a separation of self from world, mind from body, and spirit from the realities of everyday life, including educational institutions. As objectivist rationality, based on scientific reductionism and materialism, emerged as the dominant legitimized worldview, the "spiritual" realm was denigrated and relegated to a separate religious category.

Historically, the attempt to exclude religious belief from American public education has been contentious, but for the most part, religious perspectives have been increasingly silenced or marginalized in this century. Both the formal separation of church and state and the exclusion of spiritual perspectives from modernist psychological theories underlying current models of schooling have intensified the attempted ban on all things spiritual from contemporary public schools. Yet, all educators hold differing beliefs and assumptions about spirit — or its absence. Many do believe in a reality which cannot be understood through materialistic science and/or the intellect alone. Acknowledged or not, these are implicitly present in schools, becoming an aspect of the "hidden" curriculum.

However, the current groundswelling of public interest in spiritual and religious perspectives, as well as the challenges to modernism by postmodern perspectives, are influencing educational conversations, leading to the possibility of making the hidden spiritual curriculum more explicit. One sign of the shift is the visible pressure by conservative Christian organizations exerted on many public schools to incorporate their perspectives. Another is the increasing numbers of publications on topics relating to religion, spirituality, and education. A third is the growing acceptance of conversations about spirituality in academics circles. For example, at a September 1998 national higher education conference on spirituality and education, "Education as Transformation," held at Wellesley College, many educators spoke of their sense of "coming out of the closet" in terms of feeling

legitimized to discuss the topic publicly.

Any widespread endeavor to "re-spirit" the curriculum is, of course, fraught with both dangers and opportunities. The role of religious education in history is not merely beneficial or benign; the distancing of modern educational institutions from their historic spiritual and religious origins is the result of both the ascendance of a mechanistic scientific worldview *and* democratic ideals based on the necessity for a public educational system free of a dominant religious ideology. Obviously those who attempt to include spiritual perspectives in educational conversations must keep a wary eye on the potential for repressive, silencing forces.

The issues surrounding dominant ideologies become much more complex in light of several contemporary phenomena. The 1965 immigration act allowed many people from Asia and the middle East into the United States, leading to a sharp growth in numbers of people practicing the Buddhist, Hindu, and Moslem religions; it is problematic to continue to characterize this country as Judeo-Christian. In addition to the increasing diversity of established religious traditions, a growing number of Americans seek spirituality outside of these religions, either individually or in less mainstream, emerging, non-dominant groups. Finally, at least some of these who talk about spirituality think of this concept in a more metaphoric than deistic sense; they do not believe in the actuality of a God or a spiritual realm but use the word symbolically to refer to human values, such as greater peace, justice, love, or compassion.

### Postmodern Perspectives

It is clear that any inclusive discussions about "educating spirit" will necessarily be complicated by numerous, varied, and often conflicting strongly held beliefs about spirituality and religion. How do we navigate this unexplored postmodern territory, steering clear of both the sterility of expurgated modernist perspectives and the restrictive dogmatism of traditional religious views, allowing for all voices to be heard? While certain aspects of the academic "postmodern project" provide valuable openings for this diversity, others have contributed to the repression of spiritual dimensions, most notably deconstructive postmodern philosophy which "de-

constructs or eliminates the ingredients necessary for a worldview, such as God, self, purpose, meaning..." (Griffin 1989, x).

Overall, postmodern theory challenges modernism's dependence on objectivist rationality, overturning the very idea of an ultimate reality, by recognizing that "reality" is constructed through discourse and experience in a particular social context in which the dominant cultural power controls the definition of that which is understood to be real. The grand narratives of both science and religions are themselves discourses defined as *truth*. A loosening of the monopoly of these metanarratives challenges mechanistic scientific and dogmatic religious worldviews, allowing for more varying perspectives, including those that validate personal, subjective, and qualitative dimensions of experience. This creates a possibility for the emergence of a diversity of spiritual and religious views on development and education.

However, taken to an extreme, deconstructive postmodern theories have thrown out spirit along with religious dogmatism, positing no reality beyond socially and culturally constructed experience encoded in symbols, resulting in a world of multiple representations, none of which is more "real" than any other. Since many religious or spiritual perspectives are based on a claim for some sort of ultimate or divine reality, in this sense, postmodernism has extended modernism's bias against them.

How are we to resolve this dilemma, making room for religious or spiritual beliefs that retain some sense of "ultimate reality" without minimizing the socially constructed aspects of all such claims to truth? One approach is philosophical and while not the primary emphasis of this particular study, I do find support for my research in constructivist postmodern perspectives, such as David Griffin's SUNY Press series on constructive postmodernism (1989; 1993) and Doll's (1993) application of constructivist postmodernism to curriculum theory. These seek to overcome dichotomies between secular and sacred, objectification and participation, and fragmentation and connection by positing a worldview that includes scientific rationality as well as socially constructed ideologies within the larger context of a nonreductionist naturalistic theism. Griffin (1993) lo-

cates the origins of constructivist postmodernism in the ideas of several philosophers, particularly the work of Alfred North Whitehead.

Constructivist postmodernism rejects two fundamental beliefs of modernism: an ontology based on a materialistic understanding of nature, and an epistemology limited to sensory perception. It places primary emphasis on *experience* in both ontology and epistemology. While modernist epistemologies ground all experience in sensory perception, constructivist postmodernism also allows for experience arising from nonsensory perceptions, asserting that sensory perceptions occur in the context of "a presensory, prelinguistic, preconscious apprehension of reality" (Griffin 1993, 27). And rather than seeing nature as devoid of experience, constructivist postmodernism posits that all of nature has the potential for experience and for some aspect of self-organization. This view of matter is supported by scientific theories such as quantum physics, Prigogine's (1980) chaos theory, the cognitive biology of Maturana and Varela (1980) and the Lovelock's (1979) Gaian hypothesis. Thus, constructive postmodernism allows for the possibility of nonmediated spiritual or religious experience of a living world, highlighting the active relationship between subjectivity and objectivity, without denying the actuality or epistemological validity of sensory experience, rationality, and social construction.

### A Postmodern Inquiry

Perhaps the dominant characteristic of all varieties of postmodernism is their insistence on a multiplicity of many-layered, experiential, subjectively based perspectives — and this is the characteristic I find most useful in framing my current inquiry into multiple perspectives on spirituality and education. I employ a methodology based on the concept of multiple experiences and use narrative methods to actively seek a diversity of views about the nature of spirituality and its relationship to education, with the goal of generating a broad, cultural narrative. These views include those that assume some idea of "ultimate reality" in connection with spirituality as well as those that understand spirituality more metaphorically, emphasizing its relative, socially constructed nature.

From this perspective, I am exploring the multiple ways in which *spirituality* is currently understood and practiced in relationship to education. My sources are a variety of voices from both the current literature and practicing school-based educators. For the last several years, I have been asking K-12 educators to write about their personal definitions and understandings of *spirituality* and about how these understandings impact their teaching and learning environments. As I study both the literature and approximately 80 educator responses, I am impressed by their variety. However, distinct categories have emerged, and thus far I have found the following eight most useful in characterizing diverse approaches to spirituality and education. Although I present these categories as separate, they can also be seen as intertwining, and while some educators embrace a single perspective, others hold most or all of them.

### Eight Perspectives on Spirituality and Education

#### Spirituality as Religion

This category includes several very different approaches to understanding spirituality as religion, but what all have in common is their insistence that the search for spirituality is most valid inside of established historical and communal religious traditions. Thus religion would be the *foundation* of these definitions of spirituality. Eck (1993) discusses exclusivism, inclusivism, and pluralism as three responses to religious diversity. Exclusivism elevates one religion as *the* truth whereas inclusivism recognizes the partial truth of other religions, but sees one as the best, the culmination, or the most comprehensive. Pluralism, on the other hand, celebrates one particular tradition, but understands it as one of many valid representations of reality or truth: "If we are pluralists, we recognize the limits of the world we already know and we seek to understand others in their own terms, not just ours" (Eck 1993, p. 169).

In terms of education, an exclusivist religious definition often culminates in segregation into private religiously based schools, bypassing the necessity for a postmodern dialog. Or it might mean insisting that particular religious views be incorporated into school curriculums along with secular ones, such as creationist evolution with Darwinian evolution. But

it also could result in an immersion in one's own particular religious tradition, bringing all the fruits of this to bear on one's own teaching — silently if in a public school situation, or explicitly in the context of a private religious school. One teacher clearly expresses this: "Spirituality for me is the reality that my Lord Jesus lives through me. He is ever present in everything I do, knows my weaknesses and strengths, and seeks to guide me when I invite him to. What this means for me as a teacher is that I must strive to live my daily life — my teaching life — so that the light of Christ shows in my actions." I believe that this quotation illustrates that even an inclusivist religious perspective can exist harmoniously in public spheres.

More inclusive and/or pluralistic religious approaches to spirituality emphasize the history, significant influences, and inquiry methods of the various world religions as a valid curricular area. As Noddings (1993, xv) states: "There is nothing in the establishment clause of the first amendment that prevents classroom instruction *about* religion. Further, so long as our presentations are balanced, I see no legal reason why various religious claims and critiques cannot be discussed in all their richness."

#### Spirituality as Meaning Making

When Noddings (1993) suggests incorporating religious claims and critiques in the curriculum, she encompasses those who define spirituality more in terms of meaning making than religion. While religions have asked the "big questions" about life, so have philosophers and most peoples throughout history. Seeking the meaning and purpose of life is a human tendency spanning cultures and the lifespan; perhaps it is the tendency, which most clearly distinguishes us from other species. Coles (1992) notes "how young we are when we start wondering about it all, the nature of the journey and the final destination" (p. 335). Gardner (1997) speaks of the capacity to ask and pose answers to profound questions about existence as a possible ninth intelligence in his multiple intelligence theory, a capacity, which he terms *existential*.

Curricula based on this definition will include significant, enduring human questions and concerns, and examples of these can be drawn from any disci-



pline; in fact, discipline-based knowledge can be presented as diverse approaches to meaning-making. But students can also be invited to explore in depth their questions about themselves, the world around them, and the nature of life itself. As one educator in my study put it: "My spiritual search is my search for the meaning of life, in whatever form that takes. Often it involves more questions than answers. If I can encourage my children to keep asking questions, then I feel that I am furthering their spirituality."

### Spirituality as Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is the ability to look deeply into ourselves, to understand our own motives and emotions, to reflect on our lives, and to set and monitor our life goals. While this perspective on spirituality clearly overlaps with our meaning-making capacity, here the focus is more inner-directed, on personal meaning and life purpose, rather than outer-directed, on existential questions about the meaning of life. Some forms of contemplative spiritual practice, both deistic and nondeistic in nature, emphasize self-reflection and insight into the nature of one's life. The purpose of this practice is not only to achieve greater personal satisfaction, but also to allow our self-understanding to inform our understanding of others.

Clearly effective educators are engaged in continual self-reflection. Maria Montessori (1966), who wrote a great deal about spirituality, insisted that "a teacher must prepare himself interiorly by systematically studying himself so that he can tear out his most deeply rooted defects, those which impede his relationships with children" (p. 182). The educator's self-reflection continually connects her with a sense of her own life aspirations, including her reasons for choosing her educational career. Being conscious of her own life purpose can help her to assist her students in discovering and realizing their own sense of personal mission. A teacher describes it this way:

Spirituality is our connection to a greater purpose beyond ourselves that is hidden in ourselves. Spiritual education, then, is helping learners to understand themselves and to find their own purpose, and to follow that "bliss," chase that star, become who they were meant to be.

This self-reflective quality can be developed in

students as they make significant choices about their own learning, reflect on its aims and direction, and assess it critically and thoughtfully. A self-reflective capacity is supported by an intellectually challenging environment that allows for solitude, silence, and intensive but relaxed concentration.

### Spirituality as Mystical Knowing

Mystical definitions of spirituality would place self-reflection in the context of a greater Self, understood as the ground of all being. Thus meditative practices allow us to access the realm of spirit through our inner selves. Spirit is seen as a "real" energy, not fully recognized by science but known to mystics throughout history and across religions. Mystical knowing is often described as simultaneously intuitive, emotional, and cognitive — seeming to surround ordinary rational knowing, contrasting with it but not invalidating it. Mystical knowing affirms a vast and profound "unseen" reality behind the seen, a state in which all things are connected, rather than separate.

A teacher's engagement in a meditative practice may make her feel more centered and energized, allowing her to be more fully present to her students, which affects every aspect of the way she teaches. Educators who have a fundamentally mystical view of spirituality often talk about the significance of being in close contact with this realm. One teacher comments:

Spirituality is a connection with, belief in, reliance on, an all encompassing power or light or being or energy. As a teacher it is important for me to stay connected with this energy and to try to recognize and honor it in my students, even if I can't directly teach about it.

When appropriate, students could be exposed to "mystical theories" and encouraged to engage in meditative practices from diverse traditions, although these methods would clearly be controversial in many contexts. But even an unstated belief in the spiritual nature of human beings can profoundly influence adults' perceptions of children: Imagine the effect of seeing each student as a potential Buddha or Mother Theresa! Overall, the positing of a "mystical consciousness" leads to a revisioning of developmental psychology as well as a rethinking of the goals and methods of education, especially in the

context of the current obsession with measurement and competition.

### Spirituality as Emotion

Although mystical views include emotion, they are not grounded in emotion but rather in an "unseen world." Those who characterize spirituality as emotion emphasize the role emotions play in both knowledge and wisdom, in keeping with current theories about the brain which stress the emotional basis of all thinking. Parker Palmer's perspectives on spirituality and education cannot be contained in any one category, but he is often eloquent spokesperson for the significance of emotions: "The failure of modern knowledge is ... the failure of our knowing itself to recognize and reach for its deeper source and passion, to allow love to inform the relations that our knowledge creates — with ourselves, with each other, and with the whole animate and inanimate world" (Palmer 1993, p. 9). A educator in my study also speaks in a powerful voice: "Spirituality is a sense of wonder, awe, appreciation, and love for our universe and all creatures in it. It infuses my teaching with an excitement for learning, for exploring, for sharing, and for encouraging these emotions in my students." Of course, the emotions also include pain and despair and anger, which deliver important messages about our relationships and ourselves. This perspective includes embracing what some call our "shadow side," bringing to consciousness and learning from the more negative, difficult, sometimes suppressed emotions.

"Spirituality as emotion" can utilize the great literature of humanity, including mythology from various cultures and religions, which contains wise and powerful lessons about emotions. Other educational approaches include the importance of grounding learning in each student's emotionally based interests; the critical role of the teacher's emotional relationship with both subject matter and students; the necessity for recognizing students' emotions and the "emotional climate" of the classroom; and the imperative to educate students directly about their own emotional expression and control.

### Spirituality as Morality

Morality has many complex and differing definitions, but focuses on the principles, ideas, rules, and

emotions governing how human beings should relate to each other and the world. Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) both contrast masculine and feminine approaches to morality, in terms of those primarily concerned with justice based on intellectual principles and rules *versus* those primarily concerned with caring, in the context of personal, concrete situations and emotions. These varying approaches may emphasize differing values, such as greater justice, peace, caring, or community.

This category obviously overlaps with several others. While emotions and self-reflection may fuel moral beliefs and actions, they are clearly not synonymous with them. Religions include moral principles, but they go beyond them. And although a mystical sense of connection to all beings may lead to moral action, that would arise secondarily, as a result of the more primary mystical experience. Those who understand spirituality as morality often use the word *spiritual* metaphorically and are focused on moral living, as is apparent in the words of this teacher:

Spirituality is the way I approach the world with my moral judgment and values. It is who I am and how I relate to my world. Organized religion has little to do with it. In terms of my teaching, my spirituality is apparent in my every action, how I treat myself and others, the kind of moral climate that I create in my classroom.

Current media is filled with bad news about the breakdown of morality in society and prophetic voices, which demand social change and educational intervention. One of these, David Purpel (1989) proposes an "Educational Credo" which calls for (among other ideals) "the cultivation, nourishment and development of ... a cultural mythos that builds on a faith in the human capacity to participate in the creation of a world of justice, compassion, caring, love, and joy ... the ideals of community, compassion, and interdependence within the traditions of democratic principles... (p. 117).

There are many possible educational approaches to moral education. They include an emphasis on underlying ethical issues and dilemmas while teaching all disciplines; curriculum highlighting heroic moral figures and movements in history and contemporary

society; a direct focus and explicit teachings on morals and values; frequent student discussion of the moral dilemmas of life; an emphasis on respect for differences, including the understanding and valuing of cultural difference; the development of "democratic communities" that encourage student participation in the relevant moral dilemmas of their everyday lives; and student involvement in service projects which impact local and global moral concerns. In addition, educators themselves can become powerful role models for their students.

### Spirituality as Ecology

An increasing number of scientific voices call for an understanding of the holistic interconnectedness of living systems, sometimes referred to as a "systems" theory — and one approach to spirituality emerges from this view. These ecological perspectives honor both the physical, "embodied" nature of spirit and the connected, interdependent, relational nature of the earth/universe. This understanding of spirituality may be in sympathy with mystical views of interconnectedness, but it is grounded in scientific theory. The moral repercussions of this perspective are immediately obvious as we examine the effects of the combination of mechanistic science and capitalistic economic systems on the earth. In fact, Orr (1992) suggests that ecology could be reduced to yet another technocratic bureaucracy if it does not fully commit itself to answering the moral questions it continually raises. An educator eloquently expresses the spirit of this category:

Spirituality is my awareness that I am a part of a bigger universe, that we are all connected to every part of the universe, including all life forms, all humans, all cultures throughout time. As a teacher, I can inspire kids to do things for the good of others, for the good of the earth. I can model being a respectful person who understands limits and limitations.

Educational approaches rooted in this view of spirituality naturally emphasize ecological, environmental education, what Orr (1992) terms "ecological literacy," as critical to the health and survival of the planet. However, to be faithful to ecological theory, this education cannot be offered as a separate subject area, but rather must be integrated into the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Seeing the world as

an interconnected system leads to whole systems thinking and to facilitating students' understanding of the educational environment itself as an aspect of a greater whole, including ways in which educational institutions are complicit in earth-destroying practice. In a culture in which many children spend little time out of doors, ecological education would ideally include experiences in the natural world. Because an ecological approach honors the physical body as the basis of all experience, it encourages hands-on, experiential, sensory-based approaches, as well as physical and holistic health education.

### Spirituality as Creativity

Some contemporary philosophers and theologians, in harmony with the beliefs of many mystics, stress that the nature of the deity and the nature of the universe are one and the same, best symbolized by the idea of creativity. Griffin (1989, 39) notes that: "For Whitehead, creativity is the ultimate reality of which all things are instances. This means that the basic things or entities are events, spatio-temporal processes of becoming." This notion is in harmony with the scientific views of the inherent self-organizational properties of matter noted earlier and with the views of many whose spiritual metaphors are grounded in ecology.

From this perspective, not only is the universe inherently creative, but creativity is seen as the "ultimate" human capacity. As Armstrong (1993) says:

Human beings are the only animals who have the capacity to envisage something that is not yet present or something that does not yet exist but is merely possible. The imagination has thus been the cause of our major achievements in science and technology as well as in art and religion." (p. 232)

As human beings are created and creating themselves in the image of the deity, it is our creativity that allows us to fully co-operate with the divine in co-creating the world — and ultimately, in contributing to the evolution of the deity itself.

This perspective also links easily to moral. We not only have the ability to create, but we also have the capacity to make a conscious choice to use these creative gifts selfishly or for the good of the world. O'Conner (1971) expresses this:

Every person has the task of releasing angels by

Every person has the task of releasing angels by shaping and transfiguring the raw materials that lie about him.... How we do this — how we 'build the earth' to use Teilhard de Chardin's phrase — is determined by the discovery and use of our gifts.... [W]hen we deny our gifts we deny the Holy Spirit whose action is to call forth gifts." (p. 13)

In an historical period in which children's imaginative capacity is increasingly stunted and co-opted by the mass media in the name of profit, it becomes critical to strengthen the imagination for the common good. Educators can recognize and encourage each student's unique creative gifts, as this teacher states: "To me spirituality is the creativity of the universe or God or whatever you want to call it. As a person I am most spiritual when I tap into this creativity and as a teacher, I try to set up my classroom as a creative place and to find the ways each student is most creative." While teachers may choose to emphasize artistic forms such as dance, drama, visual arts, and music, there is also the possibility of demonstrating the creative process that underlies discovery in all disciplines and fields. This includes the art of educating as an act of creative spirit.

### Conclusion

If there is a central metaphor common to all of the categories, it is *connections*. Each way of thinking about spirituality and education emphasizes differing kinds of connections — with inner self, with others, with the world, with nature, with knowledge, with the divine, with religions, with emotions, with the body, with imagination, and with creative process. I have also discussed some of the connections *between* the perspectives, but clearly, many more are possible. In fact, the nature of my own belief system is best represented by a theory that situates all of the categories in relationship to each other. But this is not the point of this particular work. Many educators — as well as parents and community members — passionately affirm several approaches and reject others. This postmodern inquiry suggests that many voices offer valuable contributions to an inclusive cultural narrative. It is not my intention to minimize the potential disagreements and complexities inherent in implementing these as belief systems come into con-

flict with each other, but this is a story that unfolds one day at a time, in particular contexts. To exclude spiritual perspectives because they are controversial is neither a democratic nor a postmodern solution. Sometimes educators say to me: "I wish I could contribute to my students' spiritual education, but I can't because I teach in a public school." I believe that my framework illustrates that all educators who are helping their students to find significant connections in their lives are educators of spirit, each in their own way.

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# Transpersonal Philosophy and Education

## An Introduction to Sanders's "Dharma, Karma, and Yoga"

Ron Miller

At the Third International Whitehead conference in August 1998, scholars from numerous disciplines gathered in working groups to discuss the relevance of Whitehead's ideas for their specific fields, including theology, economics, physics, ecology, Asian studies, and many others. When I was not attending sessions in our education group, I ventured over to the transpersonal psychology group and heard Jeffrey Sanders deliver the following paper. Although he did not address educational topics as such, I thought he was raising questions that are central to the development of a holistic theory of education, and I invited him to submit the paper to *ENCOUNTER*. The editors accepted it, but the material requires some introduction for readers in the field of education who are not familiar with the literature of transpersonal psychology.

Holistic education is grounded in an epistemological critique of modern culture. We aim to educate holistically because we believe that the nature of knowledge itself, as understood by modernist education, is reductionistic, incomplete, and fragmenting. As C.A. Bowers (1993, 1995, 1999) has thoroughly explained, young people are enculturated by schooling to know the world through the lens of rational, objective analysis that separates themselves as individual knowers from the interconnected totality of the environment. This way of knowing ignores or denigrates vast realms of meaning, which might be identified as moral, archetypal, and spiritual, and which bind both individuals and cultures to the intricate, long-term processes of the evolution of life on earth.

Because we lack these meanings, we are cut off from our own sources of vitality and act upon the global ecosystem ignorantly and recklessly, doing tremendous damage. Holistic education is a deliberate effort to reconnect ourselves morally, archetypally, and spiritually to the larger whole of reality (e.g., see Cajete 1994; Miller 1996; Sloan 1993).

"Transpersonal philosophy," the focus of the Sanders paper, is a serious intellectual effort to describe this more holistic epistemology. In this context "transpersonal" refers to dimensions of existence not normally known through sensory experience or rational analysis, dimensions which the individual person can truly know only by *transcending* one's own cultural conditioning and ego identity. Building on empirical and theoretical work in psychology, philosophy, mythology and archaeology, studies of mystical experience and altered states of consciousness, as well as the findings of leading-edge scientific approaches, a few intrepid scholars are attempting to make the conceptual leap from modern rationalism to a postmodern holism. As Sanders puts it, this involves "a systematic understanding of reality that so departs from our normal conscious understanding of existence that it requires radical shifting of one's perspective..." and in his paper he examines two of the most brilliant thinkers who have made this shift — Alfred North Whitehead and Ken Wilber.

Sanders explains that Whitehead was a pioneer whose reflections on mathematics and science cleared the path for a holistic "process" understanding relevant to diverse areas of intellectual inquiry

(as was so much in evidence at the conference). Wilber is an enormously prolific writer who has woven together research in numerous fields, along with his own experience as an accomplished practitioner of meditation, into a comprehensive transpersonal philosophy. Sanders argues that their approaches complement each other; a theorist (such as a holistic educator) seeking a transpersonal basis for his or her work will find deep insight in Whitehead's ideas and inspiration in Wilber's. Sanders is concerned here with some specific issues over which they differ, and this part of the paper may be the most obscure for readers not already familiar with this literature. Nevertheless, it calls our attention to the sorts of questions we would be asking if our culture and our intellectual life were open to transpersonal dimensions. In education, we would not be wasting so much time prescribing learning outcomes and establishing standards, but would be trying to help young people find meaning and authenticity through learning experiences that nourished their souls. The discussion in this paper suggests that this approach to education is not about the culturally prescribed beliefs of "religion" but something much greater.

Readers not familiar with Wilber's work might appreciate a brief explanation of key concepts that Sanders mentions. In *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality: The Spirit of Evolution* (1995) and *The Eye of Spirit: An Integral Vision for a World Gone Slightly Mad* (1997), Wilber argues that all belief systems, all intellectual constructs, are *partial* representations of reality. He identifies four broad realms of understanding into which most intellectual ways of knowing tend to fall (these are the four "quadrants" to which Sanders refers): There are "interior" and "exterior" realms (roughly corresponding to psychological and cultural realities — the domain of consciousness — on one hand, and physical as well as concrete social-institutional realities on the other), and "individual" and "social" realms (referring to personal and group realities). These intersect, forming "interior-individual," "interior-social," "exterior-individual" and "exterior-social" quadrants. Any theory that interprets reality on the basis of one quadrant alone Wilber calls "monological," and this is reductionistic because all

manifestations of reality contain interconnected elements from every quadrant.

A second concept mentioned by Sanders is Wilber's emphasis on "holons." Any whole, says Wilber, any "totality," is itself part of some larger, more complex whole. Any entity is a holon — both whole (in some contexts) and part (in others). "Thus, holons within holons within holons means that the world is without foundation in either wholes or parts..." (Wilber 1995, 36). Wilber specifically criticizes holistic thinkers (such as deep ecologists) for contending that there is some ultimate whole of which everything else is part; in his transpersonal theory, holism does not refer to wholes but to holons, and this suggests an endless, vastly complex pattern of relationships among all manifestations of existence. In his paper, Sanders explores how Whitehead's ideas support this worldview, despite Wilber's contention to the contrary.

These ideas in transpersonal philosophy are not settled, and holistic educators have unanswered questions. Bowers has some specific complaints about key elements of Whitehead's cosmology, and Aostre Johnson, a leading scholar on spirituality in education, has strong reservations about Wilber's model of "holarchy." But I think Sanders, along with Whitehead and Wilber, invite us into some rather fascinating and fruitful conversations.

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# Dharma, Karma, and Yoga

## Whitehead and Wilber As "Transpersonal" Philosophers?

Jeffrey W. Sanders

**Whitehead's philosophy is compatible with and offers important insights into transpersonal philosophy.**

In March 1996 Whiteheadians and transpersonal scholars met at the Esalen Institute for an invitational conference to discuss a possible application of Whiteheadian metaphysics as a philosophical paradigm for transpersonal psychology (TP), and to see what TP had to contribute to process philosophy. Like many of the conferences sponsored by the Center for Process Studies, this one was designed to test the adequacy of Whitehead's philosophy in a new area. Stan Grof was particularly interested in Whitehead's system as a possible philosophic support for his holotropic regression work. John Buchanan, then testing his dissertation ideas, presented a paper entitled "Whitehead and Wilber: Contrasts in Theory" where he argued that Wilber's structures of consciousness in *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*, if combined with Whitehead's notion of concrescence and Grof's clinical work could provide a comprehensive transpersonal philosophy. Griffin (1996) and Buchanan's papers, I believe, provide a strong academic argument for choosing Whitehead's philosophy to ground transpersonal work.

But the conversation does not end there. This group of scholars eventually began to ask whether it was necessary for a philosopher to have first-hand experience of non-ordinary states of consciousness, particularly those of the transpersonal realm, in order to develop an adequate transpersonal philosophy. Walsh and Vaughn, both personal friends of Ken Wilber, look to Wilber's philosophy for grounding their work particularly because of his first-hand experiences with those transpersonal realms. Unfortunately there is no biographical documentation that Whitehead ever experienced non-ordinary states, nor is there any evidence to date (of which I am aware) that he maintained any spiritual disciplines

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that would be taken as satisfactory for producing a philosophy that would be adequate for understanding the transpersonal. If Ken Wilber is correct in saying that those developmentally stabilized at a certain level of consciousness cannot grasp the stages of consciousness developmentally above them, then this is a serious critique. I think Wilber is correct in this point.<sup>1</sup>

So, what remains for Whiteheadians is to demonstrate further the adequacy of Whitehead's philosophy to transpersonal experience and the adequacy of Whitehead's personal experience for delineating these realms. This will not be an easy task because the same injunction that applies to Whitehead and his philosophy must also apply to us. I for one have only barely touched these realms in peak experiences and am far from being a nature mystic, much less a subtle, causal, or non-dual mystic in continuous experience. That is, I have not obtained the *subject permanence* that Wilber describes.

Nevertheless, in general Wilber is very fond of Whitehead. He mentions Whitehead in many of his books and has no less than eighteen references to Whitehead in *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*. Generally he agrees with much of Whitehead's cosmology. Wilber, in fact, describes himself as an enthusiastic Whiteheadian "to the point of acknowledging certain indispensable notions" of Whitehead's thought (e.g., Wilber 1997, 350). Recently, however, Wilber made specific mention of John Buchanan's work (along with David Griffin, Charles Hartshorne, and John Cobb) and Whitehead's adequacy as a transpersonal philosopher in his 1997 book, *The Eye of the Spirit*. In brief, while acknowledging his admiration of Whitehead et al., Wilber rejects the notion that Whitehead should be "the great" transpersonal philosopher because Whitehead "has no yoga."<sup>2</sup> While Wilber feels that Whitehead adequately covers the gross domain with superb *vision logic*, he says that Whitehead only intimates the transpersonal realm (specifically mentioning Whitehead's eternal objects) (Wilber 1997, 349-351). This observation is related to Wilber's first criticism, that Whitehead's essentially monological stance misses the extensive significance of intersubjectivity. Wilber's two criticisms, then, cut to the heart of Whitehead's dharma, karma, and yoga.

### Whitehead's Dharma and Karma

To speak of Whitehead's dharma, karma, and yoga brings us first to Whitehead's dharma and karma. The understanding of dharma used here is the correlate of cosmology and metaphysics, or the understanding of the coordination and interrelations of things. Dharma, most broadly defined, is the law of being as it exists on all levels of life — cosmic (*rita dharma*), human (*ashrama dharma*), social (*varnashrama dharma*), and personal (*svadharma*) (Subramuniyaswami 1990, 21-25).<sup>3</sup> Wilber calls dharma the "big It" (Wilber 1995, 144).<sup>4</sup>

For Whitehead, speculative philosophy can be defined as "the endeavor to frame a coherent, logical, necessary system of general ideas in terms of which every element of our experience can be interpreted (Whitehead [1933] 1967, 3). The fact that the system must be coherent and logical expresses the notion of dharma, while the injunction of necessity begins to express the notion of karma. These two cannot be separated in Whitehead's philosophy. They are mutually implicative.

Dharma, like speculative philosophy, expresses the coordination of "the current expressions of human experience, in common speech, in social institutions, in actions, in the principles of the various special sciences, elucidating harmony and exposing discrepancies (Whitehead [1933] 1967, 222)." Where Wilber's use of the notion of holons and the four quadrants of experience is a brilliant coordination of these various aspects, Whitehead's dharma goes to a deeper level — one might say a transpersonal level — below the abstractions of these four quadrants of experience.

It is important to include all of these quadrants, and Whitehead does, but he accomplishes this great feat through an ontology that *transcends and includes* the four quadrants, an ontology that is applied adequately and consistently throughout the whole of his cosmology, even including God as the chief exemplification rather than an exception (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 350). His ontology, based upon moments of experience birthed from the welter of the past entering into the process of creating this contemporary moment, is applied to *all actuality* and differs greatly from traditional materialist atomistic ontologies. But the ontology itself, as integral to his cosmology, im-



plies also the relations among things in their very constitution. The four quadrants of dharma in Whitehead arise from social order, graduated complexity of extensive order (with an inverse relationship of intrinsic and extrinsic value), and the distinctions of that order, proposed by divisions of aggregates of individuals and compound individuals.<sup>5</sup> Here Whitehead delves below the surface of the dualisms proposed by these graduated complexities of order (Wilber's interior/exterior, individual/social) and illuminates also the facts of actuality from which these structures of order are composed. In short, Whitehead's cosmology demonstrates how the exterior is interior to the individual, and how the individual arises from and contributes to its social relations. While not denying the usefulness of such abstractions, he shows how concrete fact includes and transcends these distinctions.

In contrast, Wilber's system of holons and quadrants *avoids* any sort of ontological description and seeks, rather, to remain at the level of the organization and evolutionary enfolding of being — whatever that being is. In *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality*, he calls such attempts at describing reality a *subtle reductionism*, and opts instead for a correlation of ontogenetic and phylogenetic models (Habermas) where "an individual human being and its sociocultural environment evidence the *same* basic structures of consciousness (correlation of micro and macro), and *further*, these same basic structures can be found in the evolution of the individual and the species...." (Wilber 1995, 150). He believes that this is the best way to avoid *flatland*, through the coordination of things and their relations by avoiding either atomism or "functional fit" (Wilber 1995, 147). In short, he qualifies this functional fit as "Reduced to leading life by looking at a representational map of a flat and faded landscape, trying to fit into that landscape, and trying to persuade others to embrace the same cheerful ontological suicide" (Wilber 1995, 147-148).

Wilber's first major criticism of Whitehead comes out of this avoidance of ontological suicide. It is related to what I am calling Whitehead's karma. Karma, most generally, describes the principle of cause and effect, as well as the totality of one's actions and their accompanying reactions in this and

all previous *lives*. One can see in Whitehead's dharma (cosmology with its associated ontology) the implications for Whitehead's karma. As each moment of subjectivity is birthed out of the objective content of one's past actual world, with its associated subjective forms and the initial aim of God, and anticipation of the future, we have the interplay of freedom and determinism, of responsibility for the resolution of the past, and a call to the vision of transformation in the present for the future.

But Wilber accuses Whitehead of a monological stance of subjectivity that lies in his failing to grasp the extensive significance of intersubjectivity. Concerning Whitehead, Wilber states

that his essentially monological orientation severely limits the application of his metaphysics. In assuming an essentially subjectivist stance (the subject becomes the object of the next subject), he fails to grasp the extensive significance of intersubjectivity (his societies are interobjective, not genuinely intersubjective; that is, they are societies of monological occasions), so that he fails to see that actual occasions are not merely subjective/objective, but all-four-quadrant (holons)... Whitehead has taken the modern monological collapse of the Kosmos and made it paradigmatic for reality at large. (Wilber 1997, 349-350)

However, the extensive significance of intersubjectivity is *the* major point of Whitehead's system and, in fact, you can say that the whole of his system is dedicated to understanding how one entity can be internal to another (e.g., Whitehead [1929] 1978, 50). By internal, he means specifically the understanding of all four quadrants. By illustration, Whitehead said of the materialist metaphysics that "the relations between individual substances constitute metaphysical nuisances: there is no place for them" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 137). We should not confuse enduring individuals with becoming events (as I suspect Wilber may be doing), which are the final real entities. Prehension is this internal appropriation of the past. "The essence of an actual entity consists solely in the fact that it is a prehending thing" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 41).

For Whitehead, all actual occasions are constituted by their relations to their environment — and that environment includes all four quadrants. Their *primary* environment *is* the occasion of experience

immediately preceding them in their temporal-social order. This previous occasion accounts for one aspect of permanence amid flux (the other being God). Feeling the feelings of another, feeling conformally with another, and feeling sympathetically with another by virtue of one's prehensions of objective data with their associated subjective forms, illustrate how one is constituted by their environment — an environment that necessarily includes all four quadrants of experience, especially at the *level* of human experience where Wilber is concentrating. The influence of the world and one's immediate past on the becoming occasion has a real causal, or karmic, influence. It can be said that the whole world exerts an influence, however slight, on every becoming occasion. Wilber picks up on this aspect and appears to agree with it (Wilber 1981, 163).<sup>6</sup>

Amid this structure of reality based upon momentary flashes of experience and serially ordered societies that provide the real enduring objects of sense experience, live complex human subjects with an understanding of the self. One of the difficulties of the substance-quality metaphysic is that it posits substances of different kinds — mental, physical, and spiritual. This leaves mental functioning wholly separate from physical functions, for how can two different things have any real relation or communication? Further, how can spiritual functioning have anything to do with mental or physical? Where is the transcendent chimera that is needed as a bridge for a truly transpersonal undertaking? It does not appear that Wilber's scheme alone solves this problem — a problem that seems fundamental to transpersonal philosophy.

Whitehead's metaphysic makes no fundamental distinction between physical, mental, and spiritual entities. All occasions have some level of mentality. In the human subject (and in graded levels throughout the animal kingdom), mentality takes on a certain level of complexity that is qualitatively different than the mentality of a plant or even the mental functions of a squirrel. The organization of individual events in complex occasions of personal order with a regnant occasion of experience produce what can really be thought of as average human consciousness. Rocks as mere aggregates have no dominant occasion and the "mentality" that they achieve in their in-

dividual components is qualitatively different than that which can be achieved by a dominant organizing center. These "physical purposes" do not add up to the conscious experience as a subject that transpersonalists are interested in, but they are not discontinuous with that type of conscious experience either. There is no separation between mind and body here. The basis of perception is non-sensory prehension, but those relatively lifeless prehensions, through the innumerable integrations of contrasting prehensions in a dominant occasion, give rise to higher levels of consciousness in the late phases of complex organisms. Consciousness, in Whitehead, is not a prehension but a subjective form of an intellectual feeling.

Whitehead also intimates that because the basis of perception is non-sensory (prehension), there is support for higher levels of consciousness and even the prehension of other minds. A naturalistic and believable understanding of mystical/transpersonal experiences, and the cultivation of these experiences through various practices, is supported within this understanding of the ontology of the human being and its environment, including one's relation to God. Wilber, like many others, has difficulty reconciling this notion of mentality "all the way down." In *Sex, Ecology, and Spirituality* he says:

Typical panpsychism confuses consciousness with a *particular level* of consciousness (perception or intention or feeling) and then is *forced* to push *that* "consciousness" all the way down. I am completely uninterested in that approach. Do atoms possess an actual prehension (Whitehead) or perception (Leibniz)? I don't know; that seems a bit much. But they do possess depth, and therefore they do share a common depth. And a common depth is a worldspace, a worldspace created/disclosed by a particular degree of shared depth. (I will continue to use Whitehead's "prehension," but only in this considerably changed context.) (Wilber 1995, 540)

There are two interrelated aspects of Wilber's criticism of Whitehead's "monological" stance: first, that he cannot go along with panpsychism forced "all the way down" without his *revision*; and, secondly, he finds the notion of the perishing of subjectivity into objective content for the next moment of subjectivity to have missed the wider significance of intersub-

jectivity, which is two subjects prehending one another.

Perhaps Wilber is confusing the enormity of experience in the nexus of personal identity with an individual occasion. This will take us into Wilber's own notion of shared worldspace. Consciousness for Whitehead is a function of the late phases of experience and anything like what Wilber is calling human consciousness arises only in higher level organisms with sufficient complexity with a dominant organizing center to "cultivate" consciousness in their becoming. Wilber completely inverts one of Whitehead's main points — experience is the base of subjective reality, and "consciousness is the crown of experience" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 267). Subjectivity does not mean consciousness.

To clarify this matter is precisely why David Ray Griffin moved from panpsychism to panexperientialism, and is now emphasizing with panexperientialism the understanding of organizational duality (e.g., Griffin forthcoming). The *organizational duality* is precisely the distinction made between an aggregate and a compound individual. "In short, the 'pan' in panexperientialism refers not literally to all things, but only to *all individuals*. This is a metaphysical point" (Griffin 1997, 133).

Relating this to Wilber and Koestler's holarchical organization, each level of order "prehends" its own level of meaning, but this is distinct from the notion of "apprehend," which suggests a form of self-consciousness specific to higher forms of organism. "Feeling" for Whitehead is the result of a specific subjective form or value of a prehended datum and is *not* simply to be equated with feeling, emotion, or perception in higher level organisms. To make this equation is to confuse and confound Whitehead's system by ignoring the specialization of his language that pushes us beyond the mere surface meaning of every day use. One can draw analogies, but there is a wholly qualitative difference on the human level. Being "appreciated" does not have much meaning to a cell in the body, but it has a great deal of value for an individual person. Likewise, accidentally touching the hot stove means a lot to both the cell and the person. The difference is a difference of degree or, to use Wilber's word, a difference of depth. A cell and a human person do not share a common "worldspace."

Further, Wilber is disturbed that societies of occasions are constructed of monological occasions of experience wherein one occasion's moment of experience perishes to become objective datum for the subjective becoming of the next occasion, and therefore, he says, do not display the full force of intersubjectivity. Restated in his words, he says that Whitehead's "societies are interobjective, not genuinely intersubjective; that is, they are societies of monological occasions" (Wilber 1997, 349-350).

While it is true that subjectivity perishes into objectivity for the subjective becoming of another, the integrations of experience of higher level organisms is much more complex than the simple perishing and birth of a single new occasion of experience for an electron. There may be billions of occasions of an electron prehended by an occasion of experience for a cell, a thousand occasions of experience of a cell for a single occasion of unified functioning in a bodily organ, and untold numbers of occasions within and without the entire bodily experience of an individual that compose human conscious experience. Over time, throughout the entire history of an individual person, these experiences accumulate and contribute to further integrations and growth that can result in something that appears like the stages of growth Wilber outlines in his spectrum.

Nevertheless, for Whitehead, Wilber's expressed desire for intersubjectivity between temporally ordered occasions is none other than the illusion of an enduring substance inherited from substance metaphysics. This "simple notion of an enduring substance sustaining persistent qualities, either essentially or accidentally, expresses a useful abstract for many purposes in life. But whenever we try to use it as a fundamental statement of the nature of things, it proves itself mistaken" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 79). Reading Wilber's *No Boundary* and other works, I think that he might agree with the notion that a substantial, enduring self from moment to moment is an illusion. We can associate this with the notion of *Atman*. Each moment is new, though influenced by the past. There is a parallel here, but Whitehead's perished occasions are not *merely* objective datum either. They no longer possess their own subjectivity, but they also present themselves with remnants of their subjectivity. As described in *Process and Reality*,

The concrescence, absorbing the derived data into immediate privacy, consists in mating the data with ways of feeling provocative of the private synthesis. These subjective ways of feeling are not merely receptive of the data as alien facts; they clothe the dry bones with the flesh of a real being, emotional, purposive, appreciative. (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 85)

The incorporation of other aspects of concrescence, including subjective forms, the initial aim, and propositions alongside prehensions add depth, color, and real intersubjective connection between occasions of a temporal nexus. In *Modes of Thought*, "We must not conceive of a dead datum with passive form. The datum is impressing itself upon this process, conditioning its forms" (Whitehead [1938] 1968, 96). The new experience feels the objective feelings of the datum occasion, and it feels these feelings in their immediacy. The subjective form of the new occasion has its own contribution, but what is felt has its own immediacy. Thus, there is an inflow of immediacy from occasion to occasion.

Further, the same process resolves and enriches the intersubjective connection between entities that are not part of the same temporal nexus but share a common spatial nexus. Aside from the exclusion of feeling one's immediate contemporary fully in their immediate subjectivity, there is the opportunity for a real community of relations (intersubjectively grounded) within and between individual persons, animals, the ecosystem, society, history, and the cosmos. Far from being flatland, Whitehead's dharma and karma provide a rich depth on an ontological level that Wilber and Koestler's holons leave to obscurity.

But one last point should be stressed. The current occasion doesprehend its successors, albeit prior to their moment of subjectivity. Appetition for future possibilities is another component in the immediate subjective becoming of any occasion. Besides the dominance of the past that flows into the subjective concrescence, which is admittedly where many process writers concentrate in their writing, there is also the aim for the future realization of propositions. This other form of process, or transitional process, is teleological (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 214). Each occasion has an element of desire that its ideals be realized. *Ideas* are *adventurous* and seek life beyond any

concrete moment. This is why Whitehead opted for the term subject-superject. Looking backward once again, the subjective aim, as a component of prehension in the succeeding occasion, satisfies the intersubjective quest beyond a *mere* interobjectivity.

### Whitehead's Yoga

Wilber's second criticism of Whitehead as a transpersonal philosopher is scathing and appears irreconcilable. In his book *Eye of the Spirit*, Wilber states that

although some theorists (such as John Buchanan) believe that Whitehead fits the bill as *the* great transpersonal philosopher, I believe Whitehead fails that task in the most essential respects (much as I admire him otherwise). To give only the most obvious example: in order to actually awaken to the nondual Kosmos, as we have seen, one must attain subject permanence (the unbroken continuity of awareness through waking, dream, and sleep states). Without that as an actual yogic or contemplative accomplishment in consciousness, *there is no corresponding mode of knowing that will disclose the Real*. This yogic injunction, exemplar, or practice is the real *transpersonal paradigm*, and without it (or something similar to it), you have no authentic transpersonal anything. At the very least, you must incorporate the necessity for this injunction into your system. Notice that Shankara, Nagarjuna, Aurobindo, Plotinus (and Alexander and Wilber) can pass this test; Whitehead doesn't even come close. This is not a secondary issue; it is at the precise heart of the entire matter, a heart that Whitehead completely lacks. (Wilber 1997, 350)

Wilber's observations have much merit in his critique of Whitehead's system for spiritual practitioners and those seeking the transpersonal realms. Whitehead's system does not *seem* to have a yogic injunction. There does not *seem* to be any evidence from Whitehead's writings, nor from biographical references to him, that he maintained anything like a spiritual discipline, such as yoga, for himself that would indicate that he could have experienced the transpersonal realms. It *appears* that Wilber is correct and that Whitehead's system is a brilliant illustration of vision logic, but that it cannot lead one to the

transpersonal. Nevertheless, I have a few responses to offer that suggest that the matter is not settled.

My first objection to Wilber is that there seems to be a presumption concerning Whitehead's project and an exclusionary stance taken toward Whiteheadian's based upon this presumption. That is, I submit that it was not Whitehead's intention to produce a philosophy geared to lead one to higher levels of transpersonal awareness in the sense that Wilber is calling for. Wilber's philosophy presents an integrated worldview that points the way through the levels of his spectrum of consciousness toward the transpersonal. However, it was not Alfred North Whitehead's concern to deliver a philosophically based system for spiritual guidance. This is Wilber's concern. There is a conflict of use because Whitehead's *aim* was not to describe practices for attaining the nondual, for attaining contemplative states, or even for seeing beyond the *fallacy of misplaced concreteness*.

But he did offer a systematic understanding of reality that so departs from our normal conscious understanding of existence that it requires radical shifting of one's perspective to even begin to grasp his most fundamental concepts. Although his system does not prescribe practices for attaining mystical-transpersonal realms, it does not preclude the appropriation of practices where fitting. He wanted to include all of experience, transpersonal as well as the gross domain, claiming that "philosophy destroys its usefulness when it indulges in brilliant feats of explaining away" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 39) and enters into its "chief danger" when it narrows its "selection of evidence" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 512). Whitehead sought to describe reality from where he saw it, without claims that his way was the only way of seeing Reality, or that his conceptualized system was identical with Reality. He had no illusions about this fact and intimated that his system should be alterable by new evidence and perhaps may even be supplanted one day (Whitehead [1929] 1978, 41). In fact, he saw "a clash of doctrines" not as a disaster, but as "an opportunity" (Whitehead [1925] 1967, 49). In this sense, we will not claim that Whitehead is "the great transpersonal philosopher," but that Whitehead can be appropriated as *a* transpersonal philosopher and, perhaps, *a* great one.

Whitehead's philosophy grows and changes even today. Process philosophy does not end with Whitehead, but continues through the critical interpretations of Meland, Hartshorne, Wieman, Cobb, Griffin, Ford, Keller, Suchocki, Howell, and countless others. There are Whiteheadian-based theologies, but Whitehead did not develop them — Cobb and others did. There are Whiteheadian-based feminist critiques, but Suchocki, Keller, and others developed those. What Whiteheadians sympathetic to transpersonal philosophy, spirituality, and psychology are proposing is that Whitehead's philosophy offers a critical aid that has been found helpful and tested in numerous arenas and appears to be applicable here as well. Although Whitehead did not propose a transpersonal yoga, his system will support one.

There is another aspect to Wilber's critique that seems vastly more important. This second aspect concerns whether Whitehead himself had a yogic practice that would have opened him up to the transpersonal realms personally, and therefore would qualify him and his work as a "lure for feeling" (to borrow from Whitehead) that would lead others into the transpersonal realm. That Whitehead could not see into the transpersonal realms, and therefore could not describe subtle and causal domains adequately because he did not practice yoga like Wilber, I find to be somewhat disturbing and monological thinking.

While I agree that yoga in some form is an essential part of experiencing the transpersonal domains, there seems to be vast differences of practices among spiritual masters and leaders throughout the world. One cannot believe such a subtle reductionism that there is only one way; that is, that there is only one language or path to the transpersonal. One can witness numerous Buddhist paths, Hindu paths, Christian mystics, and even primal paths to higher states. Mystics have been prone to extreme asceticism, including prolonged and bodily abusive routines of fasting, prayer, and meditation to induce mystical states.

There are numerous "yogas." There is the unitive discipline of meditation (*dhyana-yoga*) and the unitive discipline of renunciation (*samnyasa-yoga*). There is the unitive discipline of self-transcending

action, or *karma-yoga*, the unitive discipline of ritual, or *kriya-yoga*, the unitive discipline of love and devotion to the Divine (*bhakti-yoga*), and so on. Yogic traditions are vast and complex, all with the goal of somehow overcoming dualisms (Feuerstein 1996, 3-4).

Grof's work demonstrates the benefits of holotropic breathwork and Lenny Gibson's work argues the benefits of LSD for expanding consciousness. While I do not believe that these are all equal and will obtain to the same ends with the same perspectives, and perhaps to the same "levels" of mystical awareness — especially Wilber's subjective permanence through waking, sleep and dream states — they do point to other paths. There are a plurality of paths to enlightenment with similarities and differences both great and subtle. Enlightenment does not obtain by only one form of meditation, awareness training or mind-body coordination. Rather, what is required is a dialectical relationship of training body, mind, and affective states — together. As there are a plurality of individual beings with a plurality of gifts and plurality of pasts, so there are preferences of path and different needs for psycho-spiritual development.

One can imagine someone with such coherence and scope of vision as Alfred North Whitehead to have spent many an hour in contemplation. Of course, my comments are speculative, but there is evidence in his work and his biography for this speculation. Whitehead writes in the preface of *Process and Reality* that "In these lectures I have endeavoured to compress the material derived from years of meditation" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, xiv).

There is a *necessary* reductionism involved whenever the transpersonal insights are brought back into the gross domain. This is a matter of necessity: language is a gross phenomenon. The Institute for Transpersonal Psychology (1995) admits this difficulty, stating

We are forced to use imprecise terms like "some-thing" because ordinary language, as a partial manifestation of our ordinary self, which is itself a partial manifestation of our deeper transpersonal "self," is of only partial use in our research and practice in transpersonal psychology, and needs to be supplemented with other

expressive and communicative modalities (ITP 1995).

Even Wilber's thought, if one takes away his specific descriptions of the transpersonal domains, are synthetic (vision logic) expressions of a realm that is often characterized by ineffability and noetic qualities. Wilber, in fact, recognizes this difficulty in *Sex, Ecology and Spirituality*, saying that "In fact, I might have a fine intuition of Spirit but unpack it poorly owing to a lack of relative understanding and relative knowledge" (Wilber 1995, 735). Wilber demonstrates incredible breadth and depth of insight in both Spiritual and relative domains, but everyone has gaps in understanding. Aside from Wilber's biography and his specific concerns with the coordination of these "higher" domains, his writings evidence no more internal intuitions that Whitehead's.

One interesting alternative path is described by Lawrence LeShan. In his book, *The Medium, the Mystic, and the Physicist*, Lawrence outlines various aspects of convergence among the worldviews of clairvoyants, mystics, and physicists. He gives a convincing, though somewhat outdated (1966), argument for some convergence and the value of alternative paths. Deepok Chopra and Fritjof Capra and many others offer descriptions of "spiritual" insights from scientific and mathematical discoveries — as often they seem mystical. More recently, Imants Barušs, associate professor of psychology at King's College, presents the mystic Franklin Merrell-Wolff as an example of this alternative type of path. In his book, *Authentic Knowing: The Convergence of Science and Spiritual Aspiration*, Barušs refers to Wolff under the heading of "Mathematics of Transcendence."

Wolff stated that his path toward realization of transcendent states of consciousness was that of mathematics, philosophy, and yoga. Mathematics, because of its abstract nature, while still part of the relative domain, is nonetheless close to the transcendent. However, by itself it is sterile; philosophy is necessary to unearth the meaning of mathematics. But to succeed in realizing the transcendent state, mathematics and philosophy as such are not enough. One must also adequately prepare oneself and approach the disciplines of mathematics and philosophy in such a way as to bring about a transformation of consciousness. The proper blend of these three ac-

tivities defines *mathematical yoga*. (Barušs 1996, 85; italics mine)

It is well known that Whitehead had two careers; the first career as a mathematician, and his second career lead him across the Atlantic to teach philosophy. Yet these two careers were not separate, for it was his philosophizing about mathematics and science, the questions of his observations with a historical perspective, a rigorous questioning of cultural and personal presuppositions that lead him to his second career. His career change marked the beginning of a creative transformation of consciousness. This much we can attest without qualification: Whitehead satisfies the first two requirements laid out by Wolff. What needs further flushing out is whether Whitehead adequately prepared himself in his approach to these disciplines for a transformation of consciousness that could lead to the transpersonal realms.

Barušs distinguishes between a concentrative style of meditation and a reflexive/dialectical style. For examples of the concentrative style he discusses Roger Walsh and Douglas Baker, and for the reflexive style he turns to Wolff. In general, I believe it can be said that Wilber agrees with his friend and colleague Walsh when it comes to style of concentrative yogic disciplines. Barušs, though, presents a convincing description of Wolff's alternative, which one can find striking parallels in Whitehead — even though Whitehead did not draw attention to his words as arising from transpersonal experiences. Though this is not meant to be conclusive evidence that Whitehead saw into the transpersonal, I think we can find some striking parallels between Wolff and Whitehead.

According to Barušs:

Wolff realized that that which one experiences lie on the surface of life, so that truth can never be found through the activity of sensation and ordinary cognition alone. Rather, in order to awaken the dormant faculty, one must completely renounce everything within experience and surrender to truth. (Barušs 1995, 84)

There are three assertions put forth here that are meant to indicate that one has gained some insight into the transpersonal realms and sees reality in a creative and novel manner. The first is that our average experience is an abstraction from reality. The second,

connection with reality cannot happen through sense experience and reason alone. The third, that in order to experience the reality below the surfaces of things, one must surrender oneself to it and renounce one's preconceptions. In other words, one must transcend the conventions of civilization.

Whitehead, likewise, offers similar injunctions. In the *Adventures of Ideas*, Whitehead says that philosophy should not submit to the fallacy misplaced concreteness in the abstractions used by the specialized sciences and ordinary experience. Rather, philosophy should act as the corrective for the logic of the specialized sciences who presuppose the adequacies of their own procedures in parochial abstraction from each other. For Whitehead,

The chief danger in philosophy is that the dialectic deductions from inadequate formulae should exclude direct intuitions from explicit attentions. In fact the abstract sciences [philosophy] tend to correct the evil effects of the inadequacy of language, and the consequent dangers of a logic which presupposes linguistic adequacy. (Whitehead [1933] 1967, 139)

Rejecting materialist atomism and vacuous actuality, Whitehead's insights lead him to an ontology within a cosmology that let him see beyond surface appearances of seemingly static materials. He acknowledged the element of illusion, the *Maya* in our everyday experience, and offered a view beneath the surface.

Secondly, Whitehead's epistemology spells out clearly that any connection with reality cannot happen through sense experience and reason alone. I discussed above the relevance of physical prehension, a non-sensory and non-cognitive appropriation of the environment that connects one to their environment, and which is not consciousness though may be an element in consciousness. In *Modes of Thought*, one reads that "In sense perception we discern the external world with its various parts characterized by form of quality....These forms ... dominate this experience.... Sense perception is the triumph of abstraction...." (Whitehead [1938] 1968, 73). Sense experience is high level abstraction from the base of experience.

Third, Whitehead agrees that in order to experience the reality below the surfaces of things, one must surrender oneself to it and renounce one's pre-



conceptions. This may be the obscure part of Whitehead — obscure in that it appears in terms of propositions instead of injunctions — but seems bountifully evident. *Adventures of Ideas* seems to express process historically. Whitehead's patterns of concrescence suggest that actual entities co-create their world in social relation with the limitations of their past actual world, the initial aim of God, and their aim for the future. Their element of self-determination enters into conversation with limitation. Wolff suggests that in order to "awaken" this "dormant faculty," one must renounce limitations and seek truth. If truth, for Wolff, is the reality as the base of things, then there may be some correlation with the creative urge of the divine aim, not to mention that a "sort" of subjective permanence can be accounted for in the full appropriation of the subjective aim of previous experiences.

But Whitehead *does* offer explicit injunctions, one particularly clear passage describing the passage into higher consciousness is found in *Modes of Thought*. He says:

Although in attempting to grasp our fundamental presuppositions ... we must undoubtedly have recourse to the learning which we inherit; yet in the development of intelligence there is a great principle which is often forgotten. In order to acquire learning, *we must first shake ourselves free of it...* There is always a vague beyond, waiting for penetration in respect to its detail. (Whitehead [1938] 1968, 5-6; italics mine)

Passages such as this one are innumerable in Whitehead's writings. While it was not Whitehead's purpose to put forth a treatise for spiritual transformation, the call to transformation is plentiful in his writings.

There is another set of correlation of worldviews between Wolff and Whitehead. Recalling the description above of concrescent and transitional processes, and the appropriation of datum by the subjective occasion, we turn to Wolff. Wolff made an analogy of separating the streams of consciousness to describe what he called "introception" as opposed to perception. This is a distinction that he makes between normal experience, which is the attachment of subjective preoccupation on an external object, and the datum of the type of "imperience" one has when one "tran-

sends subject and object." In this "imperience" subjective consciousness focussed outward on objects dimmed while the reverse flow *toward* the subject intensified. There was an immediate consciousness of "pure I." Barušs continues the description saying that

Knowledge that was made possible through attention to objects of consciousness within the relative domain was replaced by knowledge through identification with that which is known. "The introceptive realization is a state wherein the subject and the object become so far interblended that the self is identical with its knowledge." (Barušs 1995, 84)

For Whitehead, objects are always internal to subjects, as are other subjects. Subjectivity is just this process of appropriation from the environment, an "imperience" or inflowing of the world in every moment of becoming. The "experience" that Wolff describes would be for Whitehead, I speculate, a dominating influence of the past upon one's moment of self-determination.

In the end, the strongest argument may be that there is a sense in which active, speculative engagement in pure mathematics resembles the activity of those who have become enlightened. According to Wolff, "practically all of mathematical creation has been done [for the fun of it] by the pure mathematician sitting in his ivory tower." Similarly, those who have realized the transcendent state no longer work — they play. Their actions are a "spontaneous expression of delight." But out of that play "come the greatest creations of all" (Barušs 1995, 90-91).

It seems reasonable to suggest from these parallels to insights from Wolff that Whitehead *could* have experienced the transpersonal. Whitehead satisfies the first two thirds of the prerequisites put forth by Wolff, and his system has been demonstrated to imply and leave room for higher states of consciousness. In fact, it seems probable that a philosopher-mathematician who produced a vision of such coherent generalizations and detailed insight would have approached the subject with sufficient awareness and discipline to have experienced the transpersonal realms.

Obviously it is not a common path, for there are not many of us who can handle the rigors of such high and abstract mathematics, philosophy, and the contemplation that it would take to approach the



higher domains and then to write about them so systematically as Whitehead. Nevertheless, I am convinced that his writings suggest that his path was a spiritual path. The spirituality of Whitehead will not look like the spiritual of Wilber in practice, but the conclusions to which they come are often similar and compatible. Just as the life experience of any two beings is not identical, there will not be identical spiritualities, but the point is that the spiritual *transcends and includes* just such individuality.

So, in what way can Whitehead be called a "transpersonal" philosopher?

First, Whitehead is historically prior to the field but foreshadows it, just as some of his contemporaries like William James. The *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* considers James's work a pioneering effort in transpersonal studies. Whitehead acknowledges his indebtedness to James, among others, and his interest in his work. In the preface of *Process and Reality*, Whitehead states "I am also greatly indebted to Bergson, William James, and John Dewey. One of my preoccupations has been to rescue their type of thought from the charge of anti-intellectualism, which rightly or wrongly has been associated with it" (Whitehead [1929] 1978, xii).

Second, Whitehead's philosophy is an integrative vision that is open to and can be shown to support transpersonal realms. Whitehead's dharma and karma provide, as both Griffin and Buchanan have shown previously, and as admitted by Wilber, a sound, comprehensive, coherent, philosophical basis for understanding the world that includes room and possible enrichment of understanding for transpersonal experience as part of a wider system that includes all aspects of experience. The transpersonal movement is particularly interested in integrative worldviews that are open to the transpersonal realm. Whitehead, I believe, satisfies this requirement.

Third, the transpersonal movement is particularly interested in disciplines that can reveal the transpersonal to other individuals. Walsh and Vaughn state that The *transpersonal movement* is the interdisciplinary movement that includes various individual transpersonal disciplines (Vaughn and Walsh 1993, 203). Although Whitehead's concern was not to provide a spiritual path, he nevertheless

left his philosophy open to paths and processes. Many core ideas of his philosophy draw upon similar principles, polarities, and sense of balance and order found in many of the world's spiritual philosophies of old. His philosophy is open to transpersonal domains as higher levels of consciousness, even qualitative differences (developmental levels) of consciousness during the lifetime of an individual person and a species.

Whitehead, I think, should be considered "a great" transpersonal philosopher, among others. Whitehead should not replace other transpersonal philosophers, such as Wilber. Wilber's abstractions and insights are useful in ways that Whitehead's abstractions are not. Wilber's abstractions highlight aspects of Whitehead that were previously untapped. Likewise, Whitehead's thought can be used as a critical partner for Wilber and others.

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### Notes

1. Two examples come to mind immediately, both of which Wilber mentions on occasion. The first is James Fowler in his book *Stages of Faith* where he delineates six major stages of faith, the first five of which seem to correspond roughly with the stages of the gross domain that Wilber outlines in his spectrum. When Fowler comes to the sixth stage, which is his enfolding of the mystical realms into a single stage, he admits that he is personally unaware of this stage in his own experience but concedes that there is a great deal of evidence to support descriptions of this realm. He thus must resort to reporting what others say about it and is quite tentative.

Secondly, we can look to William James's *Varieties* and see that James himself reports a single first-hand quasi-mystical experience as a result of experimenting with nitrous oxide. In the end, James gives brilliant descriptions of the mystical realms, but relies almost completely on second-hand information.

2. It should be noted that although Buchanan and others were extremely enthusiastic in presenting their case for Whitehead, they never suggested that Whitehead should be held up as *the* great transpersonal philosopher.

3. It may be interesting to note how closely these divisions of dharma correlate with Wilber's four quadrants in his *spectrum*.

4. Dharma is part of the "Big Three" that he talks about: Buddha (ultimate I), Dharma (ultimate It), and Sangha (ultimate We). These, like Dharma and Karma, are all interrelated in Whitehead's system and cannot be understood in abstraction from the whole.

5. Please note that the term *compound individual* is a term coined by Hartshorne and not used by Whitehead.

6. Wilber seems to recognize this important aspect of Whitehead's ontology in his early evolutionary views, but I suspect that there is a subtle reduction of Whitehead's point. Wilber states that

We begin by repeating that each stage of evolution transcends but includes its predecessor. This is certainly true for humans as well. We have seen ... that each stage of human evolution, although it transcends its predecessors, must include and integrate them in a higher unity (fail to do so = neurosis). Another way to say this is that the human individual is a compound individual (Whitehead, Hartshorne) — compounded, that is, of all the levels of reality that have unfolded prior to man's present stage, and capped by that present stage itself. (Wilber 1981, 163)

What Wilber seems to be leaving out is the graded relevance of the object past for the present, mediated by one's immediate past actual world and by the initial aim of God. Each moment of becoming (the becoming or development of an individual human in particular) is much more complex and does not necessarily parallel the development of the entire past of humanity but is mediated by one's contemporary culture, personal experience, education, scientific revolutions, etc. The best that we can say is that personal development is analogous to human evolution, and Whitehead's cosmology and ontology give ample exemplification of this process.

*"There is nothing but is related to us, nothing that does not interest us — kingdom, college, tree, horse, or iron shoe — the roots of all things are in man." Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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## Essay Review

# Continuing White Reign

Ellen Swartz

### White Reign: Deploying Whiteness in America

Edited by Joe L. Kinchloe and Shirley R. Steinberg  
St. Martin's Press, 368 pages, \$27.95

Social constructions and the knowledge and practices they represent are continuously and contextually made and remade. They are layers of human construction that are fluid and alterable even though they seem fixed and given. Psychosocial, spiritual, political, intellectual, economic, and historical constructions exist in time and space — in a constant dialectic with the ontological, cosmological, epistemological, axiological, and ethical worldviews of the people who produce them. In this way, social constructions are both the products and the producers of the meanings people bring to their existence, to their understanding of the nature of the universe, to their ways of knowing and acquiring knowledge, to what they value, and to what they see as good and in the interests of society.

Long-standing social constructions are “products” of processes that have sifted, filtered, and kept the life-enhancing practices and developmentally rich beliefs that underpin them. Examples of such constructs are community mindfulness/mindedness, “thinking the highest thought,” right relationships, collective responsibility and survival of the

group, the development of personhood, respect for the interconnectedness of all life, inner independence and balance, and harmony with nature (Anthony 1988, Cajete 1994; Goodwin 1998; Karenga 1990; Nobles 1985, 1986; Tedla 1995, 1997). Carried and held by people/cultures over generations, these beliefs and practices continuously reproduce and refine themselves, with their representations and articulations varying according to changing conditions and historical periods.

When social constructions are not life supporting and life enhancing, they change or are eventually filtered out because they retard and obstruct broad-based interests (e.g., human development, spiritual and material well being, survival of a culture/civilization). And no culture can long sustain the widespread despoilment/destruction of the natural environment; the overt/covert enactments of genocidal-bearing supremacies; the institutionalized disrespect of elders and children; and the miseducation of vast segments of its people. Such constructed practices and the beliefs that support them destructively linger only when they serve to uphold the worldviews and practices of dominant groups who gain from keeping them in place. Whiteness is one such social construction.

*White Reign, Deploying Whiteness in America* (1998) represents whiteness as a hegemonic social construction, yet many of its authors seek to retain it by reinventing it to be non-racist and committed to social justice and equality. In “have your cake and eat it too” fashion, they propose to keep it *and* transform it, not acknowledging that if whiteness is transformed, it will no longer be white. As a social construction, whiteness would cease to exist. Working to sever white people from the constructed ideas and practices of whiteness — which some call abolishing whiteness (Ignatiev and Garvey 1996; Roediger

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Note: A copy of this review was sent to Joe Kinchloe and Shirley Steinberg prior to publication. Their response will appear in the next issue of *Encounter*.

1994) — finds no support in *White Reign*. This review intends to explore the meanings associated with whiteness by examining several chapters and referring to positions and points in others. It is conceptualized as a pedagogical tool that intends to engage, challenge, and interact with the texts of others.

In Chapter One, entitled “Addressing the Crisis of Whiteness,” Kincheloe and Steinberg trace the origin of whiteness to the period of Western Enlightenment where it became linked with the concept of rationality in the form of the white, male dominant/colonial position. The rise of science as an epistemology systematized the privileging of mind over body, man over nature, and so-called “universal” objectivity over particularized subjectivities.<sup>1</sup> They explain how a color-coded racialization of people, that exists until today, was produced out of Europe’s colonial emergence in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the enslavement of African peoples, and the military and hegemonic dominance of other world regions in succeeding generations. The authors warn that the hegemony of whiteness, fed by the free market in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and emerging globalized electronic manipulation, will become near seamless in the next century.

Kincheloe and Steinberg agree that whiteness is pervasive and its hegemonic power is undeniable. At the same time, they see it as having flexible boundaries — not as an impenetrable monolith. Ascribing to the idea that there are many ways to be white, they point out that members of Jewish, Italian, and Irish cultures haven’t always viewed themselves as white. This theme of the non-fixity and flexibility of whiteness is articulated by several authors in *White Reign* (e.g., Rodriguez, McLaren, Anijar).

Kincheloe and Steinberg use such examples of white permeability/flexibility to support their case for reinventing whiteness. Referred to as a “pedagogy of whiteness,” they call for transforming whiteness through teaching white students about it. They propose that the critical pedagogy of white studies advocates can be used to avoid the guilt and shame they have observed in white students who first learn (as near adults) about the genocidal practices of those they identify as their cultural forbears. Their angst only seems to worsen when they experience African American, Latino, Native American, and Asian classmates, authors, and public figures who

suggest that this race-based onslaught is still alive and as insidious than ever. The authors refer to students’ guilt, shame, and angst as if they only relate to the past. It is more likely that the depth and resistant nature of these feelings are located in students’ present guilt, shame, and angst when they think about having to give up whiteness — or even think about whiteness at all — with its racialized privileges and “superior” status. After all, the hallmark of white privilege is that one can have it without even having to recognize it or feel anything about it.

White studies progressives also report (in a warning sort of way) that numbers of these distraught white students become self-denigrating and turn toward right-wing groups who profess an interest in protecting white people as persecuted and marginalized victims of egalitarian-seeking policies and practices such as affirmative action. By “pointing fingers” at the right wing, Kincheloe and Steinberg suggest that there are gradations of whiteness with some forms being worse than others. This is a version of the notion that the Ku Klux Klan are the real racists and all other white people by comparison are not. While it seems hopeful to think that there is a difference between people who wear sheets and those who choose to live in segregated communities, each plays a role in maintaining a racist society. Whiteness as a social construction — in all its varied forms of presentation — is all racist. Kincheloe and Steinberg seem to recognize this when they state that the domination and oppression of others is at the root of the social construction of whiteness. Said differently, the defining characteristics of whiteness have been/are to dominate others in order to be privileged. What then is left when these defining characteristics are emptied out? Does it mean anything to be white if racism and privilege are gone?

According to Kincheloe and Steinberg, whiteness is not conflatable with white people, yet they provide no evidence of there being enough exceptions to disprove the rule of whiteness or white rule. While white people don’t necessarily and totally collapse into whiteness, hegemony steadily pushes in that direction. The author’s response to the identity vacuum that many of their white students seem to be experiencing is to reinvent whiteness as an antiracist identity. What kind of identity is being antiracist?

For sure it makes you a better person — closer to the spirit of humanness (a different paradigm indeed), but a cultural identity it doesn't make.

In America, generations of racial privilege have severed white people from their national heritages. The trade-off of cultural identity for privilege has become painful for some white people who now realize what they have lost. Their ancestors gave up/changed their language, dress, customs, values, worldviews, and, in some cases, their names and physiognomy — all for the privilege of melting into whiteness in America with its guaranteed alterity<sup>2</sup> of people of African ancestry (Wynter 1990). And now, after decades of exposure to the popular cultural practices, self and cultural explorations, and public productions of people of color — and feeling paled by comparison — many white people are having a head-on collision with the non-identify of being white — with not knowing who they are.

If any identity with — and more importantly, any understanding of — Europe is to be recuperated, there needs to be some serious historical investigations and analyses of European history outside of the Eurocentric boundaries that have been drawn around its study.<sup>3</sup> *And these investigations need to go back much further than the Enlightenment.* We need to study questions such as:

- What was the source of Greek civilization: what was taken or stolen from this source and what was ignored or not understood (Bernal 1987, 1991; Clarke 1986; Goodwin 1995; Hilliard 1986; James 1954, 1988)?
- What effects did patriarchy have on the rise of civilization in Europe and how does this intersect with the rise of race-based supremacies (Ani 1994)?
- What funded the European Enlightenment both economically *and* intellectually (Asante 1987, 1990; Diop 1974; DuBois 1947; Galeano 1973; Morrison 1992; Said 1978; Williams 1973)?
- What are the psychological/psychopathological relationships between racial and sexual domination (Ani 1994; Wright 1990)?
- What is the biblical scholarship on what Cornel West (1993) calls the Judeo-Christian racist logic?
- And what is the nature of the class-based "hierarchical ordering of human value" that has his-

torically predominated in European cultures in which particular regional, economic, and gender groups (e.g., Eastern and Southern Europeans, all lower classes, women) were positioned at the bottom as inferior (Goodwin, 1999).

Given these inequalities, how motivated millions of Europeans coming to America must have been when they were invited to jump into the melting pot — that crucible of promised potential to purge them of their unalterable "have not" status. Assimilation was offered and taken as the "pardon" for a very long sentence of an identity *as the ones at the bottom*. To take on teaching and transforming whiteness (or even to explore a paradigm of identity based on the spirit of humanness) without the grounding of these knowledge bases, as this book does, misses essential steps. In so doing, it replicates the very apartheid conditions that have produced and fed that which white studies advocates profess to be interrogating and hoping to change. If we want to "do something" with the social construction of whiteness — whether we work to transform or transcend it — we need multiple and diverse funds of knowledge to draw upon. A social construction that has affected the entire world cannot be altered by using the same center staging methodology that created it — no matter how well intended.

In his chapter entitled "Whiteness is ... the Struggle for Postcolonial Hybridity," Peter McLaren describes whiteness as "an ideological formation transformed into a principle of life" (p. 66). He refers to whiteness as a form of social amnesia that associates all that is white with that which is normative.<sup>4</sup> Having social amnesia "permits" white people to see themselves as the unquestioned norm against which all others are measured; it makes it difficult for them to understand, according to the author, that whiteness is found in its oppressive, patriarchal, capitalist, and supremacist practices and in its effects of criminalizing, marginalizing, and exploiting all others.

McLaren further explains that the identities of the oppressor and the oppressed are difficult to separate — they depend on each other. Viewing this binary relationship as problematic to resisting whiteness, McLaren seeks a coalitionist politics grounded in the struggle for social justice and in the search for postcolonial hybridity or *mestizaje* where monoculture is at the margins and the "fusion" of others through

cross-cultural dialog is possible (p. 73).

McLaren's idea of *mutual* dependency between oppressor and oppressed is not accurate. According to Goodwin (1999), "When groups are linked in unequalness, the one 'on top' depends on the one 'at the bottom' to stay on the bottom." In this way, an oppressor group *depends entirely upon the oppressed* (e.g., to grow and harvest its food; produce needed/wanted products, build its infrastructure; fight its wars; mask yet promote its privilege; support its industry of social welfare as minimum wage workers and people who are unemployed, homeless, and imprisoned). As a social construction, whiteness requires whoever it defines as its alterity to be beneath it and to support it. The patronizing suggestion that those "assigned" to alterity depend on the privileged, is akin to the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century white assertion that those who were enslaved needed and depended on their "masters." How odd, when enslaved African people brought with them and employed their knowledge of advanced technologies in numerous fields, grew and made everything, provided all physical services, invented devices to improve production and the quality of life, mothered and raised the "master's" children, and provided a spiritual presence in a most inhuman context. Quite obviously, it was the other way around.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the identities of people of African descent have never depended on white or European people. African identities predate the experience of enslavement; they predate contact with Europeans by thousands of years. This suggestion of dependency based on oppression in the Americas truncates and distorts history in a way that has been used to uphold the beliefs and practices of white supremacy — clearly the opposite of McLaren's intentions.

Also, McLaren's call for fusion and *mestizaje* through cross-cultural dialog runs the risk of decontextualizing *mestizaje's* cultural and region-specific meanings. The genocidal onslaught of colonialism, enslavement, rape, and domination for over 500 years in the Caribbean *made* the context within which cultures blended. In retrospect we see Indigenous, African, and European influences in the blended origins of "new" Caribbean cultures — which many point to with pride and respect. Yet, the near obliteration of the original peoples of many is-

lands, the denial of Africinity and the historically lowered status of people of African and Indigenous ancestry, and the majority of wealth in the hands of those who claim European descendancy is the lived context of *mestizaje*. Versions of this colonial legacy are replicated all over the Americas.

While the demographic trends regarding the decreasing number of white people may make all of this moot, a call for hybridity in a postcolonial context does not erase the *colonial*; it does not necessarily open up a space within which white people can reinvent themselves — and on their own terms no less. Basing coalition building on social justice struggle seems hopeful, but in order for coalitions to work, participants need to have equitable power relations and demonstrated practices of right relations with others — neither of which the practices of whiteness support. If McLaren had called for white people to accept a *heterarchical* position among others, thereby acknowledging the leadership and knowledge that other cultures/groups can bring to the suggested dialog, the idea of cultures coming together would offer more possibilities.<sup>6</sup> Without care, fusion-seeking cross-cultural dialog as an antidote to monoculture is likely to result in dialog once again dominated by the voices who know the least about how to "be" (if not blend) with others.

In the chapter entitled "Is the Benign Really Harmless? Deconstructing Some 'Benign' Manifestations of Operationalized White Privilege," Frances Rains provides a much needed critique of the incongruent relationship between theoretical work on racism and the dysconscious practices of white privilege (King 1991) in the academy. Rains describes and deconstructs the coterminous relationship between racism and white privilege, both aimed at maintaining the status quo while the latter tries to maintain its invisibility. Rains explains how the power of white privilege's "unearned racial advantages" (82) secures racism while remaining cloaked and seemingly benign. Her categorization of five types of so-called benign reactions/responses held by white people provides a cartography of white privilege. Responses of entitlement, individual exceptionalism, the "other" is too alien to understand, guilt, and color blindness are guide posts of white privilege. They reveal how 500 years of white affirmative ac-

tion and its attendant psycho-social distortions have become so "given," "so there" as to be hard to see (and to name) by those who benefit from them. Rains' writing serves as a corrective lens. She draws from her own and others' experiences to produce a highly useful text for addressing racism in academic contexts, especially for white academics and students who are in such denial as to need "proof" that their social, political, and economic locations are indeed privileged.

Rains takes on a tough assignment that needs to be done: to teach to the simultaneous invisibility and omnipresence of white power. While I agree that such instruction is essential for those who claim to but fail to contest race, class, gender, and other hegemonies, it is an ironic and sad function of contesting white privilege that white people require and get so much attention. Responses to individuals such as the white woman at AERA (1996) who said, "But Frances, I don't think of you as Indian" or the white woman who patted the author on the knee during a discussion about race the year before at AERA saying, "Yes, but you made it" certainly warrant less time and more edge. Such individuals are "asking for" (i.e., need to get) responses far stronger than a thoughtful academic discourse that explains how privilege works.

In "Youth, Memory Work, and the Racial Politics of Whiteness," Henry Giroux produces an artful blend of personal memories and sociopolitical critique. Remembering himself as a white working class youth, he describes how his interactions with black classmates in and outside of school pulled him across the race and class boundaries that were rigidly drawn by the community in which he grew up. Giroux models one way to intersect and contest the current resurgence of racism, the brutal job competition and lack of jobs brought about by economic restructuring, the dismantling of social welfare programs, and the undermining of the potential of public education. He warns how these conditions put youth of color and white working class youth in further jeopardy.

Giroux begins with himself — with remembering and exploring the meanings of his own journey through race- and class-defined locations. This is not a form of identity politics but an example of how

memory of one's personal and sociopolitical experiences can be used to analyze the ways in which substantive change is possible. The idea of self-study hinged to concerns for youth and the protection of democracy and social justice is a promising methodology for interrupting the "curriculum of whiteness" named and described by Ladislaus Semali in this text. Compared to a "pedagogy of whiteness," whose admission qua acceptance of normative invisibility re-centers and further segregates and insulates it, memory work encourages critical self-reflection — for which there is no substitute — when trying to critique and challenge the one or more hegemonic spaces that society places on one's body. As knowledge of self in relation to others evolves, there is an increasing understanding of the interconnectedness of all life and a growing sense of responsibility for one's place within it.

I had several laughs in the chapter by Karen Anijar entitled "Once Upon a Time When We Were White — a Rather GRIMM Fairy Tale." For example, her response to Aryan cyberspace writings that criminalized all immigrants and people of color, she writes:

I would like to know what type of crime the white person engages in, what is the white person's specialized crime? Is it polyester? Or could it be transgressing the boundaries of good taste and wearing shorts in the summer (p. 262)?

At first, her humorous and fragmented discourse/pastiche of images and ideas seemed too whimsical for such a serious topic as race. But by the end of the chapter I began to think that Anijar's assemblage avoided the ivory tower seduction that race can be re-mapped by carving out a new space in the academy from which to study it. If, as Anijar suggests, "Whiteness is housed in a complex and contingent fun house of self-referentiality" (p. 253), seeking a reserved parking spot in the academy for a separate area of study runs the risk of further reifying the hermetic, exclusionary self-referencing character of whiteness. Being able to name, chart, and theoretically discuss the problematic aspects of the social construction of whiteness in a separate academic space is like riding a train on a circular track. Notwithstanding the impressive and progressive credentials of white studies advocates, I would suggest



that the same challenging explorations can occur/ need to occur in heterarchical contexts where there are many voices, backgrounds, experiences, and world views.

There are several chapters in *White Reign* whose deconstructive bent is quite useful. For example, in chapter 10 entitled "Developing a Media Literacy of Whiteness in Advertising," Daniel Nicholson clearly explains and supports how the institution of advertising serves to promote hegemony and "perpetuate and normalize the invisibility of whiteness" (p. 210). By analyzing several advertisements (e.g., Benetton, Diesel Jeans, and Workwear) targeted at Generation X, he shows how these cultural artifacts can be used as pedagogical tools for understanding the overt and covert raced, classed, gendered, and other messages of power and oppression. Nicholson explains how in addition to the market being used to sell, it is also used to contain and delimit resistance to any cultural curriculum aimed at fundamental change. He proposes that reading the latent messages in media "will foster a deeper understanding of what it means to be white — or *not* to be white — in our culture and society" (p. 210), and may be useful in efforts to create an egalitarian society.

In their chapter entitled "Whitewashing 'The Strip': The Construction of Whiteness in Las Vegas," Barbara Brents and Melissa Monson also recommend critiquing cultural sites for their race, class, and gender meanings. As residents of Las Vegas, their initial interpretations of the Strip as a site that exploited women (read white women) through images and embodiments of women as objects were altered when they realized that being white was limiting their perspectives about the Strip. "We live in a segregated material environment where the Strip is one of the largest employers of people of color. Discourse of and about Las Vegas mitigates against attention to this racial segregation. In other words, race is hidden in the structure of occupations, in the images of Las Vegas, and in our discourse about it. The iconography constructs normalcy, even as we construct normal identity against it" (p. 215). From their admitted white location, Brents and Monson view the presence and perspectives of people of color as concealed — both as service workers and in the themes and practices of casinos constructed as paradise-like co-

lonial sites of "feast and plunder" and hedonistic pleasure (p. 221). While the academic route to removing the blinders of whiteness is arduous, it is better than the dysconsciousness that uninterrogated whiteness produces. "Working" Las Vegas to expand a gender analysis with the omnipresent aspects of race and class helps to increase the visibility of whiteness and its commercial articulation, which the authors call "capitalism-run-amok" (p. 226).

In a similar way, Vicki Carter's chapter entitled "Computer-Assisted Racism: Toward an Understanding of 'Cyberwhiteness'" invites readers to be critical and vigilant of the virtual whiteness being produced in cyberspace through omission, misrepresentation, stereotyping, and overrepresentation of images, information, and sounds that reflect the social construction of whiteness. Carter makes a solid case for the cultural imperialism of the Superhighway — a wide-open area for critical attention and intervention. Characterizing cyberspace as "the newest form of white America's flight to suburbia" (p. 270), she warns that it is a reiteration of the racism so prevalent in the country's social structures. From numerous examples of software that assume the viewers/users are white and then overrepresent them, to computer representations of people that either erase race or caricaturize it, to the predominance of resources and educational sites that exclude by race and gender, she demonstrates how computer technology (for children and adults) has the potential to create virtual zones of elite whiteness and maleness that remain protected, isolated, and impenetrable. The author points out how ironic this is in a technology that markets itself "as a locale for free speech and open access" (p. 275). Carter calls for critical multiculturalists to interrogate the Internet and computer technologies just as they have been doing with other texts in order to address the "formidable cadre of instructional designers, instructional programmers, distance educators, and commercial providers, most of whom are white men and white women ... [who] are reproducing images in cyberspace framed by their own unexamined whiteness and reproducing a social construction of reality cloaked by its own invisibility" (p. 281).

This chapter models how to do a cyber critique of



this latest form of white flight found in technology-assisted venues with significant hegemonic potential to maintain whiteness. Beyond calling for more critical analysis, however, Carter doesn't offer much else. Can we afford to reproduce the decades of critique and debate that brought us to this not-even-satisfactory place of lip-serving multiculturalism? For example, Carter states that "although there are sites created by underrepresented and marginalized groups and other sites (such as Computerusers Against Racist Expressions and the Center for the Study of White American Culture, Inc.) ..., these are far outnumbered by other pages full of unexamined whiteness and white privilege" (p. 278-279). Even sharing a list of "sites created by underrepresented and marginalized groups" (none of which are mentioned) would insert other voices no matter how few by comparison. Without even naming and providing an overview of such sites, Carter unintentionally reproduces the closed space of cyberwhiteness through a very good critique of it.

"The Learning Organization: Reproducing Whiteness" by Sharon Howell explores the politics and practices underneath the Whirlpool Corporation — a worldwide organization noted for its leadership in organizational learning and in employee empowerment. With its world headquarters located in the City of Benton Harbor, Michigan, where it was founded in 1911, Whirlpool has moved all its manufacturing to places in America and other world regions where labor is cheaper and not unionized. This has left Benton Harbor — an over 92% black and poor community with virtually no employment from this global corporation standing in its midst.

Concurrently, Whirlpool has become a learning organization — a concept developed by Peter Senge (1990). He describes learning organizations as places "in which people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly deserve, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together" (p. 3). Focused on teamwork and collaboration (mostly of top managers), this postindustrial paradigm purports to value complexity, unpredictability, and multiple perspectives. While this corporate reinvention has increased productivity and assuaged

workers with talk of empowerment, Howell points out that it ignores issues of race, power, and inequality — what she refers to as "color/power evasiveness" (p. 290). This is a ripe context for promoting the cultural norms of whiteness and cloaking the identities of people of color.

In efforts to reach global sustainability, learning organizations position people as another commodity called "human resources" and ignore the vast disparities in wealth which they are part of creating. This wolf in sheep's clothing is described by Howell as a postindustrial version of industrial-age individualism and manifest destiny that supports the superiority of white people, particularly those economically positioned at the top. It also contributes to white blue-collar and white-collar workers joining unemployed and underemployed people of color at increasing rates as jobs are exported and further automated. The author criticizes Whirlpool Corporation for furthering this condition and for failing to look within (i.e., the effects of its policies and practices on Benton Harbor) before it expanded outside the U.S. Whirlpool's stated public commitment to community and cultural diversity — expressed values of learning organizations — rings false as it ignores the poverty surrounding its own headquarters.

Howell's critique of the learning organization as "master narrative" (p. 295) reveals how it is a Eurocentric model based on individualism and the silencing of those groups already marginalized in the culture. Even though collaboration is named, the master narrative obstructs "[l]earning based on interdependence found outside the dominant white cultural perspective [which] is not readily incorporated into organizational structure" (p. 296). This chapter is highly instructive and should be closely examined by educators who are (once again) exploring corporate models for adaption to educational contexts.

In the last chapter of *White Reign*, Ronald Chennault conducts an interview with Michael Eric Dyson entitled "Giving Whiteness a Black Eye." This is a profound title if the "black eye" refers to a needed vision from a black perspective. Dyson certainly provides some of this critical vision in his examination of how whiteness was invented and is represented; how it was articulated in the philoso-

phies of the “founding fathers” that created *and* contaminated American democracy and the laws of state, and how the myths of whiteness continue to be promoted by current superiorist social scientists.

While it is true that the tentacles of racism and whiteness are all around and through the land, and that critique is needed, Dyson’s discourse tends toward reification of the social construction of whiteness by viewing it as an object of interrogation that should have a place in the academy. While this social construction has always been supported by the academy, a “new” residence legitimized by departmental status will only prolong whiteness as we know it in endless study. Many academics are now writing about whiteness precisely because it is showing signs of destabilization in the general society (e.g., contestation and denial of whiteness as a cultural identity, de-mythologizing representations of whiteness in popular culture). Bringing it in to give it refuge serves to maintain this construction which was not made in the academy and can not be reinvented within its hermetic space. Whiteness cannot even be stimulated in new directions from that location, but it can be kept alive there until hegemonic social conditions call for its reemergence.

Critiques of whiteness should not be silenced in academe, but they need to be contextualized. The social construction of whiteness (i.e., white supremacy) cannot be critiqued and studied in isolation, that is, outside of the context of studying the European history and cultures of peoples labeled “white” in America. And, most importantly, this study and critique requires an intergroup effort. How can we decide that whiteness can (even must) be reinvented *before* we talk/think with and work collaboratively with representatives of everyone who has been affected? Dyson calls for *real* conversations across all groups, but his view that there are redemptive and productive features of whiteness clouds his position on who needs to lead these conversations. He notes that some white critics have rightfully cited the works of DuBois, Hughes, Hurston, Hamer, etc., but this doesn’t necessarily mean that they acknowledge the leadership of their colleagues who are the late 20<sup>th</sup> century counterparts of these pioneers. Honoring in retrospect is necessary but very safe. Dyson encourages collective efforts across groups

but offers no caveat about the positionality of white leadership which white studies programs will engender. If white progressives try to lead as the “Johnny come lateleys” to the critique of whiteness, what will keep them from making the same errors as their *trying-to-always-be-in-the-lead* forbears?

Dyson’s support for conversation is also compromised by the way in which he encapsulates race and identity within American time and space which is the dominant habit. It works to erase pre-fifteenth century, pre-colonial African, Indigenous, and Asian cultural identities which have never been “lost” or traded away like those of assimilated “white” Americans. While reference to these ancestral cultural knowledges is referred to as essentializing race by white liberals, progressives, and black scholars such as Dyson and McCarthy (in the Afterward of this book), its wholesale dismissal disregards the multiple knowledge bases needed to guide the untangling-dismantling of whiteness. These cultural knowledge bases have much to contribute to any effort to rethink whiteness. Yet Dyson’s reference to and respect for those who produced these knowledges only references and begins with their colonial victimization and liberation struggles. This seals off pre-colonial cultural productions, thereby keeping the social construction of whiteness in the same dominant position. Interdependence of people and the multiple and overlapping knowledge bases they represent is essential for any rethinking of whiteness. The historical narratives and memories of transgressive white resistance and collaboration which Dyson hopes to acknowledge will exist and be heard in such a multiply-informed context. However, if white studies makes a way, once again, for “auto-pilot” white leadership, it only reproduces the illegitimate hierarchy that white studies advocates claim to be reinventing.

Dyson also agrees with white studies advocates that whiteness is not all monolithically bad. He refers to variations of whiteness as “differentiated whiteness” (p. 320). In so doing, he merges white people and all their class, regional, religious, national, etc., variations with the social construction of whiteness. Why? Is it that white people (who obviously have variations) must cohere with whiteness as a strategy to save whiteness from essentialization as dominant

and supremacist? The dismantling of whiteness doesn't "end" white people; it just sends them packing in search of their lost identity. Is that so unimaginable?

### Some Suggestions

There is no doubt that the social construction of whiteness needs to be critiqued. Then, given the enormous amounts of evidence about how the practices of this social construction have obstructed the broad-based interests of human development and survival, it needs to be dismantled and discarded. Perhaps "filtered out" is a better way to express the process of discarding whiteness over time. The question is whether we can face the historical realities of whiteness honestly enough to assist in the dismantling process, or are we going to cater to fear (our own or others) and retard the process. The title of this book (*White Reign, Deploying Whiteness in America*) curiously uses the military term "deploy" (the spreading out of troops or the stationing of forces to form an extended front). Does this title mean that the transformed whiteness advocated by the authors is supposed to end white reign when deployed, or is transformed whiteness supposed to keep the reign of whiteness in a more benevolent form?

Benevolent *White Reign* seems more likely in that the book proposes a "pedagogy of whiteness" that continues to center stage whiteness. This is reflected consistently in many authors' assumptions of white leadership for the proposed study of whiteness. This hermetic approach is a racial shadowbox — a way to avoid direct and decisive action about whiteness — because there is no admission of needing assistance to avoid reproducing whiteness in forms that appear different but continue to support the core concepts of whiteness. Not much else is possible, even with the best of intentions, when the process refuses multiperspectival and heterarchical leadership. Said simply, white people can't fix (reinvent or dismantle) whiteness alone.

We could make a quantum leap, however, if we understood that whiteness continues to serve only the interests of a small number of wealthy white men — leaving the deluded masses of "white" people with just enough crumbs of privilege so that they will continue to prop up their masters who look enough

like them to engender the unethical hope that they or their descendants will one day become the truly privileged. The unhealthy power of whiteness can be seen in the fear and unwillingness of people who have viewed themselves as white for several generations to disengage from a category that has oppressed them as well as most others.

Consider, as a colleague explained to me, that actively "dropping" racism or whiteness (i.e., ascribing to equity, fairness, and reparations) along with being "lost" from European identities (that were traded away through assimilation) might be a promising possibility; it could bring one closer to the spirit in one's human identity — underneath all layers of social construction (Goodwin 1999). This, of course, takes real work and real time and is not to be confused with the often heard white response when asked to consider race: "Oh, I'm just human."

A "racial netherworld" (p. 21) as Kincheloe and Steinberg call abandoning whiteness sounds rather attractive — not frightening and lonesome as they suggest. Think of it as a temporal space — a place from which to shed the ignorance and fear attached to living in apartheid spaces. Read, learn, listen to others' narratives and perspectives; search your own ancestral past (near and far) for examples of life-enriching practices. Reinvent yourself and join others in the same/similar pursuits — remembering that alienation and identity issues are not the singular property of white people. Expand your world and seek to know many histories and cultures. As described by Connie Titone in this book, become an ally who takes on the struggle against racist practices and tries to understand the effects they have on those with whom you are allied and on yourself. Deny privilege when possible, contest it always, and guard against being "part of the problem — not because of [y]our race but because of [y]our possessive investment in it (Lipsitz 1995, 384). And finally, learn to carry ambiguity as part of the assignment of your historical moment, as it is a real antidote to a possessive investment in the identity of whiteness — reinvented or otherwise.

### Notes

1. While not articulated here, other ways of knowing such as spiritual ecology, intuition, group-based knowledge, conscious reflection, caring, and the common sense that derives from observation/interaction with the seen and unseen world were either not considered as

ways of knowing or were devalued by Enlightenment philosophers (Allen 1986; Cajete 1994; Tedla 1995).

2. Sylvia Wynter uses the term *alterity* to represent the material and epistemological location of African and Indigenous cultures whose "outsidership" is defined by the dominant culture as an anti-thetic and oppositional location or subset of itself. By doing this, the dominant cultural group promotes its own partial perspectives and accounts as "objective" and universal while subsuming and delegitimizing the perspectives and accounts of all "others."

3. Eurocentric ideology is a body of myths, symbols, ideas, theories, and practices that exclusively or predominantly value the cultural productions of people of European origin as superior and universal. Consequently, this ideology subordinates and denigrates the cultural manifestations of peoples from all other lands of origin as inferior (DuBois 1947; Keto 1989). Eurocentric ideology is seen in all forms of supremacy that use overlapping subjectivities such as race, class, gender, religion, language, and ethnicity as criteria upon which to privilege some groups over others. The historical and cultural accounts and perspectives of people of European origin that are not confounded by supremacy are not considered Eurocentric by this author. In this way, one can distinguish between that which is Euro-sourced or European-centered and that which is Eurocentric.

4. This transparency or invisibility is discussed by several other authors in this text (Brents & Monson, Carter, Demello Patterson, Maher & Tetreault, Nicholson, Rains, Rodriguez, and Semali), many who cite earlier authors on the same topic (Frankenberg 1993; Keating 1995; McIntosh 1988/1992; Nakayama and Krizek 1995).

5. The extent to which there is no whiteness without Africanness, but there is Africanness without the social construction of whiteness suggests that dependency may only exist on the part of those who have what George Lipsitz (1995, 384) calls a "possessive investment" in whiteness.

6. The term *heterarchy* [and its corollary *hierarchy*] refers to power relations and leadership. Heterarchy combines a form of the Greek word *heteros* (different, other) and *arch* (leader) [as compared to the term hierarchy which combines a form of the Greek word *hieros* (holy, sacred) and *arch* (leader)] (Lincoln and Guba 1985). A heterarchal position among others means that no groups have an innate "natural" ordering or pre-arranged superiority of ideas, beliefs, methods, etc., but that there is a shifting order of leadership among groups determined by which group has the knowledge and expertise that is needed in a given context. Who leads is not pre-determined through power relations; it is changeable and context dependent.

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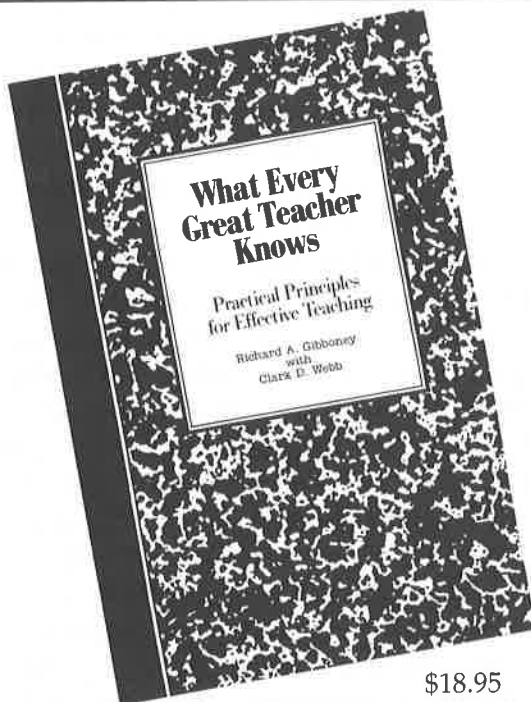
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# Book Reviews

## Whitehead and Philosophy of Learning: The Seamless Coat of Learning

by Malcom D. Evans

Published by Editions Rodopi, 125 pages, 1998

Reviewed by Ron Miller

This book joins the small but growing literature on the philosophical foundations of holistic education. It is a useful book for practitioners and for students who are not yet initiated into the specialized discourses of philosophy or curriculum theory. Malcolm Evans is a retired school principal and superintendent who has pored through Alfred North Whitehead's difficult works in order to find a coherent guide to educational practice. As he comments often in this text, that task is not easy: Whitehead never presented a definitive philosophy of education, and we need to infer from his informal suggestions (in *The Aims of Education*, for example) and his complex works in metaphysics and "process" cosmology what a Whiteheadian philosophy of education would specifically involve.

The portrait that Evans draws is remarkably similar to the educational philosophy that we in holistic education have been suggesting for the past several years, without the benefit of Whitehead's insights. Indeed, Evans uses the term "holistic" frequently. He argues that the central idea of Whitehead's view of education is *connectedness*: Human life is unified with all of nature; all experience is related across space and time; sense perception only has meaning through the emotional, symbolic, and historical situation in which it is experienced. Education itself "does not stand alone; it is an institution and activity embedded in a world order and connected with virtually every element of that world order." Ultimately, human life — and education — must be seen in *spiritual* terms because we are creative beings; we find meaning through *transcendence* of immediate experience and established knowledge.

Given this worldview, education would no longer consist of filling up students' passive minds with "inert ideas" (Whitehead's famous phrase) but would strive to engage each learner in the pursuit of *wisdom*

— a broad and meaningful understanding of the world as a whole and one's place in it. Evans shows how the main elements of Whitehead's philosophy contribute to such a view of education. Whitehead's emphasis on *creativity* as the basic life principle means that students are active, seeking, self-motivated to learn. His notion of *prehension* implies that the human mind engages new knowledge purposefully, rather than receiving it passively. His term "*concrecence*" refers to the integration of experience, meaning that new perceptions and experiences are not mechanically added on to the old, but incorporated into a larger whole. And Whitehead emphasized the *rhythmic* nature of life; his organismic philosophy is influenced more by biological than physical principles, and in education this led Whitehead to propose that there are rhythmic stages of learning, which he called romance, precision, and generalization. Education should pulse with life, and not be conceived as a flat, mechanical processing of information in fulfillment of external standards.

Evans's study of Whitehead was aided by process thinkers David Ray Griffin and John B. Cobb, Jr. (among others), who have argued that Whitehead's cosmology suggests a "constructive postmodern" worldview. Within this worldview, says Evans, we would move from individualism to community, and from competition to collaboration. We would rein in the scientific materialism that, when misapplied to human affairs, obscures the fullness and uniqueness of individual persons. Evans describes what a postmodern world would look like: "People's lives have meaning; there is a satisfying participation in community, the environment is protected and renewed, an extensive spirituality prevails, reason is enriched by intuition, creative change is tempered with tradition, and human beings and all of nature are seen as a unity in a fragile biosphere. This context for education is quite different from that of mechanistic modernity."

This book introduces us to Whitehead's life and work, and strongly reinforces ideas that holistic educators have expressed in various ways. Because Evans is himself not a philosopher, his book is far more accessible than Whitehead's own writings or the

works of many other interpreters. Of course, there is a price for this accessibility; Evans gives us a fairly one-dimensional picture, an admiring portrait of a "world-class philosopher" (he uses this phrase several times) whose work, it seems, he does not feel competent to criticize. Evans makes a brief, tantalizing reference to the contrast between Whitehead's and John Dewey's educational approaches, but does not explore this contrast to illustrate possible gaps or weaknesses in either of their work. A reader who completes this introduction to Whitehead's thought would then want to read William E. Doll's *A Postmodern Perspective on Curriculum* or Donald Oliver & Kathleen Gershman's *Education, Modernity, and Fractured Meaning* to further understand the implications of process philosophy for educational theory and practice.

Whether or not it would then be worthwhile for education theorists to tackle Whitehead's own major works *Science and the Modern World* and *Process and Reality*, I have not yet decided. For all his enthusiasm about Whitehead, Evans left me with the impression that one would have to struggle with enormously dense and complex texts in order to arrive at the few basic principles of process education that he has identified. I am glad that Whitehead is on our side, but I wonder whether the more recent literature in holistic thought, including popular works by Ken Wilber, Fritjof Capra, Anna Lemkow, Theodore Roszak, and Charlene Spretnak, for instance, provide much the same substance in a more usable form. We would, of course, still need to be careful to read such works with a critical eye, and perhaps that is where some familiarity with Whitehead, or Dewey, or Habermas, or other thinkers of similar stature would be most useful.

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## What Every Great Teacher Knows: Practical Principles for Effective Teaching

by Richard A. Gibboney and Clark D. Webb

Published by Holistic Education Press, 139 pages, 1998, \$18.95

Reviewed by Evans Clinchy

How does one review a book that attempts to digest all of the philosophy and practices of progressive, developmental, Dewey-based education, with all sorts of practical advice on how to go about it, and all in a mere 139 pages? And what's more, a book that succeeds in that task?

As Butch Cassidy once put it, who are these guys anyway? Well, Gibboney is a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education, the author of the justly acclaimed *The Stone Trumpet*, a former high school teacher, former Vermont Commissioner of Education, former deputy secretary of education in Pennsylvania and currently a visiting scholar at the John Dewey Project on Progressive Education at the University of Vermont. Webb has been a teacher at both secondary and university levels for more than 30 years and currently teaches at Brigham Young University. Credentials, in short, that obviously could hardly be bettered.

Gibboney and Webb begin by dividing their book into two parts. Part I is essentially an introduction that gives an overview of what progressive, Deweyesque education is all about, with special emphasis on Dewey's belief that the aim of education is the cultivation of human intelligence in the service of the creation of a truly democratic society. Part II contains the heart of the book — eighteen "teaching principles," each of which begins with the words "Every great teacher..." and goes on to elucidate a great truth about how education should be conducted. Every such principle is then illustrated with examples from the practical experience of classroom teachers. Principle 1, for instance, says that "Every great teacher makes the cultivation of thinking in a decent and humane environment the primary goal of teaching" and is accompanied by two examples of classroom practices from two Pennsylvania high schools.



The eighteen principles are divided into general topics, beginning with "Thinking and Experience" and continuing with "Teaching Objectives," "Subject Matter," and "Teaching Methods."

Perhaps my favorite principles are those listed under the category "Thinking and Experience," including No. 5 which says that "Every great teacher recognizes that thinking is not separated from doing something with a purpose in mind; the mind is in the doing, not outside of it." For me, Dewey's insight that all useful and productive thinking must come from and be generated by first hand, everyday experience is one of the great intellectual achievements not only of Dewey but of all progressive educators. It is what underlies all of the ideas about "learning by doing," "inquiry-based schooling" and, indeed, "child or learner-centered education" — everything, in short, that good education is and always has been.

Indeed, ever since the dawn of human consciousness some two million years ago, we human beings have evolved and learned all of the things we have needed to learn in order to survive as a species through immediate, first hand experience and our evolving capacity to think — to reflect upon and learn from that experience (our evolving "intelligence"). It was only some 5,000 years ago in the Western world (and most especially in the classical Greek world of Plato and his followers) that we began to develop a philosophy and an educational system that denigrated and ignored that first hand experience in the "real" world of everyday life.

It was Plato, of course, who established his Academy, the original Groves of Academe and the precursor of all our later Western academic institutions, not in downtown Athens as an integral part of the business and political life of the agora or marketplace. Rather, he located it out in the pastoral surroundings of the countryside. This was perhaps the first real "campus," that piece of land set off by itself and devoted to the cultivation of the mind and the education of a carefully selected, elite group of the male young, relatively free of the distractions of the workaday world. It was also Plato who located "reality" in the distant and changeless realm of "ideas" and the "ideal" rather than in the mundane sphere of actual people and objects, which he considered to be mere shadows on the wall of the world's cave and there-

fore of far lesser rank and essentially of no value at all.

As the philosopher Edward S. Reed (1997, 1) puts it:

The Western philosophical tradition about which we hear so much these days in arguments over so-called 'cultural literacy' has been an intellectual force for undermining everyday experience from its beginnings. The great Athenian thinkers promulgated a dichotomy between reality and appearance in order to denigrate everyday experience as mere appearance, and to emphasize that one's experience is never so real as one's thoughts, as even a casual reading of Plato reveals.

Gideon Sjöberg (1960, 311) sums up this attitude:

Among the ancient Greeks, as with other traditional urbanized peoples, the scholarly activities of learned men were, with rare exceptions, divorced from everyday, mundane existence. While some individuals in Athens and other cities made observations of the world around them that added to the store of data in astronomy, biology, physics and other fields, their general attitude toward life was in many cases a positive aversion against increasing knowledge by experiment. In the ordinary affairs of life, they esteemed mental activity far more highly than physical, which they thought unworthy of freemen and fit only for slaves.

While Plato's Academy itself and many subsequent institutions of higher education have been located out in the country, still others in ancient, medieval, and modern times have been housed in the heart of some of the Western world's largest cities. But even these urban institutions are almost always found within a physical enclave or a series of enclaves isolated from their surrounding urban environment — Oxford, Cambridge, the Sorbonne come to mind here, as do many of our present and most prestigious American universities such as Harvard, Yale, MIT, Columbia, the Universities of Chicago, Pennsylvania, California at Berkeley.

Following the model thus established by our institutions of higher education, this same physical disconnection has existed in the past and still exists now for virtually every elementary or secondary school in the United States — urban, suburban, or rural. Each of these schools sits on its own plot of land sur-



rounded, if possible, by playgrounds or playing fields and thus physically cut off from its immediate, everyday surroundings.

The result of this standardized practice at both our higher and elementary and secondary educational levels has been the conscious and deliberate creation of *educational ghettos*, secluded enclosures inhabited solely by teachers and particular age groups of students with the rest of the world carefully excluded. But this fact that our institutions of both higher and elementary and secondary education in the West have traditionally been physically isolated from their surrounding communities is only one manifestation of the even more important fact that they have also traditionally been *intellectually and educationally* isolated from the everyday lives of their students and the larger society.

The disconnection between the "life of the mind" and the ordinary, everyday life of the larger, non-academic society was carried into and reinforced by the creators of what we have come to call "the Scientific Revolution" of the 16th and 17th centuries. As Reed (1997, 3) puts it:

Although Greek philosophy and its offshoots tended to downgrade ordinary experience in the hunt for ideal essences, it took the great scientific revolutionaries of the 1600's to make the destruction of experience a basic tenet of philosophical thinking. First Galileo insisted that the book of nature was written in the language of mathematics — and therefore that ordinary human experience could not decipher the world's meanings.... According to the scientific revolutionaries, all appearances derive from ideas which in turn derive from the mind's reaction to physical stimulation coming into the nerves. Some thinkers, such as Newton, considered ideas to be little images in the brain.... For an ordinary observer to find out about the real world, according to this standard philosophical view, the observer must follow just those special 'rules of method' that the new philosophers had put forth. Many of these texts on method are quite dismissive of the problems of daily life.

It would, however, be quite wrong to assume that the great masses of common folk throughout Western history were not being "educated" because they were unable to inhabit the higher Latinized and mathematicized latitudes of the formal schools and

universities. There was, first, that quite elaborate, all encompassing contextual university set up and run by the medieval craft guilds — the apprenticeship system that became the standard in every walk of common life. But there was also the experiential university of everyday agricultural and commercial life and its non-formal educational system, beginning with the First Industrial Revolution in the Middle Ages.

It has been this long history of both philosophical and educational detachment and isolation from the "real world" of everyday life that has rendered our entire Western system of education from elementary school through college, university and graduate school so eminently boring and irrelevant to the vast majority of the population who will not end up as university scholars.

And it is this joint philosophical and educational tradition that John Dewey, Maria Montessori, and all of the creators of "progressive" education (now joined by the major figures in the cognitive psychological revolution such as Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Duckworth, and Gardner) argued against and sought heroically — if unsuccessfully — to change over the past 100 years. It is to this new tradition in Western thought and educational practice that Gibboney and Webb are making a major contribution in this book. And a worthy contribution it truly is.

If I have any criticism to level against Gibboney and Webb, it is in all likelihood a manifestly unfair one. They take great pains, as I have said, to provide the teachers, principals (and even parents) who live, work in, and use our very real schools with solid, practical, and eminently progressive advice and counsel. But they unfortunately do not provide such people with specific advice and counsel about how to combat the present top-down, authoritarian (indeed, totalitarian), anti-educational, and completely anti-progressive "re-form" juggernaut of new, universally mandated, "high," indeed "world class," academic standards accompanied by endless and endlessly cruel "high stakes" testing that has descended upon all of the schools of this land over the past ten years.

This disastrous and inescapable national and state educational agenda is rendering even the most cou-

rageous and adventurously progressive school people increasingly impotent and helpless as the demand for endless content "coverage" and "teaching to the tests" destroys individual school and teacher autonomy and thus the power to do what is educationally right for the students committed to their care.

This criticism is manifestly unfair to Gibboney and Webb, since their specific aim is to provide sound and sage advice about how teachers and principals can institute progressive practices in their everyday schools and classrooms. A few words, however, on how those practicing school people might join together to form networks across their states and even all across the nation to create a strong, anti-totalitarian, thoroughly democratic, unstintingly progressive movement — and thus a genuine educational "reform" movement — would not have been totally amiss.

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## Ecological Education in Action: On Weaving Education, Culture, and the Environment

Edited by Gregory A. Smith and Dilafruz Williams

Published by State University of New York Press,  
1999, 244 page paperback, \$19.95

Reviewed by Andrea Sabatini McLoughlin

In what ways can educators work to help themselves and others to live a good life in an ecologically sustainable sense? *Ecological Education in Action: On Weaving Education, Culture, and the Environment* presents twelve stories of life and learning that share a common element — at their core, they each relentlessly challenge the myopic belief that any form of education could ever be successful in nurturing ecologically sustainable lifestyles and mindsets unless it resulted in the transformation of the cultural myths and mores which underlie modern industrial-economic thinking. The roots of our rapidly accelerating ecological crisis stand firmly grounded in cul-

tural assumptions that value short-term economic rewards over the stability of natural systems, placelessness over local appreciation and action, and individualism over community. When left unacknowledged and unexamined, such assumptions undermine educational efforts developed for change.

While the educational arena is often seen as a locus of change for cultural malaise, contemporary approaches to environmental education have been "simultaneously a major part of the problem and potentially a major part of the solution" (Cajete, p. 192). Because children and adults learn from the atmosphere and culture in which their lives are embedded, attempts to simply add on a veneer of environmental consciousness to education without confronting the tacit and environmentally destructive cultural assumptions that remain in place, will fail. Yet educational efforts that include a reevaluation of the symbols, customs, rules, and roles that otherwise form the taken-for-granted assumptions of modernity have great potential for helping people to develop more sustainable and life-affirming habits.

Of central importance in this collection of essays is the reciprocal relationship between human culture and natural systems, and the efforts of some educators to awaken people to the deep examination of the relationship between sustainability and human culture. *Ecological Education in Action* asks two central questions: In what ways might educational efforts assist people to shuck off the veils of cultural replication and instead embrace the philosophies, dispositions, and skills that would enable them to re-engage in living harmoniously with the planet and with each other? How are the possibilities of such transformational visions being realized in educative venues today? In asking these questions, Smith and Williams bring together powerful stories of the successes and tribulations of cutting-edge, ecologically transformative educational work. The contributing authors offer creative multiple perspectives on environmental education that arise from the concepts of

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ecological sustainability and respectful, community-based social interaction.

Part 1 of the book examines connections between current thinking in curriculum, K-12 schooling, environmental literacy, and culture. It focuses on the education of the young in ways that empower those students to awaken their natural and just sensitivities so that they can help bring about a sustainable future. Joseph Kiefer and Martin Kemple speak of the power of the Common Roots program, a school redevelopment effort connecting children, gardening, curriculum, food literacy, local action, and the rebuilding of community. Paul Krapfel shares the wisdom of, and methods for, facilitating "deeper lessons" in the outdoors with children so that they reconnect most strongly with both their education and the natural world. Madhu Suri Prakash and Hedy Richardson unveil the far-reaching cultural destruction wrought by that seemingly unassuming bastion of civility: the water toilet. They discuss alternatives utilized by other peoples, and especially relate the work of the Xico-Chalco school community which resisted modern public plumbing with its accompanying industrial sewage systems and instead chose to educate itself in the construction of more sustainable dry sanitation systems. Dilafruz Williams and Sarah Taylor present a richly detailed account of the formation of, and daily learning experiences in, Portland's Environmental Middle School — a place where environmental studies no longer exist on the curricular periphery, but form the very core of a socially responsible education. Elaine Schwartz focuses her lens of ecofeminist literacy on classroom literacy studies, helping readers to visualize the scope of cultural reconsideration that could emerge from educational lessons grounded in robust examples of children's literature and critically aware pedagogical techniques. Angayuqaq Oscar Kawagley and Ray Barnhardt put forward a penetrating comparison of the worldview of the Alaska Native people with that of the Western scientific-industrial culture, arguing convincingly for a mutually respectful moral dialogue and educational practice between non-native and native peoples that would result in benefits for all.

Part II of the book widens the scope of our vision by engaging the reader in reflection on the possibili-

ties and challenges inherent in higher and nonformal education. Stephanie Kaza explores how the use of two models of liberatory education in college courses can aid learners in considering their moral responses to ecological issues in ways that move them from isolation and despair to community and empowerment/emancipation. C.A. Bowers identifies some of the major shifts in thinking that are required in order to re-examine contemporary views of knowledge and intelligence, then delves into the philosophical imperative of challenging students in education so that they begin to recognize, continue to examine, and eventually act upon, the dominant and commodifying forces of modern culture. Peter Blaze Corcoran details autobiographical methods that center on re-awakening and re-creating students' personal connections with the natural world, and speaks to the importance of involving prospective teachers in environmental education that prepares them to educate children in the values and activities necessary for sustainability. Gregory Cajete reaffirms the powerful lessons to be learned from indigenous communities in terms of groundedness in place, groundedness in community, and groundedness in a spirituality which celebrates and sustains human biophilia. His examples, while drawn from a variety of indigenous cultures, conjoin in their primary focus on relationships and in the lessons that those relationships offer for a more sustainable world. Gregory A. Smith sets forth a compelling argument for eco-supportive nonformal educational efforts for adults in the mainstream to occur concurrently with those created for teachers and schoolchildren. In particular, he chronicles the work of two organizations that are doing much to stimulate adults embedded in the industrial mindset to take more responsibility for their local places and ways of living through either the power of restoration work or the subtle questioning of life and work in the belly of the industrial beast. In a fitting closing chapter, David Orr reminds us of the power of the human potential to think past the obvious and the usual, and into the open realm of moral, intellectual, and community possibility through the scope and design of man-made materials and places. The story of the building of the Oberlin Environmental Center is not simply the saga of the construction of one building, but an

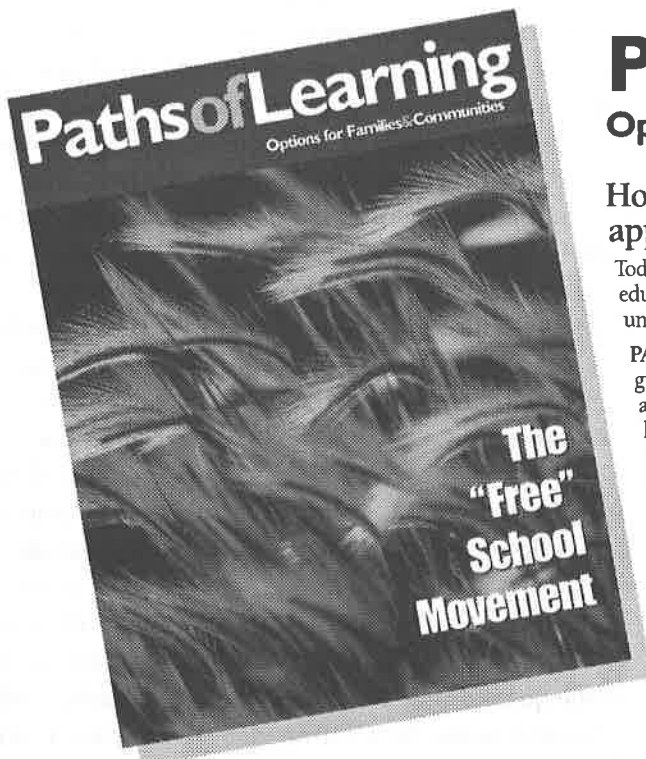
example of the potential for creating liveable change based in ecologically enlightened values, skills, and intellect.

In all of these narratives, it is clear that mainstream views of education, of worthwhile knowledge, and most fundamentally, of the human relationship with the world must change if the evolution of an environmentally sustainable system is to be fostered. Effective environmental education must help children and adults to develop the values and skills that they need in order to know themselves as honorable and responsible beings intimately bonded with the earth and each other. It must help them to find the inner strength that they need to be able to withstand the seductive onslaught of assumptions that otherwise

spread the modern monoculture. It is just such educative efforts which are described in this book. *Ecological Education in Action* does not shy from acknowledging the difficulties of the work ahead, yet it resonates with potential, with methodology, and thankfully, with hope.

#### NOTICE

Due to the special theme of this issue and its unusual length, the seventh installment of our continuing serialization of *Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum* will not appear until the next issue of Encounter.



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