ENCOUNTER

EDUCATION FOR MEANING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Zen Reflections on the Place of Clarity in Education

Does a still mind and a clear heart have a place in education? Does clarity, compassion, and a recognition of inherent interdependence have a place? Does the apprehension of reality free of distortion? What say you?

> If you encounter the Buddha on the road, kill him.
> Have you eaten your cereal this morning?

In the classical definition, derived from the Latin *educare* and the practice of Socratic midwifery, education is a process of leading forth, of drawing out.

What is drawn out?

> Nothing! (No-thing-ness)

What is there to remember? to recollect?

> Only that which *is*.

Which is?

> Nothing! (No-thing-ness)

Absolute Nothingness is absolute fullness, for all that is, *is*.

Socrates concludes that knowledge is virtue. Is he suggesting that if one has a conceptual understanding of moral principle that one will always act justly? No. Socrates knew, as we do, that desire repeatedly overwhelms what we think we should do. What Socrates is suggesting is that moral knowledge is ontological. To know the good is to participate in it and thus to be and do good. This ontological form of knowing is based in awareness not thinking . . . no thinking.

> To be good is to do good.

What is being?

Nothing!

There is a pristinely clear lake which lies at the base of reality. This lake is made of…water?

Consciousness…

the realization of which leads to the ultimate expression:

Compassion

Against Socialization?   Against Transmission?   Against Testing?   Against Tracking?   Against Meritocracy?   Against Empirical Rationality?   Against Metanarratives? Against . . . ?

Opposition rests upon duality, which sets one upon an unending spiral of being for and being against. Duality is the source of suffering.

Just Be.

No lines drawn in the sand or set in stone . . . lines drawn in air. Better yet, no lines, yet with an awareness of the reality and/or unreality of that which appears.

Can Being be Taught? Find the teacher, quickly!

No one can teach…Nothing is taught.

Let the children be, love them, guide them toward clarity of heart and mind.

— Dale Snauwaert and Jeffrey Kane

The Importance of Nature to Children

William Crain

Growing evidence suggests that children have an especially strong interest in nature and that rich contact with nature helps them develop powers of observation, creativity, and a feeling of rootedness in the world.

The other day I saw a little girl, about 2 years old, walking with her caretaker across a city square. The girl registered little emotion until she saw a pigeon, and then she lit up. She pointed at the bird as if she had discovered something of enormous importance and tried to follow it about. But the caretaker merely said, "Yes, a pigeon. Now come along." The child complied for a few steps, then changed direction and began following the pigeon again, this time provoking a sterner response.

It's my impression that such scenes are quite common. Children have an intense interest in nature—in animals, ponds, trees, sand, and so on—but adults don't typically share their enthusiasm. Indeed, this change was the focal concern of some of our most venerated Romantic poets. For example, William Wordsworth believed that the child's experience of nature is so intense that it opens the child to the divine. As he put it in the opening lines to his *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* (1807/1985),

> There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Apparelled in celestial light...

Sadly, Wordsworth said, we lose this exquisite sensitivity as we grow up.

> Turn whereso'ev I may,
> By night or day,
> The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

Still, Wordsworth maintained considerable optimism. He urged us, as adults, to appreciate the beauty of nature that we do continue to see. He also urged us to rejoice in the child's special sensitivity to nature and to draw inspiration from our own early feelings,

> Those first affections,
> Those shadowy recollections,

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Which, be they what they may,

Are yet the fountain-light of all our day.

I believe, however, that if Wordsworth were alive today he would write with much greater desperation. Today, it's not just that everywhere we turn we fail to see nature with the radiance of our childhood years. We also see nature being destroyed. We see construction crews removing the weedy waysides, woods, fields, and ponds that children once loved to explore. In their place, real estate developers are creating indoor malls, office buildings, and housing developments with parking lots, perfectly manicured lawns, and neatly landscaped flowerbeds. Anything wild is being removed.

Simultaneously, our society keeps enriching children's indoor environments. We provide children with stimulating new videos, television programs, video games, and computer technology. Indeed, the great vision of many national leaders is to link every child to state-of-the-art computers and the Internet. Never does a public official wonder what it means for the child to learn in a completely artificial environment, cut off from earth, waters, breezes, vegetation, and wildlife.

Of course, children can learn about nature through television programs and computer technology. But the experience is second-hand. Gary Nabhan and Sara St. Antoine (1993; see also Nabhan & Trimble 1994) found that even in the remote Sonora Desert along the U.S./Mexico borderland, most of the 8- to 14-year-olds in their sample said they had learned more about wildlife from TV and movies than from direct experience in the out-of-doors. Most of the children, who were from Native American as well as Latino and Anglo backgrounds, had never spend a half hour alone in a wild place or had collected natural treasures such as feathers, rocks, and bones from their desert surroundings.

Is declining contact with nature really a cause for concern? Are children really in danger of losing something very special, as the Romantic poets said? If so, precisely what capacities or traits might children be failing to develop?

For answers, we turn to developmental psychologists and other social scientists. But the information they provide is sparse. Researchers have largely ignored the fact that the child lives in a natural world at all. Every year, thousands of studies investigate children's thinking about math, scientific concepts, language, and people, but rarely has anyone examined children's experiences of the natural world.

I believe that this neglect occurs because the concerns of psychologists and other social scientists basically reflect society's dominant goals and values. Our society wants children to achieve success in the human-made world. We want children to learn the cognitive skills that enable them to succeed in a high-tech workplace. We also want them to learn to interact well with other people. But the development of the child's affinity to the natural world is hardly a national priority.

Thus, the theory and research I will review in the next several pages are exceptions to the dominant trend. They represent initial efforts to get a picture of what nature means to the growing child.

Theoretical Speculations

Like the Romantic poets, some scholars have speculated that childhood is a time when we take an especially strong interest in nature and develop permanent feelings with respect to her.

The most elaborate theory is the "biophilia hypothesis" developed by the biologist E. O. Wilson (1993) and his colleagues. *Biophilia* means love of living nature, and Wilson suggests that humans have a moderate, genetically based attraction to other living things. Our interest in nature, Wilson suggests, makes sense when we consider the environment in which our species evolved. For more than 99% of human history, our ancestors lived in a natural environment—not a mechanical world. Thus, a curiosity about and sensitivity to nature must have conferred survival value on human populations.

Contact with nature, the biophilia theorists further assert, is vital for human self-actualization and self-fulfillment. Nature has inspired much of our art and our poetry, and we feel often feel most content and restored in natural settings (Kellert 1993).

But, the biophilia theorists emphasize, our attraction to nature isn't terribly strong. It isn't nearly as strong as the hunger drive or the sex drive, for example. Our attraction to nature, moreover, is only partly genetic and requires experience with nature, sometime prior to adolescence, to develop and flourish.

That is, there is probably a "sensitive period" during which children are highly motivated to make contact with nature, and if their experiences during this time are impoverished, their feelings for nature will never be as strong as they might have been. As Orr (1993, 427-428) says,

> If by some fairly young age ... nature has not been experienced as a friendly place of adventure and excitement, biophilia will not take hold as it might have. An opportunity will have passed and thereafter the mind will lack some critical dimension of perception and imagination.

Other scholars—for example, Maria Montessori (1909/1964), Edith Cobb (1959), Joseph Chilton Pearce (1977)—also have speculated that childhood is a special time for developing a feeling for nature. They have suggested that the child finds nature a source of wonder and develops a bond with it. Cobb suggested that children experience a sense of unity with nature in their play and creative activities—a sense that creative adults try to recapture.

The writings I have briefly reviewed tend to be abstract and sketchy. They often lack concrete examples precisely where one needs them most. Nevertheless, they do raise the two general questions that I believe research can most helpfully address.

1. Is childhood a time of special sensitivity to nature? Are there specific ages when this interest is greatest?

2. What are the specific benefits of rich contact with nature? Do children need experience with nature to develop creativity? to develop some sense of unity with nature or belonging in the world?

Research on Children and Nature

Are Children Especially Sensitive to Nature?

If childhood is a time of special sensitivity to nature, we might expect children to show especially strong environmental concerns. Polls have suggested they do. In one U.S. poll, Peter D. Hart Research Associates found that most young people (grades 4 through 12), as well as their parents, believed that the individual in their family who was most concerned about the environment was the young person. The young people frequently lobbied their parents to recycle and to purchase environmen-

tally responsible products. The youngsters also were typically more worried than their parents about the general deterioration of the planet's ecosystems (Koennen 1992). Other surveys also have found that young people are far more concerned about the environment than adults (Nabhan and Trimble 1994, 40, 177).

A nationwide Louis Harris poll gives more specific information on the ages when environmental concerns might be the strongest. This poll's results are summarized as follows.

Table 1. Children Concerned "A Lot" About the Environment* (Source: Harris Poll, 1993)	
Grade	Concerned "A Lot"
4-6	67%
7-8	54%
9-10	53%
11-12	50%
* Children were asked whether they were concerned "A Lot," "A Little," or "Not at All."	

As we can see from the table, the children in grades 4 to 6 were more concerned about the natural environment than the adolescents (grades 7 to 12).

Informally, I have repeatedly been struck by the passionate environmentalism of 4th to 6th graders in their essays and letters. In New Jersey, the *Star Ledger* newspaper sometimes includes letters to the editor from young people as well as from adults, and the differences are noticeable. The adults typically write about issues such as auto insurance, welfare reform, and high-profile court cases. The teenagers discuss environmental issues, but also focus a good deal on school matters such as the value of the arts and athletics. But it's the youngest writers—those in grades 4 to 6—who write about nature with the most urgency. They begin their letters with statements such as, "People should stop cutting down trees," "Pollution is hurting the planet more by the minute," "In America people don't care enough about animals," and "We must save the panda bears." The passion with which children defend other life forms, while not yet carefully documented, also has impressed others (Nevers, Gebhard, and Billmann-Mahecha 1997).

Other research has found that children, in com-

parison to adolescents, talk more about animals, nature, and environmental issues when they make up stories or describe what societies should be like (Abrams 1977; Crain & Crain 1976; Crain & Suh 2000).

In their actual behavior, too, a difference has been noted. Researchers have found that whereas children love to find and build hideouts and shelters in natural settings, these activities decline in early adolescence. This decline has been observed in rural New England (Hart 1979), in Devon, England, and on the island of Carriacou in the West Indies (Sobel 1993). It seems that when young people enter adolescence, they become less interested in finding "homes" in the natural world and more interested in finding their place in the social world.

Several strands of evidence suggest, then, that the child's interest in nature is particularly strong prior to adolescence. I should emphasize that this conclusion must be considered very preliminary. The data is still too sparse to say anything definitive. I also would note that most of the evidence comes from children in the "middle childhood" years, from about 8 to 11 years of age. My impression is that an interest in nature is even stronger in the earlier years, but the research evidence on this point becomes very fragmentary and somewhat contradictory (Chawla 1988; Crain and Crain 1976; Kahn 1999; Leming, Dwyer, and Bracker 1995; Musser and Diamond 1999), probably because polls, questionnaires, and other standard research methodologies are less appropriate with younger children. The younger child's interest in nature is an important area for future research.

How Does Rich Contact with Nature Benefit Children?

Even if research showed beyond a doubt that children have a particularly strong interest in nature, psychologists, parents, and educators would want to know specifically how rich contact with nature helps the child develop? Valuable leads are to be found in a small but important number of studies that have examined children's spontaneous behavior in nature's outdoors. These studies are often informal, but they are rich in detail. After culling through them, I would like to suggest three ways in which nature helps children develop their potentials.

Nature Stimulates Powers of Observation

In a pioneering study conducted between 1971 and 1973, Roger Hart (1979) investigated the outdoor behavior of the 4- to 12-year-olds in a rural New England town. Hart interviewed the children, observed their free behavior, and followed them about as they led him to their favorite places. As he had expected, the children engaged in lots of active play—running, jumping, and climbing—and they loved to hike and explore their natural surroundings. But Hart was surprised by the patience and care with which the children simply observed nature. For example, some children spent long stretches of time quietly watching the fish, frogs, salamanders, and insects in the ponds, brooks, and river. Sometimes a child would kneel by the water for many minutes, with his or her hands cupped, waiting for a catch. As a result of their observations, the children came to know the locations and habits of the water species in remarkable detail.

Many children also were keen observers of all the fruit-bearing trees and bushes in the area. They knew their precise locations and states of readiness. Hart (1979, 321) said their knowledge was comparable to that of professional cultivators.

Adopting a similar methodology, Robin Moore (1986a) found that 9- to 12-year-olds in urban sections of England liked to go to the parks and undeveloped, weedy areas to collect things such as rocks and acorns and simply to observe. They took considerable pleasure in quietly looking at birds, ponds, flowers, bees, ladybugs, lizards, mice, and other small animals. As they showed Moore their favorite places, he often felt he like he was on a nature tour with an expert guide. The children showed him plants and wildlife in places that initially appeared to be nothing but neglected wasteland.

Nature's effects on children's perceptions became very clear during a project Moore initiated in Berkeley, California, in 1972. Moore and community members (including children) began transforming an all-blacktop, 1½-acre elementary schoolyard into a new playground that included a ½-acre nature area with ponds, streams, wooded areas, and meadows. Five years later, Moore interviewed the fourth grad-

ers who had experienced the change, and their comments speak of a sensory awakening.

The children said that whereas the all-blacktop yard was "boring," the nature area was a wonderful place just to sit or to "go on little trips and look at things" (Moore 1989; 1986b, p. 57). One child said she especially liked to see the sunlight through the trees, and another liked to taste, smell, and look at the plants (Moore 1989). Many children were especially interested in the animal life at the ponds, and the children's comments reveal their new alertness.

> "Look, there's a bunch of really tiny [fish], they must have just hatched."
> "Oh, wow, there's a 'biggy'!"
> "Where?"
> "It's disappeared" (Moore 1987, 16).

Like the children in other studies, these children often simply sat and quietly observed. "I love to look at the frogs," Lela said, "They're t-h-a-t big and all green.... Last time I saw one it jumped right out of the water" (Moore 1987, 16).

The children also attended to the sensual effects of the water itself. "It's like a cool breath of air blowing in your face," one child said. "I feel like I'm swimming and I'm not even in the water" (Moore 1987, 17).

In the classrooms, the teachers encouraged the children to discuss and document their observations, and the children were aware of how much they were now learning. As one said, "You would never say, 'Let's go outside and learn about a cement yard.' There's only one thing to know about a cement yard. It's a cement yard, period. [Now] there's always something new to find out" (Moore 1989, 205).

Nature Fosters Creativity

In Hart's study in rural New England, the children loved to build things. They built tree houses in the sturdy maple and apple trees, and they constructed model towns and highways in the loose dirt beneath the trees. As noted earlier, they also energetically built clubhouses, hideouts, forts, and other shelters on the ground—frequently beneath the canopies formed by large bushes or tall grass.

Actually, the younger children, between the ages of 4 and 7 years, didn't so much build shelters as find them. But the older children, between about 8 and 12

years, engaged in a good deal of actual construction, using sheets, discarded lumber, and other "loose parts" to help build their structures. In the winter they built shelters out of snow.

Children's shelters have drawn the attention of other researchers. MaryAnn Kirby (1989) found that the 4-year-olds on a grassy preschool yard in Seattle were strongly attracted to the shelters they found and could alter a bit. Huddling inside them, the youngsters engaged in an unusually large amount of make-believe play. Apparently, the shelters' cozy atmosphere and natural elements stirred their imaginations. Sobel (1993) documented the enthusiasm with which 8- to 11-year-olds construct shelters in rustic surroundings in Devon , England, and on the island of Carriacou in the West Indies.

Children also build shelters indoors and in urban settings. Researchers have yet to systematically compare the amount of shelter-building in different environments, but one gets the impression that it is greatest in relatively wild, outdoor settings (Hart 1979; Moore 1968a). City children, for example, seem to build shelters most readily when they have access to undeveloped open space, such as fields with tall grass. Children become excited by the possibility of exploring wild areas, and they feel an urge to build an outpost or base from which to venture forth. As Sobel (1993, 61) says, they create a place to be at home in the outdoors.

Nature also inspires children's art and poetry. Parents and teachers know how commonly the sun, trees, clouds, birds, and other aspects of nature appear in children's drawings. Most adults are less familiar with children's poetry, but nature's inspiration seems powerful. I have examined the poems by 2- to 8-year-old children (some of which were written down by attentive parents) in four collections (Chuckovsky 1925/1968; Heard 1989; Koch 1970; Rogers 1979), and I estimate that over two-thirds of the poems deal with the natural world.

The poems in Rogers's anthology, *Those First Affections* (1979), are particularly impressive. Most of the poems reveal the kind of keen observation we discussed earlier. The children's senses are wide-awake. For example, 8-year-old Wendy Hancock (Rogers 1979, 106) calls attention to a sound that could easily be missed:

The storm is over and gone away,
Not a bird sings, not a twig moves.
There's driftwood on the beach
and the sea is low,
After the storm
After the storm.

But there was a sound,
Was it a rabbit scurrying
Or a dog barking?

No, no, no,
It was the whisper of the trees
Far away,
Far away.

Other poems alert us to other sensations, such as the sounds of brooks, the sight of a glimmering sun, the fragrance of a flower, the feel of the cold.

Many of the poems, in addition, have a remarkable freshness and immediacy because the children assume that they are on intimate terms with all aspects of nature. In fact, the children frequently speak directly to plants and animals as they try to understand the world. Two-year-old Thomas Broadbent (Rogers 1979, 19) seems to ask a basic question of existence.

Bu'fly, bu'fly
Fell in a pond
Why spider, why spider, why?

Four-year-old Hilda Conkling (p. 34) speaks directly to a flower.

Sparkle up, little tired flower
Leaning in the grass!
Did you find the rain of night
Too heavy to hold?

With disarming simplicity, these children remind us of what it is like to be open and responsive to the life around us.

Nature Instills a Sense of Peace and Being At One with the World

I have described how natural settings prompt quiet observation and noted how children's alert observations contribute to their poetry. But nature also creates states of quiet and calm that differ from alert observation. In rural New England, Hart found that the children spent considerable time simply resting in a seemingly introspective manner. This was partic-ularly true at "froggy ponds," sluggish brooks or ponds that sometimes contain frogs, insects, or other small wildlife. At water's edge, the child often stared into the water in a daydream-like state, aimlessly dabbling dirt or water as he or she did so. In these moments of quiet, the children seemed to feel a fluid connection between themselves and the water—a oneness with the world (Hart 1979, 167, 171, 205, 334).

Nature's quieting effect is striking in Robin Moore's study of the Berkeley schoolyard. When the yard was entirely asphalt, there was constant fighting and bickering. But in the new nature area, the children played together more harmoniously, and they were much quieter. This was true of both the boys and the girls, who had previously played apart. In the nature area, they commonly joined together in relaxed conversation (Moore 1986b). As one child said, "It feels good there. Really quiet. Lots of kids just like to sit around and talk" (Moore 1989, 201).

I believe the children often felt calm in the nature area because they sensed that they were in the midst of a nurturing presence. It was as if they had become members of a very loving family. Describing the nature area, the children said things such as, "It makes me feel at home." "Being alone doesn't bother me now." "It's just a good-natured place." "It seems like one big family there" (Moore 1989, 201-203). As Moore said, the nature area gave the children a new sense of belonging.

Sometimes the children experienced particular moments of heightened connection to the natural environment. When a pond is still, Kelli said, "It makes me feel speechless, it's so quiet there. It makes me feel warm inside.... I just feel nice about myself" (Moore 1987, 17).

Childhood feelings of calm and connection also are prominent in Louise Chawla's (1990) important study of 20th century adult autobiographies. Those writers who remembered intense experiences with nature as children highlighted feelings of calm and rootedness in the world—feelings that lasted a lifetime. As Chawla noted, an especially eloquent description of such feelings is found in the 1979 autobiography of Howard Thurman, an influential African American minister.

Thurman, who grew up in Daytona, Florida, in the

early 1900s, frequently felt lonely as a boy. His father died when he was 7 years old and his mother was distant. But Thurman felt comforted by the night, which provided him with a kind of maternal reassurance.

> There was something about the night that seemed to cover my spirit like a gentle blanket.... [At times] I could hear the night think, and feel the night feel. This comforted me and I found myself wishing the night would hurry and come, for under its cover my mind would roam. I felt embraced, enveloped, secure. (1979, 7)

Thurman felt a similar relationship to an old oak tree in his yard; leaning against it gave him a feeling of peace and strength. The woods, too, seemed to befriend him. But his most intense experiences came at the seashore. When he walked along the shore one night, and the sea was very still,

> I had the sense that all things, the sand, the sea, the stars, the night, and I were one lung through which all life breathed. Not only was I aware of a vast rhythm enveloping all, but I was part of it and it was part of me. (Thurman 1979, 226)

Even the storms seemed to embrace the young Thurman, and his boyhood experiences of unity with nature gave him a

> certain overriding immunity against much of the pain with which I would have to deal in the years ahead when the ocean was only a memory. The sense held: I felt rooted in life, in nature, in existence. (1979, 8)

I have described three ways that rich contact with nature helps children develop. Nature stimulates children's powers of observation, promotes their creativity, and instills feelings of peace and oneness with the world.

These benefits seem important. Yet, as mentioned earlier, nature has been diminishing in children's lives. Even while Hart (1979) and Moore (1986a) were studying children's outdoor activities in New England and in England, they observed how adults were rapidly replacing natural areas with pavement, concrete, and neatly manicured lawns. The Berkeley nature area was a bold, but rather isolated effort to reverse a sweeping trend. In the remainder of this essay, I will note how the absence of nature may be con-

tributing to two widely observed emotional problems.

Implications for Emotional Disorders

Attention Disorders

Many children have difficulty paying attention. They have trouble focusing on tasks and are generally restless. In about 3 to 5% of U.S. school age children, the problem is so severe that it merits a psychiatric classification: Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. But in its varying degrees, the problem seems much more prevalent and has caused alarm among some health professionals (Baren 1994; Wenar and Kerig 2000).

Researchers generally assume that the cause of the disturbance is genetic or physiological. But we have seen that children are capable of remarkably patient and careful observation in natural settings. Thus, the environment may play a role. Today's outdoor environments may be too sterile and boring to appeal to the child's senses and engage the child's powers of careful observation. What's more, today's indoor environments may actually exacerbate attention problems; channel changers, video games, and other technological devices invite the child to constantly change or accelerate stimulation.

Efforts to prevent and remedy attention disorders, then, might try increasing children's time in natural settings. There is some evidence that care for animals can reduce severe attention problems (Katcher & Wilkins 1993), and opportunities to explore nature's outdoors might also foster patient and careful attention in many children.

Loneliness

A wider problem is loneliness. People seem alienated, adrift, and alone. Several great social theorists, such as Emile Durkheim (1930/1951) and Erich Fromm (1941) have suggested that isolation and loneliness is the characteristic pathology of the modern age, and the problem seems to becoming visible at younger and younger ages (Bronfenbrenner 1986).

Scholars have suggested various explanations. Durkheim (1930/1951), Fromm (1941), and others have pointed to the loss of communal ties in modern, individualistic societies. Other scholars have suggested that we look at problems with the modern

family. When, for example, parents become too pre-occupied with their work lives, children often grow up feeling neglected and alone (Bronfenbrenner 1986; Elkind 1994).

In psychoanalytic theory, object relations theorists such as Margaret Mahler (Mahler, Pine, and Bergman 1975) and D. W. Winnicott (1965; see also Kaplan 1978) have suggested that the roots of isolation can be found in early mothering. In healthy development, these psychoanalysts say, the mother's empathic responses to the baby's needs contribute to the baby's sense of being harmoniously at one with the world. As the child grows, he or she becomes more independent, but the early sense of unity with the mother stays with the child and helps the child weather separations, rejections, and losses. When, in contrast, children lack early feelings of pleasurable unity, they may grow up feeling very alone and adrift in the world, and any threat of rejection makes them feel like they are falling apart. Although most psychoanalysts are not too explicit on the matter, the implication is that the increased isolation in today's world reflects increased problems in early parenting.

All these explanations have merit. Rarely, however, has anyone raised the hypothesis that modern loneliness has to do with our estrangement from nature. The studies of Hart (1979), Moore (1989), and others suggest that natural settings foster strong feelings of peace and connection. Nature seems to act like a new mother, calming and comforting the child, and making the child feel that he or she belongs in the world. As Howard Thurman (1979) wrote in his autobiography, experiences with nature made him feel rooted in life itself. Shouldn't we consider the possibility that people feel alone and adrift today because they grow up in such artificial environments that they lack connections to nature as a comforting, maternal presence?

Conclusion

I have reviewed research that tentatively suggests that childhood is a period of special sensitivity to the nature and that rich contact with nature helps the child develop powers of observation, creativity, and a sense of peace and belonging in the world. I also have noted that the absence of nature in children's lives may be contributing to two of the more visible emotional problems today, attention deficits and loneliness.
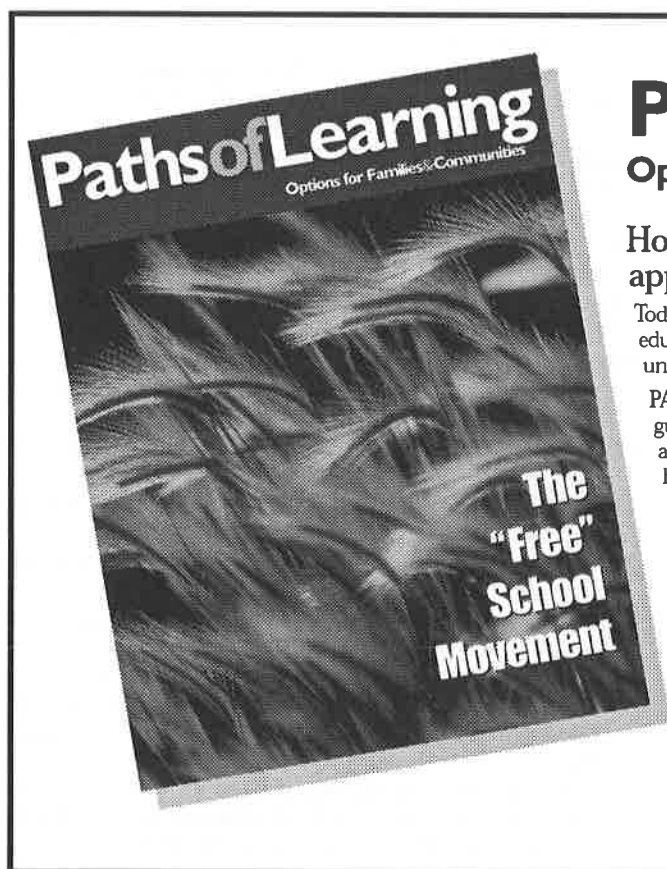
The research I have reviewed represents only a beginning. Much more is needed before we can make conclusive statements on the ways in which rich contact with the natural world helps children develop. But in a world in which the natural environment is so seriously threatened, I believe the current research supports the need to act now to preserve and restore nature. We must do so for the sake of our children, to say nothing of the survival of other life forms.

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Our Life Out of Balance

The Rise of Literacy and the Demise of Pattern Languages

Derek Rasmussen

Literary-based conceptual language has supplanted and devalued pattern language, thus devaluing people and cultures that operate within it.

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I was in downtown Toronto a while back; I went to find a restaurant that was supposedly on the ground floor of one of those big glass skyscrapers. I walked around and around looking for the entrance, but for the life of me I couldn't find it among all the similar rectangular glass panels. Next door was an almost identical building, but it had a small granite lintel protruding from the glass which drew my eye to the doorway underneath. (Frustrated, I went in there and ate lunch instead.) In their book, *Pattern Language* (1977), Alexander and his associates say that the lintel on the second building was sending a message from the architect to the visitor, in effect saying, "Yoo-hoo. Over here." Alexander would probably say that the first building had a message too: "Get lost."

Culture, says Goody, is a compilation of these communicative acts: Something is expressed, something is comprehended, over and over again in ways that people come to expect (Goody 1977, 37, 26). Communicative acts like these make up what Egan calls our "languaged understanding"; however, Egan (1997) limits his use of this term primarily to denote individual understanding facilitated by oral and written language. But by combining his insights with those of Alexander, Goody, Bowers, and Steele, we can develop a broader explanation of what languaged understanding is for *cultures*, and how different types of languaged understanding form and influence different cultures.

For the purposes of this paper, I will redefine *languaged understanding* as the methods (conceptual and physical) whereby people-in-relation come to understand, communicate, and negotiate meaning together. Languaged understanding is shared, col-

lective, relational understanding—as opposed to innate or supposedly freestanding, objective understanding. Languages communicate meanings because people negotiate with each other what the meanings will be (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 1999). An expanded interpretation of languaged understanding allows us to examine a thus far neglected polylingualism—that of embedded nonalphabetized cultures—and allows us to form a critical view of the monolingualism of Euro-American education. As for a definition of culture, I will borrow Jacques Barzun's (1989, 89): "a network of beliefs and purposes in which any string in the net pulls and is pulled by the others, thus perpetually changing the configuration of the whole."

Illich (1992), Havelock (1986), and Goody (1977) seem to characterize the gulf between embedded and disembedded cultures or between mature ("primitive") and "modern" civilizations as primarily a gulf between orality and literacy—yet the orality-literacy dichotomy seems insufficient to explain the deep differences in understanding between the two types of cultures. In this paper, I propose to do five things: (1) I will present a broader model of languaged understanding that includes the non-abstract modes that pervade more embedded cultures (as described by Armstrong, Bowers, Couture, and Scollon and Scollon). (2) I will examine how alphabetized communication is expanding at the expense of pattern-languaged understanding. (3) I will describe some of the impacts of alphabetization on non-literatized cultures. (4) I will examine how Euro-American culture equates the non-literal state with the "undevelopedness" of children and primitives, and thus equates literacy with education and development. And (5), I will suggest some practical considerations for educators.

Towards a Broader Definition

Art educator Bob Steele has argued that drawing is a language: expressive, communicative, and collective, but also founded on an innate capacity within individuals (Steele 1999). Steele says that children are born with at least two innate languages: speech and drawing. Children who are encouraged to draw, says Steele, "can articulate rich content in a simple line, expressing thoughts and feelings far be-

yond their ability to manage in words" (Steele 1998, 8).

> All languages are important—and it is so important to expand our definition of language—but drawing is the one children can use most spontaneously, the one they can employ to experience empathy. There is an awful hiatus in the education of young children as we pressure them to learn the codes of literacy and employ every stratagem to develop rationality and, in doing so, neglect the affective side of mental development or isolate it in special compartments—the much neglected arts. But empathy must be a part of every learning situation or we will never achieve environmental health or social cohesiveness.

Steele raises an important challenge: Can we expand our definition of languaged understanding? How might our culture be different if we all were *bilingual* as he describes it; that is, able to understand and communicate through drawing as well as speech? By focusing attention only on oral and literal forms of language, is it possible that scholars have defined monolingualism too narrowly?

American educator Chet Bowers includes art, architecture, clothing and adornment as "metaphorical" languages, and suggests that the use of natural phenomena as analogs for understanding human events is a hallmark of "sustainable cultures" (Bowers 1997, 4). Unfortunately, these forms of understanding are viewed as "low-status," says Bowers, thus they are eclipsed by the "higher-status" abstract uprooted knowledge of Euro-American culture. Abram and Bowers argue that the tendency of our education systems to narrow our conceptions of knowledge and language to those that fit our predominately oral/literal understanding is at the root of our present ecological crisis (Abram 1996; Bowers 1995). In Bowers's and Steele's terms our education promotes a type of monolingual culture; not everyone has to be able to dance or draw to graduate, but we are all expected to be fluent in literacy and numeracy.

If Bowers is correct in describing manipulation of built space (architecture) as a form of language, then what are we to make of the more diverse linguistic competencies of many non-Euro-American cultures? What are we to make of people whose entire mem-

bership may be proficient at building dwellings, and can also draw, sing, and dance?

> Dance, music, poetry, architecture, temple design as mandala, religion, all coevolved. The people of Tamil Nadu used the language of music to talk about poetry or buildings, or the language of religion to talk about dance and song, or the aesthetic vocabulary of architecture to talk about religion. (Snyder 1980, 54).

Wasn't Isadora Duncan reputed to have said, "If I could tell you what I meant I wouldn't have to dance it"? Is it possible that our literatized minds have overlooked a broader type of polyglot, a type that still exists in less alphabetized cultures? Drawing, dance and architecture are highly specialized languages in our culture; only a narrow segment of our adult membership is conversant with these expressive tools.

The diagram below shows how the wider range of languaged understandings might be encompassed by a broader definition:
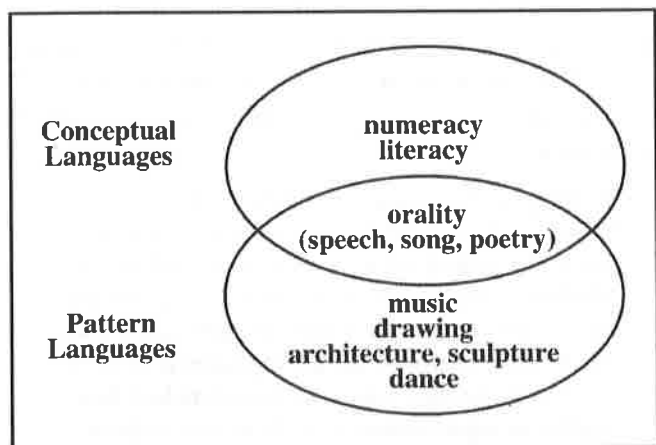
In this schematic, the types of languaged understandings are divided into the primarily conceptual and the primarily pattern-oriented. The second type borrows its name from one of the most important books ever written (often referred to as the architect's "bible")—*Pattern Language*—by Christopher Alexander and his associates. Orality is so effective as a language because in some ways it overlaps both the pattern and conceptual realms—its patterned communication being most easily discerned in the rhythm and metre of poetry and song. One could also say that pattern exists in purely conceptual language; for example a metaphor could be thought of as a pattern:

By comparing one thing to another in metaphor we learn about the first thing by seeing where it fits the second and where it doesn't. But the most important

Alpha-Numeric Understanding	Pattern Languaged Understanding
Abstract, conceptual, explicit	Tangible, tacit
Thin: paper-based	Thick: form/space-based
Superficial meaning	Deep meaning
"High-status"	"Low-status"
Space and silence irrelevant	Communicates through space and silence
Context independent	Context dependent
Biological diversity irrelevant	Linked to biological diversity

difference between conceptual and pattern languages is that the latter communicate through quiescence as well as activity. This is most evident in music. In drumming, for example, the different durations of silence between impacts are as much a part of the message as the strikings of the drum. In alphabetized communication, blank pages typically say nothing to the reader. Unfortunately, behind the walls of Euro-American education, blank pages or silent pauses do signal something: problems—time to call out the counselors and break down the silence, convert it into confession or diary entries. Alpha-numeric output is what schools produce.

Westerners tend to be oblivious to pattern language because we tend to confine meaning to the domain of conceptual language, or priorize situation-free critical discourse over context-dependent tacit knowledge. This conflict between high- and low-status knowledge, between superficial and deep meaning, may also explain some of the resistance of America's indigenous peoples to institutional education. Wes Jackson speculates that the reason we assign greater value to "knowledge learned … in classrooms and textbooks," is that this type of knowledge "is more complicated for us to learn and internalize," although, in essence it "is not all that complex." But deeply nuanced traditional knowledge, acquired through "daily experience and stories in an informal setting…, for however *complex* it might be, is not all that complicated to internalize," because it is acquired "second nature," "woven in with the rural setting, the daily work, the moral code" (Jackson 1987, 14).

What Are the Characteristics of Alphabetized Understanding?

How has alphabetic thinking shaped our culture? What happens when an embedded culture permeated by nonabstract modes of languaged understanding is literatized? The links between literacy and the "inventions" of knowledge, education, and independent "selves" have been outlined by Illich (1992), Havelock (1986), and Logan (1986).

Havelock, for example, has explained how in ancient Greece the "conversion of an acoustic medium for communication into a visible object" spawned the belief that what was symbolized "was permanently true to the psyche, as opposed to fleetingly present to the ear"(Havelock, 1986). The ancient Greek interest in categorizing permanent mental truths amounted to the self-conscious discovery of the intellect and intellectualism, symptomized by the "proliferation of terms for notions and thoughts and thinking, for knowledge and knowing."

> The assumption has grown up that writing is language, rather than merely a visual artifact designed to trigger the memory of a series of linguistic noises by symbolic association.... The confusion is understandable, because it is only as a language is written down that it becomes possible to think about it ... to see it as a phenomenon wholly separate from the person who uses it.... As language became separated visually from the person who uttered it, so also the person, the source of the language, came into sharper focus and the concept of selfhood was born.... Selfhood and soul conjure up convictions which in the West have been powerfully reinforced by 2000 years of Christianity (though it is worth notice that the same conceptions seem to be lacking in the Old Testament). They form a foundation for the belief in individual identity and devotion to personal liberty which is so highly prized in Western democracies. (Havelock 1986, 112-113,120)

Illich modified Havelock's theory, arguing that a widespread faith in the existence of independent, free-standing stuff called knowledge did not come about until the invention of *silent* reading. This "ideology of literacy," argued Illich, did not depend on everyone becoming literate, it merely depended on everyone tacitly accepting the superiority of literacy.

"Without this visualization of the text," said Illich, "there is no idea of 'knowledge' that is laid down and deposited in books, of knowledge that can be reproduced and communicated ... thus conceiving the idea that an absolute identical knowledge exists somewhere behind two individual copies" (Illich 1992,114). The emphasis on visualization of the text has also been the key factor in the ascendancy of sight over the other human senses in the behavioral history of Euro-Americans. As explained by Rifkin, Abram, and others, as Euro-Americans increasingly depended on sight alone to make sense of their surroundings we became a disembedded culture populated by disembodied beings (Abram 1996; Rifkin 1991). Descartes may have written "I think therefore I am," but—as Saul (1995, 101) has noted—that suggests that he didn't look down while writing.

In fact, most non-alphabetized cultures have not seen fit to disembed a process called *education* from their ongoing pattern of life in order to transfer discrete objectifiable "knowledge" or "information." "The world does not contain any information," asserted Illich, "It is as it is" (Illich, 1973, 86). Our belief in a collection of independent, mental atoms called knowledge is not a universal belief; it is a by-product of literacy.

> Writing is about seeing and believing in symbols that are substitutes for sensual reality. The page, decorated with permutations of the alphabet, cannot represent smell, taste, touch, space, the teachings of the six directions, and earth. Most importantly, the alphabet is incapable of representing silence.... Deciding to subject reality to representation in 26 letters reflects a decision that reality can be represented in 26 letters.... This (is the) alphabetization of thought. (Sheridan 1991, 24)

Educators have long believed that conferring literacy on members of an oral culture would make them, in Havelock's words, "wake up from the dream" (in Stuckey 1991, 78). Stuckey calls this the "superiority-from-literacy" argument; an argument advanced, for example, by Freirean educators (see Macedo and Freire 1987). Havelock and the Freireans argue that "Nonliterates must be brought into fuller life," and that only by "reading the word" can you "read the world" (Stuckey, p. 80-83; Macedo and Freire). In this view, literacy not only "makes minds," it "makes

minds intelligent" (what it does to the rest of the human being is beneath notice) (Stuckey, p. 78). In Euro-America and the colonies, the spreading idolization of literacy between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries also resulted in the increased awareness of two closely linked but hitherto underemphasized concepts: childhood and primitiveness.

Inventing the Primitive: The Conversion of Nonliteral Understanding into Childish Understanding

As Aries has documented, beginning around four hundred years ago in Europe, a growing number of distinctions began to be made between childhood and adulthood: increasingly childhood came to be seen as an innocent and special time (Aries 1962). Eisenstein in particular has linked these changes to the spread of literacy (in Meyrowitz 1985, 262-263). The fact that this connection between the widespread absorption of the ideology of literacy and the "invention of childhood" has gone largely unnoticed by educationists is "astonishing" according to Postman—particularly since this nearly universal alphabetization of thought was facilitated by the introduction of mass schooling in the 1900s (Postman 1982, 46). Books obviously allow one to learn to read in "stages," and this "developmental process" helps to mark the change between childhood and adulthood (Meyrowitz 1985, 263). We believe that a child "evolves toward adulthood by acquiring the sort of intellect we expect of a good reader," said Postman (1982, 46), notably:

> a vigorous sense of individuality, the capacity to think logically and sequentially, the capacity to distance oneself from symbols, the capacity to manipulate high orders of abstraction, the capacity to defer gratification.

Many pattern language-permeated cultures were (and are) judged to be childlike or "less-developed" because they lacked a written language. As with children, it was (and is) believed that so-called primitives should be encouraged to ascend through the levels of "symbolic achievement," until they could "think abstractly and without interest"; then they would "better adapt to the way things are" (Postman 1982, 42; Sampson 1981, 738; Kuper 1988). The invention of the tool of education simultaneously threw

light on its two targets: children and primitives. Notable figures like Darwin argued that education was the perfect vehicle for raising "primitives" up the "ladder of civilizations" (Desmond and Moore 1991, 557, 609, 653).

Fifty years ago, Ananda Coomaraswamy, a Ceylonese-American scholar, took issue with views of this kind in his writings in defense of mature Asian cultures. He stated that "to impose our literacy ... upon a cultured but illiterate people is to destroy their culture in the name of our own"; instilling literacy "destroys the memories" of a people (Coomaraswamy 1967, 21, 20). In his view, recent civilization has used "three typical forms" to impress "itself upon older cultures: readin..., bigoted religious ideas, and ... narrow utilitarian views" (Coomaraswamy, p. 24).

> [The] West will have to abandon ... its "proselytizing fury," ... the activities of all the distributors of modern "civilization" and those of practically all the "educators" who feel that they have more to give than to learn from what are often called the "backward" or "unprogressive" peoples; to whom it does not occur that one may not wish or need to "progress" if one has reached a state of equilibrium that already provides for the realization of what one regards as the greatest purposes of life.... To many this "fury" can only suggest the fable of the fox that lost its tail, and persuaded the other foxes to cut off theirs. (Coomaraswamy 1967, 60).

Tempering our "proselytizing fury" will require that we recognize the validity and necessity of pattern language fluency. It will require us to lessen our dependence on conceptual language and rein in the education system that promotes it. And clawing back turf from the disembedded education system will ultimately mean reclaiming society from the disembedded economy which spawned it (Polanyi 1957).

Today, educational proselytizers of the left and right—whom Bowers separates into "Emancipators and Technocrats"—both prescribe the highest refinement of alphabetized language to cure those suffering from Not-Western-Enoughism. Their magic pill is the culture of critical discourse (CCD):

> CCD is centred on a specific speech act: justification.... The culture of critical discourse is

characterized by speech that is relatively more situation-free, more context or field independent ... (it) values expressly legislated meanings and devalues tacit, context-limited meanings. Its ideal is: "one word, one meaning" for everyone and forever.... Most importantly, the culture of critical speech ... de-authorizes all speech grounded in traditional societal authority, while it authorizes itself, CCD, as the standard of *all* "serious" speech. (Gouldner 1979, 28-29).

The abstract language of CCD, "high-status" or thin knowledge, tends to undermine the worldviews of "land-based" cultures according to Bowers. CCD seeks to turn the world into a problem to be solved, while oral storytelling, "dance, song, initiation rituals ... and mentoring relationships" run counter to this "singular focus on critical reflection" (Bowers 1993, 144).

Mono-Understanding: A Life Out of Balance

A narrow diagnosis of oral or written monolingualism tends to prompt the familiar call for the familiar cure: more instruction, more teachers, more schools. A broadened diagnosis of "mono-understanding"—the key agent of mono-culturalism—is not so easily cured. Like a waiter carrying a tray with all the glasses stacked on one side, we are living a life out of balance.

Diverse pools of pattern languages are receding in the face of abstract desertification; all that we feel and know is transcribed onto dry parchment. The richness of tangible understanding is now confined to the privileged enclaves of architects, composers and choreographers. The rest of us make do with juvenile individualistic expressions of music, dance, and art. As our cultural expressiveness wilts under the pressure of literacy and numeracy, our worldview thins like the paper we depend on. We fall prey to what Indian scientist Vandana Shiva calls a "monoculture of the mind" (Shiva 1993).

The demise of tangible languages has been accompanied by the demise of spoken languages. And "loss of language can constitute ... an impoverishment of the observed—of experience itself" (Brody 1987, 159). The reverse also holds: The destruction of the landscape diminishes the language. "Languages weaken and disappear because of large-scale habitat destruction," warns linguist Peter Muhlhausler (1996, 270-271, 276). A people no longer uses the same breadth of vocabulary in describing its surroundings because their surroundings are no longer so diverse. In this way, "language is inseparable from ecology" (Abram 1996, 179).

> Roughly 5100 languages are spoken on the earth at the moment. Just under 99% of them are native to Asia and Africa, the Pacific and the American continents, with just one percent in Europe.... A patchwork quilt of linguistic areas, large and small, covers the planet. But all indicators suggest that within a generation not more than 100 of these languages will survive. Languages are dying out every bit as quickly as species; whereas ... with the demise of languages entire cultures are vanishing from the history of civilization ... for language preserves the way the world is ordered, how a group feels, and what everything means. Along with languages, entire conceptions of what it means to be human evaporate in the heat of "development".... Whichever way you look at it, the ... (uniformization) of the world is in full swing, a global monoculture spreads like an oil slick over the planet. (Sachs 1990, 28)

If so many spoken languages are on the verge of disappearing, how then do we account for our much-vaunted "information explosion"?

The outline of conceptual and pattern languages put forward in this paper allows us to postulate that the rise of one type of languaged understanding is happening at the expense of the others. Rather than experiencing a widescale "information explosion," we are actually experiencing an information *bulge* in one narrow part of our spectrum of understanding—the part devoted to paper knowledge—while all our other avenues of color and meaning have atrophied. Deep and wide forms of languaged understanding are dying out. Wes Jackson, farmer and Director of the Land Institute, believes we are losing enormous amounts of our information about the world as the vast majority of us lose our ability to understand what our weather means or how our food is grown—he calls this an "information implosion" (Jackson 1987). McKibben (1992) describes our current situation as "the age of missing information." Umberto Eco says we have less information in the internet era than ever before (Simonnet 1999). These are unpopu-

lar sentiments with many academics devoted to "thin" knowledge; they quickly take issue with commentators like Jackson who suggest "that there is less total cultural information in the U.S. today than fifty years ago" (Jackson 1987, 12). Although Thomas Berry has reluctantly concluded that our information-imploding civilization is "autistic," it may be more accurate to say that we are turning into a culture of idiot-savants—proficient at expressing ourselves numerically and alphabetically, but incompetent in all of the other types of pattern-languaged understanding.

Recovering Embedded and Embodied Truth

Man can embody truth, but he cannot know it.
—W.B. Yeats

If we think of the diverse languages Bowers and Steele describe, it is possible to conclude that we have been stranded with only one type of communication—literacy—for even orality is now "seen" through the lens of its written offspring.

Educators, as a mass profession, first emerged as the purveyors of the miracle of literacy; they focused on curing two target populations: children and primitives. Today, as symbol-physicians, they seek to expand their practice, and thus raise the spectre of "lifelong learning": a hitherto-unsuspected need to be administered and "taught" things from cradle to grave. We are now all patients in the abstract knowledge hospital. Nothing can be learned unless it is taught; nothing can be learned *properly* unless it is taught by a teacher; nothing can be learned *profitably* unless it is taught by an accredited teacher in an accredited institution. Parents need to be taught how to parent; workers need to be taught how to work; executives need to be taught how to execute. By using terms like "parental literacy" and "emotional literacy," we signal our belief that what used to be done by the society is better done by the book—and what is better done by the book is best done by the teacher. A plague of books with titles like emotional literacy, spiritual literacy, scientific literacy, and sexual literacy spread the fantasy that alphabetized understanding is synonymous with competency and attunement.

Can educators resist the urge to uproot learning from life, can they stop expropriating and kidnapping experience for conversion into texts and curricula? Can educators discriminate between where their systematization of learning is helpful and where it is harmful? Can they voluntarily limit their "proselytizing fury"? Can educators restrain themselves and allow human beings to experience unmediated embeddedness and to rediscover that "there *is* more than just the individual mind"—as Okanagan Jeanette Armstrong (1995, 296-297) asks?

> If people could feel themselves to be part of the world in a real sense for just one moment, devoid of all constraints that we've constructed to stop us from feeling that, from understanding and knowing it, if they could experience that, it would change their processes, their approach to things, their approach to themselves.

The important corrective now is not the increased "problematizing" of the world—the world is not a *problem*—but the re-linking of human with non-human nature, individual with collective humanity, and the abstract with the physical human being. We have to revitalize our embedded and embodied understandings. Within our families, natural surroundings, and neighborhoods, we have to breach the anthropocentric wall raised by our overemphasis on conceptual language. Are Euro-Americans mature enough to recognize how our susceptibility to abstract language—our magnificent and uniquely human attribute—has led us to deploy it in every instance, including situations that instead called for silence, physical sensitivity, or emotional attunement? As Abram (1996, 79, 81) has warned:

> [By] overlooking the sensuous evocative dimension of human discourse … we hold ourselves apart from, and outside of, the rest of animate nature…. [But] Language is a bodily phenomenon that accrues to *all* expressive bodies, not just human.

Simply put, we must recognize the validity and necessity of pattern language fluency. We must lessen our dependence on conceptual language and rein in the education system that promotes it. We must start to ask how we can re-link, re-embed, and re-embody all the other non-abstract ways of coming to know and expressing this knowing. We must stop evaluating our civilization and others' in solely literary, conceptual language terms, terms which conceal

the riches of our truly polyglot nature. We have to call a halt to what Illich has condemned as our "500 year war against 'subsistence' cultures"—mature cultures that insist on relating to their surroundings in multi-sensual, not-exclusively-mental ways.

Educators could begin this journey by re-listening to the advice of Harold Innis, who 50 years ago made a "plea for consideration of the role of the oral tradition as a basis for revival of effective vital discussion and … an appreciation on the part of universities of the fact that teachers and students are still human." "Large ideas," said Innis, "can only be conceived after intensive study over a long period and through the direct and powerful device of the spoken word in small groups" (in Salutin 1994; see also Innis 1951).

So, for educators, this would constitute the first step: discussing and reflecting on the broad vistas of pattern languages. Ironically, there are even a few good books to help with this: Illich and Sanders (1988) on the alphabetization of the popular mind; Egan (1989) on teaching as storytelling; Rupert Ross (1996) on the difference between European noun-based and indigenous verb-based languages; Steele (1999) on how teachers can use drawing as language; and Bowers and Flinders (1991) on using body language as a key element of culturally responsive teaching.

The next step for educators could crudely be called 'reality check': Look at your institution; will it accommodate any changes along these lines? How far can you push it away from its meal ticket of transmitting and gauging alpha-numeric proficiency? Can you expand its diet?

If it looks unlikely that your institution will give up its bread and butter, can you at least encourage some resistance to omni-literacy? In particular, can you and your colleagues resist the overwhelming pressure to use literacy as a benchmark for every kind of competency, to see the world as "word"? Australia has gone so far as to deny welfare to those who do not pass literacy tests—can you resist these extreme forms of monolingual idolatry? (On Australia see Wordsworth, 1999.)

Finally, are you willing to step beyond the bounds of your institution? If pattern language fluency is to be resuscitated, it will be done by ordinary folks outside of their professional identities, people embrac-

ing their family and community identities, embracing what they were born into. Do your grandparents speak with their hands? Do you have family colors, a family tartan, a dance, a meal, a song? Do you quilt, build, sculpt? How far can you go "beyond the book"? These will be the real measures of the re-emergence of pattern languages. They will not be re-introduced by a disembedded education system; not so long as our society staggers and disintegrates under the burden of servicing its disembedded economy. Pattern language fluency will only definitively re-emerge when we once again have a society of participants, not purchasers; when we have a society linked by fellowship not one divided by ownership. Then we will have returned from the "paper world" to the real world.

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A Holistic Approach to Studying Spirituality in Educational Thought and Practice

Somatics Perspectives

Kam Chi Chan and William Taylor

An understanding of somatic theory combined with self-cultivation practices can lead to heightened spiritual sensitivity.

Issues of spirituality in education have long been discussed within a religious framework in the Western tradition (Dudey 1976; Palmer 1983; Purpel 1989; Youlden 1988). In recent years, along with the development of the holistic bodily arts and sciences,[1] a cross-cultural, interdisciplinary, nonsectarian approach to studying spirituality has increasingly caught the attention of Western intellectuals and practitioners in diverse domains (Learn 1996; Walz-Michaels 1996). This approach stresses the experience of day-to-day living. Its focus on the notion of "capacity to fully experience being" as "spiritual experience" has disentangled the discussion of spirituality from religion in the contemporary educational discourse.[2] For example, in an editorial in *Holistic Education Review*, Kesson (1994, 2-3) introduced an emerging "spiritualization," which "involve[s] a unitary state of mind that has transcended such opposites—moving beyond dualistic thinking into the fullness of Being." Kesson defined spirituality as meaningful wholeness—"integrative practices open the awareness to rich layers of meaning embedded in otherwise ordinary, everyday events."

In the section on "Spirituality and Education" in *Education 2000: A Holistic Perspective* (1991, 8), spiritual experience and development are defined as "a deep connection to self and others, a sense of meaning and purpose in daily life, and experience of the wholeness and interdependence of life, a respite from the frenetic activity, pressure and over-stimulation of contemporary life, the fullness of creative experience, and a profound respect for the numinous

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mystery of life." Moffett (1994, xix) claimed in *The Universal Schoolhouse: Spiritual Awakening Through Education*, "to be spiritual is to perceive our oneness with everybody and everything and to act on this perception. It is to be whole within oneself and with the world."

In this essay, the emerging holistic and integrative approach to spirituality will be introduced. In particular, the discussion will first draw on perspectives primarily from somatics, a discipline that provides basic assumptions and principles for the development of implications of this new conceptualization of spirituality for educational thought and practice. Then, special attention will be directed to the conceptual framework of spirituality in the somatic context. Last, issues about "self-cultivation," a distinctive East Asian theory of disciplined praxis for personal growth, will be addressed. Thus, Eastern theory and Western somatics will be linked together in discussing spiritual education.

Somatics

Somatics as a new field can trace its lineage to the evolutionary-revolutionary recognition of the body as an important subject of study and inquiry around the turn of the twentieth century (Hanna 1970, 1983; Johnson 1983; Mangione 1993). In response to the conventional dualistic conception of a body-mind split that had long dominated Western intellectual history, the primary somatic thinkers (e.g., Friedric Nietzsche, Jean Paul-Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty) and practitioners (e.g., Ilse Middendorf, Rudolph Laban, and F. M. Alexander) worked with varying concerns and various methods to challenge the pervasive metaphysical argument that views the body as a mechanism and subservient to the mind (Hanna 1970, 1976; Johnson 1982, 1983, 1990-91; Levy 1988). New theoretical conceptions and ways of working with bodies gradually developed. These developments recognized and valued the limited and often neglected Western historical legacy of body knowledge and practices, and embraced the new influences of Eastern holistic ideologies and movement forms that encouraged body-mind unity (Greene 1995; Hanna 1984; Kleinman 1990).

Historically speaking, somatics emerged as an academic field in its own right in the 1970s. In 1970,

Thomas Hanna first used the words "soma" and "somatic" with his particular meanings in his book, *Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking*. According to Hanna (1970, 35),

> "Soma" does not mean "body;" it means "Me, the bodily being." "Body" has, for me, the connotation of a piece of meat—a slab of flesh laid out on a butcher's block or the physiologist's work table, drained of life and ready to be worked upon and used. Soma is living; it is expanding and contracting, accommodating and assimilating, drawing in energy and expelling energy. Soma is pulsing, flowing, squeezing, and relaxing—flowing and alternating with fear and anger, hunger, and sensuality.... Somas are the kind of living, organic being that you are at this moment, in this place where you are.

In 1976, Hanna coined the term *somatics* and used it to name the field in the first issue of *Somatics: Magazine-Journal of the Bodily Arts and Sciences*. In "The Field of Somatics," Hanna (1976, 30-31) introduced the cross-cultural interdisciplinary characteristic of somatics as follows:

> This continuing emergence of multidisciplinary sciences is the clear sign of a growing sophistication and recognition of the interdependence of different methodologies and points of view. This contemporary synthesis of sciences is also a strong argument that the major discoveries of contemporary science will continue to rest in the hands of those who can employ many different models and methods to explore the same common field.... It is the discovery of the functional-structural integrity of the somatic field that allowed Western scientists and scholars to make the belated discovery that the Asian martial arts and bodily disciplines of judo, aikido, t'ai-chi, karate, yoga and tantra were predicated solidly on a somatic theory and not upon a religious pretense.

In highlighting the recognition of rediscovery of the unity and integration of mind and body in the field, Hanna (1983, 4) defined somatics as

- the art and science of the inter-relational process between awareness, biological function, and environment, with all three factors understood as a synergistic whole: the field of somatics
- the study of the soma, soma being the biological body of functions by which and through which

awareness and environment are mediated. (It is understood the word soma designates any living organism, animal or plant. It is also understood that all such somas have, to some degree, the capacity for awareness [sensorium] of the environment and intentional action [motorium] in the environment.)

- it relates to somas of the human species, whose sensoria and motoria are relatively free from determination of genetically fixed behavior patterns, thus allowing learning to determine the inter-relational process between awareness, biological function, and environment.

In 1986 (p. 4), Hanna further defined somatics as the field which "studies the soma; namely, the body as perceived from within by first-person perception." According to Hanna (p. 4),

> when a human being is observed from the outside—i.e., from a third-person viewpoint—the phenomenon of a human body is perceived. But, when this same human being is observed from the first-person viewpoint of his own proprioceptive senses, a categorically different phenomenon is perceived: the human soma.

What Hanna highlighted is that somatics studies the body as perceived from within. This focus on the first-person viewpoint of the body is distinguished from the third-person viewpoint in which the body is observed from the outside. As Hanna (1986, 4) claimed,

> The two distinct viewpoints for observing a human being are built into the very nature of human observation, which is equally capable of being internally self-aware as well as externally aware. The soma, being internally perceived, is categorically distinct from a body, not because the subject is different but because the mode of viewpoint is different: it is immediate proprioception—a sensory mode that provides unique data.... Physiology, for example, takes a third-person view of the human being and sees a body. This body is an objective entity, observable, analyzable, and measurable in the same way as any other object. The universal laws of physics and chemistry are brought to bear on this body because—as an observed body—it richly displays universal physical and chemical principles.

Hanna (1986, 4) further pointed out that

the proprioceptive centers communicate and continually feed back a rich display of somatic information which is immediately self-observed as a process that is both unified and ongoing. Somatic data do not need, first, to be mediated and interpreted through a set of universal laws to become factual. First-person observation of the soma is immediately factual. Third-person observation, in contrast, can become factual only by mediation through a set of principles.... The two separate modes of cognition are irreducible. Neither mode is less factual nor inferior to the other: they are coequal.

In sum, somatics focuses on wholeness and rediscovery of the unity of body and mind. Somatics is the study of the soma, the living body that is an embodied process of internal awareness. In the field of somatics, the body is viewed as perceived from within by first-person perception. As Hanna delineated (1988, 20), somatics is a matter of looking at oneself from the "inside out," where one is aware of feelings, movements, and intensions, rather than looking objectively from the outside in.

Spirituality in Somatics

To illustrate the notion of spirituality in the somatic context, three individual first person accounts of spiritual experiences in day-to-day life will be provided. These stories are told by three different people from diverse backgrounds in various everyday life situations; their experiences will provide the kind of intersubjective understandings that can contribute to the conceptual framework from which to view spirituality in the somatic context.

The first story is from Lord Fenner Brockway, who in 1986 recorded his spiritual experience in the autobiography *98 Not Out*, which was excerpted in White (1996) along with three other examples to illustrate his definition of spirituality in *Education, Spirituality and the Whole Child: A Humanist Perspective*.

> It was not until I had left school that this identity with Nature became a religion to me. Strangely, it was at that cathedral of materialism, Blackpool, that this spiritual experience came. One evening I stood, looking over the green ocean towards the red sunset. As I did so, a great calm came over me. I became lost in the beauty of the scene. I seemed to become part of it.

Gradually my spirit reached out and became one with what seemed the spirit of the sea and sky. I was at one with the universe beyond. I seemed to become one with all life, from the beginning of time, in the present, stretching out into the future.

This experience had a profound effect on me. It came to me often when I was alone with Nature. It swept over me as I looked out to the stars at night. It was a continuous inspiration. I have said it became my religion. It did. I felt now that I was more than an individual. The life of all time was within and about me. I must serve it. (White 1996, 30-31)

The second story was originally from Robinson's (1986) *Religion and Spiritual Awareness Survey* in young people. The survey was composed by staff at the Alistair Hardy Research Centre at Manchester College, Oxford. White (1996) used the story as another example for finding the meaning of spirituality in *Education, Spirituality and the Whole child: A Humanist Perspective.*

I remember one evening standing by the sea. The sun was setting; the tide was going out, leaving little pools and streams of water, and wet sand. There was a marvelous feeling of light and peace all around me. I felt great joy, and also a strong desire to find a meaning and purpose in life.

A little later I remember feeling the same when I was sitting on a hillside and looking out over the spreading green countryside. It was beautiful, and also strange: you feel you are somehow part of a mysterious whole. (White 1996, 31)

The third story was an unpublished experiential description written by the author in 1995. The excerpt describes the author's experience of practicing *tai chi chuan* (a kind of Chinese martial arts) with a four-year-old boy she was babysitting.

Lying on the floor to fit together the irregular pieces of the jigsaw puzzle repeatedly with him over and over for almost half an hour, I feel tired. My upper arms and shoulders are getting stiff, and my elbows and neck ache. He is still concentrating on finding the right piece. He seems never tired of working with jigsaw puzzles. I decide to change my position. I relieve my elbows, and relax my arms, chest, and hands on the floor. Then, I turn my body around, and let

my back and head rest on the floor. "What are you doing, Kam?" Andy asked. "Nothing, just thinking," I told him. He climbs close to me and tries to study my face. I open my eyes and smile to him. "I have a bi—g idea." I raise my arms and hands, and make a big circle while I am talking to him. He slightly moves his head and follows me to raise his arms and hands to make a circle and says, "Bi—g idea?" "Yep." I jump up and try to think what else we can play.

He looks at me curiously and is waiting for my "big idea." "Let us practice Chinese kungfu." I am glad that this idea comes across my mind in time. I bend my knees, and try to show him some movements. He seems attracted by what I am suggesting and what he is seeing. Following me he jumps up and moves, and says, "Kungfu." I decide to show him how to practice *tai chi chuan*. The whole sequence is originally made up of 48 postures and actions, but I quickly simplify the sequence to 5 postures and actions in my mind. The simplified system still allows a proper co-ordination between the head, hands, arms, legs and footwork. I slightly move my left foot, bend my knees and show him the first position within a sequence. He is learning the sequential character of the movements by practicing the movements.

I move, and he follows. We smile to each other when we are making circles. "He seems to enjoy the movements. Should I add more postures?" I ask myself. "Wait, what is he doing? He is adding some circle movements." He smiles and waits for my response. I follow his movements and then, exaggeratedly nod my head three times. He follows me to nod his head, and then jumps up to show his excitement. I follow him to jump up, and easily shake my head and shoulders after I get down on the floor. He follows my movements and adds some more creative movements. I follow and then extend my arms and hands to an outward stretch. He does the same movement and our hands touch. We laugh and hand-in-hand start jumping around. I feel our breath is getting heavy. I release his hands and stretch my arms and hands to my sides while inhaling heavily. He follows me. Sometimes I follow his movements, and other times he follows mine. We move whatever we want to and try to make use of every part of our bodies. Our hands, our heads, and even our backs sometimes closely attach, and whichever

parts of our bodies attach, we make circles together.

His face is turning red. I see beads of perspiration all over his forehead. I stop moving around and lie down on the floor. He follows me and rests beside me. His young and pure face looks peaceful. Suddenly, I see my own image appear in his blue eyes, vivid and transparent, as if I am living in the very spirit of this small life. I am moved and strongly feel self-possession. My heart is full of joy and love. (Chan 1995, 2-4)

Above are three individuals giving a first-person account of their spiritual experiences in their day-to-day life. While Brockway and the young respondent of Robinson's (1986) survey related their spiritual experiences to their inner awareness of the intimate connection with nature, Chan shared her spiritual moment with a child in the process of practicing movements with him. Taking a somatic approach in reviewing these secular spiritual experiences, we can highlight the following interconnected assumptions of somatics that contribute to the conceptual framework from which to view spirituality.

First, spirituality is associated with two of the fundamental assumptions of somatics—existence is holistic; all existence is interconnected.[3] As noted above, Hanna (1983, 1) defined somatics as "the art and science of the inter-relational process between awareness, biological function and environment, all three factors being understood as a synergistic whole." In somatics, the human is understood as an embodied self in his or her holistic multidimensionality, to include the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual, and his or her interconnectedness with the external world. The human being is viewed as an integrated unity that consistently corresponds with and is affected by the external world.

This somatic assumption that existence is holistic and correlative was widely grounded in the Asian[4] (Ho 1992; Leslie 1976; Porkert 1974), Native American (Dunstan 1995; Thoreau 1996), and even Western medical traditions [5] (Brooks, Gilbert and Curtis 1962; Lloyd 1983; Nutton 1993) before the "Man-the-Machine" paradigm was dominant in the culture (Leder 1992; Sheet-Johnstone 1992a). These traditions recognize the human as a holistic being. As a part of the universe, humans are linked to all creations. Significantly, this recognition of wholeness and intercon-

nectedness is evident in the above three spiritual experiences. While Brockway and the young respondent experienced bodily sensation (e.g., the feelings of calm, peace, and joy) in the process of their awareness of the connection with external nature, Chan was aware that she was full of joy and love when she felt that she was living in the spirit of the child. We can say that in the course of their spiritual experiences, Brockway, the young respondent, and Chan all experienced the unity of the mind and the body, and the self and the external world. To use the term employed in somatics, they experienced an embodiment of achieved oneness of the body and the mind, and interconnectedness with the external environment.

Second, in somatics, the human is conceptualized as soma, the "ongoing experience." The soma is highlighted as the embodied and potential self. As Hanna (1986) argues, the soma is not an objective "body," but an embodied process of internal awareness. The living individual is conceived as a process. Hanna (1976, 30-31) claims that

Living organisms defy being described as "bodies." They have a moving order and lawfulness of their own which violates the stable concept of "body." Living organisms are somas: that is, they are an integral and ordered process of embodied elements which cannot be separated either from their evolved past of their adaptive future.... At the center of the field of somatics is the soma—an integral and individual process which governs its own existence as long as it has existence.

Process is a paramount and ultimate goal in the field of somatics. As Hanna (1991, 29) states, the soma "is the systemic unity of a process." Thus, in the somatic context, Brockway, the young respondent, and Chan's spiritual experiences can be understood as a part of the ongoing organic processes that occurred within their bodies when they were engaging in the world. In this sense, spirituality is not a notion belonging to another world or occurring beyond the soma. Rather, it is an inner organic process within the soma.

Third, somatic theory basically views the body as perceived from within by first-person perception. A somatic perspective conceptualizes living experience from the inside out. This means the being is self-

focused, and the being's subjective ongoing experience and inner awareness are central foci (Greene 1995). This conception of first-person perspective is clearer when we review Brockway, the young respondent, and Chan's spiritual experiences. The feelings of joy, love, calm, or peace that they described are their experiences from within. These feelings came from an inner awareness of the bodily sensation, which was not objectively observed, analyzed, and measured by the third person. Significantly, it is a first-person's perspective of self-awareness and self-understanding from the inside out.

The perspective that spirituality links to first-person perception and experience from within is also accepted by some religious educators who study spirituality. They usually use the term "interiority" to highlight that first-person inner awareness. For example, Jack Priestly (1985, 39) claims that spirituality has to do with "interiority," with something inside a person. To highlight the relationship between spirituality and interiority, Ferguson (1980, 368) quotes the remark of Anthony Padovano, a Catholic theologian, as follows:

> The religious response that has occurred in the Western world—a revolution that has made us more sensitive to the religions of the Orient—is an understanding that whatever answers there are must come from ourselves. The great turmoil in the religions is caused by the spirit demanding interiority. Faith is not dying in the West. It is merely moving inside.

In conclusion, in taking the somatic approach to understanding the spiritual experiences described in the three stories, spirituality from the somatic perspective refers to an individual's awareness of and responsiveness to bodily sensation, which comes from an inner self-understanding by experiencing the embodiment of achieved oneness of mind and body, wholeness, and interconnectedness with the external environment.

Self-Cultivation and Somatics in Spiritual Education

Having discussed the conceptual framework of spirituality in the somatic context, we now move to issues about bringing spirituality to education. In stimulating, encouraging, and nurturing development of spirituality in schooling, we recommend that schools include self-cultivation practices in the curriculum. Since self-cultivation has developed distinctively in the East Asian tradition and is an unfamiliar concept to most Western educators, a brief introduction to self-cultivation is first provided. The discussion focuses on how self-cultivation practices can enhance an individual's spiritual growth in the process, and how this Eastern traditional proposition can contribute to spiritual education from a contemporary Western somatic perspective.

Self-Cultivation in East Asian Traditions

Self-cultivation as a form of interior self-discipline that proceeds to an awareness of personal growth has long been a widely accepted proposition in all great East Asian traditions, although self-cultivation approaches and practices vary because they are associated with diverse philosophical and religious doctrines developed in each individual Asian tradition (Ames 1993; Chung 1995; Ivanhoe 1993; Ni 1997; Tu 1978, 1985; Tucker 1989; Yuasa 1987, 1989, 1993). For example, while Yogic disciplines have been distinctively rooted in India, diverse Zen meditation methods and other various kinds of self-disciplined practices, like martial arts techniques (e.g., judo, aikido, tai chi, karate), ritual practices, and practices of calligraphy have been respectively established and transmitted from generation to generation along with Buddhist, Confucian, and Taoist influences in Korean, Chinese, and Japanese cultures.

In recent years, Yuasa's (1987, 1989, 1993) comprehensive studies of self-cultivation have cleared the ground for a mutual meeting among all these diverse approaches and practices of self-cultivation across East Asian traditions. Drawing upon his investigation of Eastern philosophy, religion, medicine, meditation methods, artistry, and martial arts, and Western phenomenology, religion, medical science, depth psychology, parapsychology, and physical education, Yuasa not only makes relevant connections among Asian traditions but also between Eastern and Western mind-body theories (Nagatoma 1989, 1992a, 1992b). His cross-cultural interdisciplinary studies have established a theoretical ground on which both Eastern self-cultivation and Western somatics can mutually illuminate the emerging holistic and integrative approach to spirituality that fo-

cuses on day-to-day lived experience.

According to Yuasa (1993, 196), self-cultivation literally means "to master a practice." Unlike the Western tradition, Eastern philosophies generally treat mind-body unity as an achievement, rather than an essential relation. The pursuit of spirituality is viewed as physical as well as intellectual development. Based upon this view of mind-body unity as an achievement, various self-cultivation practices (mind-body disciplinary training methods) have been developed under diverse philosophical and religious doctrines in the Eastern cultures. All these methods utilize one's own body as a means for cultivating one's self (Yuasa, 1987, 1989, 1993).

As Yuasa (1989) highlights, self-cultivation involves a process of knowing based upon regularity and continuity of self-disciplined bodily practices. Knowledge regarding personal growth, according to Yuasa (1987, 25), "cannot be obtained simply by means of theoretical thinking, but only through 'bodily recognition or realization,' that is, through the utilization of one's total mind and body."

Cultivation practices are designed to enhance the degree of correlativity between the mind and the body. In Yuasa's (1987, 1989, 1993) words, self-cultivation is practical training aimed at the development and enhancement of one's spirit or personality by means of the body. To use the term employed in depth-psychology, one's *psyché* moves toward the experience and knowledge of the oneness of the body and the mind through self-cultivation training. It is believed that through the achieved ideal of self-cultivation, humans can relate to each other and to the environment through accommodation while harmonizing the qi-energy shared between "I" and "the other."[6]

To help Western intellectuals understand how the transformation happens, and how embodiment of mind-body oneness is achieved within self-cultivation processes, Yuasa offers a comprehensive theoretical elucidation of his idea of "bodily scheme" in accord with "four circuits" of interrelated information systems. The first circuit in Yuasa's bodily scheme is named the "external sensory-motor circuit," which is much like Bergson's (1970) "sensory-motor apparatus," and Merleau-Ponty's (1962) "sensory-motor circuit." This circuit is established between the body and the external world by means of the sensory organs (e.g., eyes or ears), which receive stimuli from the environment, and by means of the motor organs (e.g., hands and legs), which act on the outside. Yuasa (1993, 43) states, "the body can take the action appropriate for a situation in the external world in virtue of the fact that the sensory nerves function passively for the stimulus coming from outside, and the motor nerves function actively on it." This circuit refers to a system of information that is habitualized for the purposes of the "utility of life, which refers to daily activities such as moving about and eating foods" (Yuasa 1993, 44).

The second circuit is called the "circuit of coenesthesis," which concerns an information apparatus that enables us to become aware of internal conditions in the body. This circuit consists of two subdivisions: the circuit of kinesthesis and the circuit of somesthesis. In the kinesthetic circuit, each sensory-motor nerve functions as a centripetal path, both conveying information about the condition of the limbs to the brain and sending commands responding to the conditions to the distal organs of hands and legs from the brain. We become aware of this circuit through motor sensation. Yuasa acknowledges that philosopher Edmund Husserl (1973) had already noticed this kinesthesis in terms of "passive syntheses." Together with the first circuit, the circuit of kinesthesis explains how in our everyday life we engage our immediate environments through perception and action.

The circuit of somesthesis, the other subdivision of the second circuit, is concerned primarily with the awareness of internal organs via the splanchnic nerves. These nerves send information to the brain about the conditions of the visceral organs. The whole circuit, combining kinesthesis and somesthesis, brings us conscious awareness of our bodily condition. Yuasa (1993, 47) characterizes this circuit as "consciousness of self-apprehending sensation, that is, awareness of one's own body." The fundamental structure of this circuit is its biofeedback system related to the mechanism of memory, which Yuasa calls the "automatic memory apparatus where past data is stored in such a way that it is sent to consciousness" (p. 47). For example, when one learns to play a sport or the piano, through repeated practice

one's body knows in an instant how to respond to the next move that is required. That is, one's body moves unconsciously without involving any intellectual judgment when one reaches the state of proficiency. The idea that the body learns and knows is derived from a combination of Merleau-Ponty's concept of "habit-body" and Henri Bergon's "learned memory."

The third circuit is the "emotion-instinct circuit," governed by the autonomic nerves, which control and regulate the function of various internal organs such as the lungs, heart, and stomach. This circuit is closely related to human instincts such as appetite and sexual desire. Unlike the first two circuits, this circuit does not reach the cerebral cortex. This means that the activities of the visceral organs are not, under normal circumstances, brought to our awareness. However, since this circuit converts the stimulus received through a sensory organ into an emotional response (anger, sorrow, or pleasure) or information about stress, it holistically affects the whole person.

Yuasa notes that the majority of Western philosophers interested in mind-body theory have been concerned solely with the first circuit and to the kinesthesis of the second circuit. Only depth-psychologists and psychiatrists in Freudian and Jungian schools paid attention to the circuit of the somesthesis in light of their clinical experience, and in connection with Eastern methods of meditations.

The fourth circuit is the "circuit of unconscious quasi-body." The term "unconscious" suggests that the operations of this circuit cannot, under ordinary circumstances, rise into the field of our everyday consciousness, but rather remain buried in the unconscious. The term "quasi-body" suggests that this circuit cannot be grasped experientially in the everyday lived dimension of the body. Yuasa (1993, 118-119) characterizes this circuit as follows:

> This fourth circuit, insofar as it is examined anatomically, is an invisible circuit which cannot be perceived from outside by external sensory perception. Moreover, when it is examined psychologically, it is a potential circuit in the consciousness which ordinary consciousness cannot detect. For this reason, I would like to call the meridian system the "unconscious quasi-body." It designates a pathway of emotional energy flowing in the unconscious, and is a quasi-body system which activates physiological functions together with the objective body.

Yuasa suggests that although the quasi-body is potentially invisible to us, and hence unknown to the everyday consciousness, the practice of self-cultivation methods can render the "invisible" circuit "visible," that is, bring its function into awareness. This invisible system of the body is proposed by both Bergson's motor-scheme and Merleau-Ponty's body-scheme, but has never been theoretically verified in Western mind-body studies. To express the concept of quasi-body, Yuasa brings in the discussion of the ki-meridians, which has been recognized in Eastern acupuncture medicine for thousands of years. According to acupuncture medicine, ki-meridians form an invisible network beneath the surface of the skin which covers the entire body, and which serves as a grid through which the ki-energy flows. In connection with the ki-energy, the unconscious quasi-body mediates between the first two circuits (consciousness) and the third emotion-instinct circuit (the unconsciousness).

To elaborate how self-cultivation methods work with and how cultivation processes occur within and affect the four circuits, Yuasa highlights the examples of martial arts and Buddhist meditation. According to Yuasa (1993), the postures of the body in the martial arts as well as meditation bring the activity of the third emotion-instinct into awareness. What Yuasa means is that the ki-energy qua emotion appears when both the external sensory-motor circuit and the circuit of kinesthesis are rendered inoperative during meditation and/or martial arts training. For instance, to meditate in a sitting position means to stop the muscular movements of the limbs while cutting off the sensory stimuli of the external world. In the process, the external sensory motor circuit in conjunction with the circuit of kinesthesis is brought to a state of standstill (Yuasa 1993). Yet, the circuit of somesthesis, which has a close connection with automatic memory system, and whose experiential correlate is a self-grasping awareness of one's body, is still functional. When the level of activities of the first external sensory-motor circuit and the circuit of somesthesis is lowered in meditation, the autonomous function of the unconscious surfaces into awareness, that is, ki-energy appears as images.

significantly, self-cultivation by means of bodily practices is to make the function of the third emotion-instinct circuit work smoothly through habitualization of the second circuit of coenesthesis. That is, through repeated cultivating training, the control of the third circuit will be developed naturally. As Yuasa's (1989, 1993) studies show, with repeated training, the movements of mind and body gradually coincide with each other in a way that is unique to each person. If one achieves a state in which one can move the body freely without intending it, the movements of mind and body are one. Moving one's body without conscious effort suggests "a person is approaching the state of no-mind while letting ego-consciousness disappear" (Yuasa, 1993, 32).

Following Yuasa's theory of bodily scheme, we can say self-cultivation is a lifelong, ongoing project. Its ultimate goal is to overcome and reject the standpoint of consciousness in the dimension of the everyday. In other words, self-cultivation aims to break through the characteristics of being a subject, which the mind possesses in its ordinary dimension. In Yuasa's (1987, 85) words

> the everyday self as a being-in-the-world does not stop being a subject that grasps things in the world by objectifying them. Self-cultivation, however, overcomes this subjectivity so that the self becomes no longer a subject body and in turn goes beyond its being an object. No longer a being in the everyday life-space, the body will no longer be an object. The distinction between one's own and others' bodies, between being a self and the being of others, completely disappears. Every being is changed to a perfectly coherent radiance made transparent through the illumination of the transcendent.

In short, Yuasa's studies show that the mind-body unity (the state of "no-self") is achieved in the course of physical cultivation. In this sense, spiritual development is somatic in nature. We can use Sheet-Johnstone's (1992b, 6) words to summarize the characteristics of self-cultivation as follows:

> Self-cultivation as an epistemological undertaking is somatic in character: knowledge is gained through the body. At one level, self-cultivation as an Eastern concept is the epistemological equivalent of Socrates' "Know thyself." But it is at the same time a radically different precept on

three counts: it originates in a disciplined practice of the body rather than a disciplined practice of the intellect; it culminates in a different kind of knowledge of the self; and it underscores the continuity and unity of self and world.

The Link between Self-Cultivation and Somatics in Spiritual Education

Yuasa's interdisciplinary inquiry of self-cultivation has brought a new cross-cultural understanding of how the achievement of mind-body oneness occurs in the process of training the body. This understanding provides us with a somatic context for considering issues of spiritual education. As stated earlier, spirituality from the somatic perspective refers to an individual's awareness of and responsiveness to bodily sensation that comes from an inner self-understanding by experiencing the embodiment of achieved oneness of mind and body, wholeness, and interconnectedness with the external environment. Thus, education on spirituality, in the somatic context, is directed toward enhancing students' self-discovery and self-understanding of their individual inner awareness of bodily sensation. School activities on spirituality focus on students' individual existential experiences and help them recognize the somatic process of embodiment—the internal unity of mind and body, and the external connectedness with the environment.

To enhance students' internal awareness of mind-body oneness, self-cultivation practices can be considered as part of the schooling process. As stated earlier, self-cultivation practices (e.g., yogic and Zen meditation methods, martial arts techniques, breathing exercises, mountain retreat practices, qigong, the training of artistry in poetry and drama, the practice of calligraphy, and tea ceremony artistry) vary across Asian traditions. It is not our attempt to introduce each individual self-cultivation practice in this paper since each practice has its own particular context, method, history, and philosophy. In addition, each practice when introduced into a new setting interacts with the ideology, values, and history of that setting.

Discussion by local teachers, parents, community members, and school administrators is necessary to assure a complementary match between practice and school setting. We suggest that discussion begin with

the reading of the following books, which include a comprehensive guide to both Eastern self-cultivation and Western somatics practices:

- Knaster's (1996) *Discovering the Body's Wisdom*
- Murphy's (1992) *The Future of the Body: Explorations into the Further Evolution of Human Nature*
- Yuasa's (1993) *The Body Self-cultivation, and Ki-energy*
- Yuasa's (1987) *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-body*

We have to call attention to the fact that the kind of awareness enhanced by self-cultivation practices is different from the awareness that characterizes the cognitive knowledge most respected in current mind-body duality-based curriculum. It is not the awareness of an external observer who is seeking to be objective, but the awareness of a participant whose responsiveness emerges from the fact that he or she is both respectfully attentive to and subjectively engaged with what is being encountered. This kind of awareness comes from regular engagement of a practice. We can say this is an awareness that includes something of a personal engagement and a sense of personal significance together with a recognition of the wholeness and interconnectedness within the being and with the external world. One may have been engaging in a certain kind of practice for a period of time, but only at some point is one aware that the practice brings him/her a new experience. This sort of experience often lies behind phrases like "I have never had this kind of experience before." Just like Chan had practiced *tai chi chuan* for many years, Brockway and the respondent had long lived with nature, but only at certain moments did they experience an awareness of and responsiveness to bodily sensation that comes from an inner self-understanding and self-awareness.

In addition, as Yuasa notes, self-cultivation is a method of overcoming mind-body duality through praxis. In following the theory of self-cultivation and somatics disciplines, spiritual education focuses on the ongoing process of cultivation within the soma, the living body. This kind of education places a priority on an individual's self-consciousness and self-understanding of existential experience from one's first-person perception. As Yuasa (1993) proposes, cultivation is a process by which we can gradually change what we existentially are by opening new op-

tions previously unavailable to us. It is believed that the individual can recognize the transcendental experience within the soma in the process of a regular disciplined practice. When an individual becomes internally aware of his or her own transformation in between consciousness and unconsciousness, the power of the awareness has the capacity to invoke internal changes. Once people learn how to identify mind-body oneness taking place within themselves, they can learn how to evaluate, take control of, and cultivate their spiritual lives. In this sense, students can learn how to tune in to their own individual experience in ways that support their taking responsibility for their own spiritual growth, as well as their relationships with others.

In short, spiritual sensitivity, like the appreciation of music or art, is a cultivated mode of relating to the world (Yuasa 1993). A continued and prolonged exposure to a particular bodily training can deepen one's awareness and appreciation of spirituality. In both Eastern self-cultivation and Western somatics, spirituality is not merely an intellectual function; it involves the soma, the living body. We can conclude that the conviction behind spiritual development is a psychophysical achievement attained through long-term, regular, physically based cultivation.

Conclusion

We see somatics as one more way of framing human spirituality. The field of somatics brings together a generation of interest in the soma, a century of concern in the West for the deleterious effects of mind-body dualism, and a millennia of Eastern self-cultivation practices in the holistic and integrative discipline. The two movements taken together provide insights, language, and practices of interior awareness and external connectedness without obligating one to the religious.

Somatics as educational practice helps participants both ask and answer the question: "What am I experiencing, now?" To arrive at the place where question and answer merge requires a significant undertaking of committed practice. The attainment of this place of somatic engagement, this particular geography of the spirit, is achieved through self-cultivation—the education of the soma.

Endnotes

1. Mangione (1993, 13) defined "bodily arts and sciences" as "practices and explorations having to do with the living body—first person perspective and experience is valued."

2. In the Introduction to the papers on the *Spiritual Dimensions of Curriculum* (Part II), the author asserts that "the 'capacity to fully experience Being,' a philosophical objective explored most fully by Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, is at the root of what is referred to as 'spiritual experience.'" This conceptualization of spirituality, and its implications for educational thought, are the topic of the proposed experimental format symposium. See *Critical Issues in Curriculum Newsletter* No. 43, February 1993, published by a special interest group of the American Educational Research Association. The topic is "Spiritual Dimensions of Curriculum: A Conversation (Part II)."

3. Greene (1995) highlights twenty assumptions that comprise a general theory of somatics. They are as follows: existence is holistic; the human being is a soma; the human being is an individuated, adaptive process; first-person perception is privileged; phylogenetic knowing is privileged; sarcal consciousness provides powerful guidance; perseveration prevents sarcality; interstice counters perseveration; awareness is unique to somas; to be actively aware is to function with intent; perception determines reality; perception shows us not reality but ourselves; reality is changed by changing self; with each thought, a new reality is created; internal and external realms are collapsed into one; we are simultaneously individual and interconnected; space and time are simultaneous; mind is a function; energy creates matter; all life forms are interconnected; and somas are multidimensional beings of energy.

4. For instance, the Chinese medical system has been founded on the belief that the human body represents a microcosm of the natural and social world. Human being qua microcosm is correlative with the physical universe qua macrocosm. The body is never merely material and mechanical nor isolated from the universe. Rather, it is an open and flowing system of vital energy inseparable from the cosmos. Also, Leslie and Young (1992) observe that the conviction that "the human being forms one body with the universe" is generally found in Asian traditions (e.g., Chinese, Japanese, Ayurveda, and Unani).

5. For example, Empedocles, a Greek physician-philosopher and forerunner of Hippocrates, related the four basic macrocosmic elements (air, fire, earth, and water) to four basic elements of living beings (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile). Hippocratic medicine affirms that humans are coterminous with the world. While illnesses signal a disproportionate relationship among the humoral elements and their attendant qualities, health depends on a harmonic relationship among humors and their qualities, among treatment variables, and between living creatures and the world about them. The theory of humors offered an apparently convincing explanation that linked together both human and macrocosm, and formed the basis of Western tradition of medicine down to the nineteenth century (Nutton 1993). Like other substances within the earthly sphere, the human body is conceived as a harmonious balance between four humors and four elements. Humoralism stresses the unity of the body and the strong interaction between the body and the external environment (Klebs 1917; Nutton 1983; Temkin 1977).

6. In the Asian mind-body theory, qi (chi), or ki (in Japanese) is believed to be the basic element that constitutes the cosmos and produces everything in the world through its movement and changes. In the field of Chinese medicine, qi is referred to as the fundamental energy that makes up the living body and supports its vital activities. One of the distinctive features of qi is its susceptibility to external force and its self-generated internal dynamism. According to acupuncture medicine, an invisible psychophysical qi-energy circulates within the interior of the body along the twelve primary meridians and eight extraordinary meridians, while at the same time intermingling with the qi-energy pervasively present in the environment, including that of other creatures and humans. For details about qi-energy, see Eisenberg and Wright's (1985) *Encounters with Qi: Exploring Chinese*

Medicine, Farquhaar's (1994) *Knowing Practice: The Clinical Encounter of Chinese Medicine,* Leslie's (1976) *Asian Medicine Systems: A Comparative Study,* Unschuld's (1990) *Forgotten Traditions of Ancient Chinese Medicine,* and Yuasa's (1993) *The Body Self-cultivation, and Ki-energy.*

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Pedagogy for the Affluent

Adam Howard

Challenging the embedded beliefs of students and creating a safe place for them to express alternative understandings are effective in introducing an engaged pedagogy.

I began my teaching career at a private school in a wealthy suburb of a Midwestern city. Large, gated estates owned by the most influential people in the city and state surround the school's 25-acre campus. One of the fifty wealthiest men in the United States lives less than a mile from the school. The student body represents the population of the surrounding community as well as other suburban communities of the city. All students are enrolled in a college preparatory program and all attend college after graduation—not just *any* college, only well-respected, first-tier colleges.

One of my responsibilities was to be an advisor for ten seventh-grade boys. I met with them each morning and after lunch for advisory time. During advisory time on Tuesdays and Thursdays we talked about social issues and the rest of the week this time served as a study hall. During one of these advisory time issue sessions, we were discussing homelessness, a topic in the Society Unit (part of the prescribed curriculum of the school). I asked them if they had ever seen a homeless person in our city. At first, all of the boys said they had never seen a homeless person. I then asked them if they had attended sporting or other events downtown. Finally, one advisee said that he had seen two homeless people sitting outside the entrance of a sporting event asking for money. After he gave this example, nine of the ten advisees said they had seen a homeless person at some point in their lives. We continued to talk about homelessness in a very general sense until one advisee stood up and asked, "Mr. Howard, why are we learning about those people?" I gave the standard response by telling them that we should be aware of social issues. The same advisee responded, "This isn't about social issues. Those people are just bad business people." The rest of the boys voiced their agreement with this opinion. Fortunately, the bell soon rang because I did not know how to respond at the time. I was stunned by this opinion so different

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from my own beliefs and a worldview so much in opposition to what I held to be true.

Later that same year, with another group of students, a discussion of the welfare system emerged from an assigned reading. The majority of the students in the class argued that the system did not work, their parents should not be forced to "support" the poor through their taxes, and those who were receiving government assistance should just get a job. For the sake of exploring deeper into the issue and sharing my own beliefs, I proposed an opposing argument to them that supported the welfare system. This provoked a debate that eventually spread to other issues relating to poverty.

The importance of the discussion for me was the students' perceptions of the relationship between the affluent and poor. One of the students commented, "Our parents have worked hard for what we have. We shouldn't be forced to give it to people who don't do anything." The central point of their argument was that since their parents have worked hard, they deserved their wealth and were not obligated to share their wealth with the poor. From their perspective, wealth meant working hard and poverty meant laziness. The discussion concluded with a student jokingly stating, "Besides, we don't have to worry about them. Don't you know that's the reason why we have woods around [our neighborhood]? It blocks the view of [the adjacent poor community] so we don't have to see 'em." Again, the students proposed the question, "Why are we discussing those people?"

These experiences with my students during my first year of teaching began my journey of attempting to understand the educational processes at work in the school. The students were being "well educated" (all attended top colleges after graduating) but I had to ask toward what ends they were being educated. I had consciously chosen to teach the affluent because I believe that educators who struggle for social justice are not only needed in schools that serve poor students but also in schools with socially, economically, and politically privileged students. I was faced, however, with the problem of building the bridge between theory and my everyday practices as a teacher.

I began this process of transforming my pedagogical practices by first reaffirming my understandings of teaching. Teaching and learning in most schools predominantly neglect the talents, strengths, weaknesses, and voices of those within the schools. Consequently, education becomes merely perfunctory and meaningless activity. Teaching and learning are defined in terms of the nature of the activity and the knowledge of the teacher. Paulo Freire (1989, 58) refers to this as a banking concept of education where "education … becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor."

Counter to a banking concept of education is what bell hooks (1994) has described as "engaged pedagogy," which includes a progressive and holistic teaching and learning approach in which the well-being of students is central to pedagogical goals. I wanted my students to be engaged throughout their educational experiences even though their education had been antithetical to this connectedness. What I found to be even more difficult within this particular educational context was the mystifying notion that students were engaged in their learning because of their dominant cultural status.

As in most American schools, the school's curriculum was ideologically impregnated by the dominant culture. The white, affluent status of my students corresponded with the meaning systems developing from the curriculum offered to them. However, their educational experiences lacked a freedom to create, to construct independent meaning, to wonder, and to venture. The powerful influence of competition, hierarchy, and complete focus on achievement are incompatible with "educational values of free inquiry, the development of a critical and creative consciousness, and the struggle for meaning" (Purpel 1989, 93). Within this affluent educational context, academic success was defined in terms of superiority over others. An engaged pedagogy provides an alternative educational context that allows students the freedom to challenge their own cultural assumptions and to begin developing a critical consciousness of self and self in relation to others.

Developing an Engaged Pedagogy

Confronting Competition

Over time, I came to understand that the competitive pursuit for academic success prevented my stu-

dents from feeling safe to make mistakes. Mistakes were understood entirely as weaknesses and not as part of what it means to be human. My students did not know how to work through failure. Consequently, they dodged failure at all costs, which led to behaviors such as cheating and other forms of dishonesty. Teachers also could not expose their weaknesses. Both students and teachers were not bringing their humanity into the process of teaching and learning. Competition to be the best constructed boundaries that prevented students from exercising the freedom to construct independent meaning or to be creative. We all were trapped within these dehumanizing constraints.

In establishing an engaged process, we had to encroach on these boundaries—we needed to reclaim our humanity. I first let myself become more authentic and honest with students. I shared with them what I found important even when my values did not correspond with the conservative nature of the larger educational community. I allowed my strengths and weaknesses to surface. They got to know me as more than just one who provides knowledge but also as a human being who struggles to understand. They began to gradually understand that if I as their teacher approached learning and teaching noncompetitively, then, at least in my classes, they had the freedom to do the same.

One classroom practice I introduced as a way to begin breaking down those boundaries was sharing my writing with students. I did not expect to have my students share their writing and take risks without me being willing to do the same. Once my students saw that I agreed to have my own writing questioned and that this process of questioning had a constructive purpose, they were more willing to have their writing examined by the classroom community. Activities such as students critiquing each other's papers were not only effective in writing development but also made clear *why* this feedback from multiple sources worked. This was also a community endeavor.

Providing an honest and authentic educational experience highlighted the importance of students' opportunities to share feedback with each other and me. Parents' feedback was understood as a process defined by control and economic power. As a parent

frankly told me, "we pay a lot of money for our kids to go here and we should have a say in how things are run." They wanted to make sure they were getting their money's worth. Neither the students nor their parents contributed to the conversations about the school's educational program through a mutual and respectful process. I rejected this education as a product notion and devised methods and approaches to generate respectful, collaborative, and honest student feedback. For example, we frequently had class discussions to determine what activities, methods of assessment, and assignments were educationally effective. The students also wrote evaluations of the class throughout the year. These methods and approaches allowed the students to work with me in constructing educational practices and routines.

The collaboration of students and teacher throughout the teaching and learning process was essential in establishing a classroom community. Theoretically, the school placed an emphasis on building community. For example, teachers attended numerous in-service workshops on the characteristics of a respectful and collaborative school community and we were introduced to various methods of building community in the classroom and during school activities. In actuality, however, the school's community-building process provided the necessary means for students to maintain their identity of domination and didn't provide opportunities for individuals to work together. The school's routines and practices were embedded in sexist, classist, and racist understandings of how individuals relate to each other. Sexual harassment was understood as flirting. The hazing rituals of the various sport teams were considered a rites of passage for male students. This distorted notion of community prevented honesty and openness.

My students and I worked towards a different understanding of community. The most important approach I used to build community in my classes was to recognize the value of each individual voice. In class discussions, every student had the opportunity to share his/her opinion. I made a consistently conscious effort to make sure all students' voices were being heard. This approach also recognized that our understandings could be shared in a variety of ways.

For example, I had one student who did not want to speak during class discussions. I tried various methods to urge him to verbally share his understandings during class until I discovered his love for drawing. I then recommended that he draw as a way to communicate his understandings. He enthusiastically accepted this suggestion and created drawings to share with the entire class for the rest of the school year. His drawings allowed his "voice" to be heard.

By introducing and then constructing an honest classroom community, the students were provided more freedom to be creative and to harbor independent understandings. This approach allowed me and the students to become more human in the teaching and learning process. We could make mistakes and work through these mistakes both independently and collectively. Contrary to the competitive educational environment of the larger school community, my students and I began to establish an engaged course for our teaching and learning.

Beyond Dominant Culture

The education offered at this school reinforced existing systems of domination. This reinforcement fundamentally developed from the idea that what students learn needs to be directed by "official knowledge," subject matter legitimized by a selective tradition. As a teacher who was required to implement this curriculum in my classes, I negotiated the "givens" (e.g., Chaucer, Shakespeare, specific modes of assessment for vocabulary words) within an engaged and liberatory framework. Keeping the curriculum requirements in mind, I used methods and subject matter that allowed us to be honest with each other, maintain a noncompetitive educational environment, and have learning and teaching experiences beyond the boundaries of official knowledge. The students and I created opportunities to work with the curriculum instead of altogether against it. This does not mean, however, that resistance to dominant educational practices was not part of our teaching and learning. Our resistance allowed us to go beyond the "givens" to allow ourselves to become pedagogically available for an engaged education.

For example, in my history course, I developed a framework for our approach to history and the process of understanding the past from the feminist perspective that Susan Griffin provides in *A Chorus oj Stones: The Private Life of War* (1992). In Griffin's understanding, history is not a record of isolated events that happen only to particular groups of people in particular places but instead

> is part of us, such that, when we hear any secret revealed … our lives are made suddenly clearer to us, as the unnatural heaviness of unspoken truth is dispersed. For perhaps we are like stones; our own history and the history of the world embedded in us, we hold a sorrow deep within and cannot weep until that history is sung. (Griffin 1992, 8)

To develop this framework, my students and I spent the first part of the year wrestling with this nontraditional perspective of what history means. This coming-to-understand process provided a means for us to establish a questioning tone for our study of history throughout the year. By tone, I mean developing a norm for both our approach to subject matter and our discussions of that subject matter.

I also used texts such as Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* (1980) to provide stories and interpretations of history different from our required textbook. We read both accounts and identified the differences and similarities in these varying historical accounts. During the Civil War Unit, we watched parts of *Birth of a Nation* and *Gone with the Wind* to understand how films have contributed to the perpetuation of a racist understanding of history. It is important for students to know, for example, that *Birth of a Nation* influenced the rebirth of the KKK and films since then have constructed a particular racist history.

Our analysis of films and texts provided a means for my students to locate the political, economic, and social forces at work in constructing understandings of history. Most importantly, examining conflicting stories of our past and the influences of our past on our present further provoked student questioning. For the most part, students began to no longer readily accept the "official knowledge" as the *one* knowledge, but, instead, understood learning as a questioning process. This also provided students the opportunity to question me and for me to challenge them in their assumptions about the world beyond the walls of our school. The act of mutual question-

ing facilitated a classroom community where we all were teachers and learners.

This questioning approach to studying history frustrated students. They wanted certainty that couldn't be found through this critical educational discourse. This approach to learning and teaching recognized that knowledge did not come in a neat, convenient package to be opened and discovered. Coming to understand is a messy, not always direct process and requires us to become more critical of what we study and what we hold to be true. Most students eventually worked through their frustrations and began to ask important questions that challenged dominant forms of knowledge.

The students also began to apply this critical approach to their daily lives outside the classroom. For example, a student told the class he was at the movies with a group of friends and, as he explained, "couldn't stop thinking" as he watched the film. Other students shared similar stories of moments when they applied critical analysis to the world around them.

For my students to become engaged they had to work towards a new level of honesty with me and other students. My students had been socialized to speak and act in a way that reinforced their dominant cultural framework. They knew what to say and what not to say and when they could be honest about their beliefs and when they needed to not disclose their opinions. Their socialized behaviors prevented them from genuinely participating in classroom discussions and activities. Therefore, although they had internalized racism, classism, and other forms of domination, they habitually represented themselves and their ideas differently.

To bring students' authenticity to the surface, I created a classroom environment where students could voice their ideas and beliefs even when their views were not socially acceptable. This openness was guided by the idea that philosophies situated within a supremacist framework could not be challenged until they were revealed. Initially, students tried to find out how far they could go by making outrageous comments that really didn't represent their thoughts. They wanted me to say, "OK, the game is over. We can go back to playing it safe and pretending we don't believe certain things." I responded, however,

by continuing to provide them a space for free expression of their ideas. Eventually, students used this "free expression space" as an opportunity to become aware of their understandings and how they influenced their lived realities. Their openness also allowed me to challenge them to think differently about and to become more critically conscious of the world around them. This authentic exchange among the classroom members provided students the opportunity to struggle with their current and eventual positions in society and challenged them to extend beyond their dominant cultural framework.

The honesty among the classroom members allowed us to openly discuss issues in the attempt of developing a critical consciousness. These authentic discussions, however, were not always sufficient for real understanding. In one class, after the students had reached the "philosophizing without association" zone during a discussion about racism, I eventually discovered that their cultural backgrounds prevented them from even partially understanding racism. We had spent several classes discussing racism, but my students were not engaged in the discussion. They felt no relationship between the subject and their own lives.

I responded to their lack of educational engagement by creating an activity similar to the classroom exercise Jane Elliott devised in 1968 when she segregated her third grade class based on eye color. In this activity, three students who were chosen based on criteria the students developed had the "privilege" of sitting while the others stood during class. The students hurriedly developed criteria in hopes the activity would end and everyone could sit down to begin discussing the previous night's reading. When they realized they had to remain standing while I facilitated a discussion they increasingly became discontent with me. They wanted to know what I was trying to demonstrate through this activity. I didn't respond to their inquires.

I directed my attention towards the sitting students during our discussion and ignored the standing students. I made negative comments about the standing students and praised the sitting students even when they provided inaccurate responses to my questions. At this point in the exercise, they no longer wanted to know about the activity but in-

stead, wanted to know why I was treating them this way. The standing students eventually disengaged themselves entirely from what was occurring in class. When the bell rang I dismissed the class. I didn't process the activity with them to answer their initial questions about the purpose of this exercise. I wanted them to think about it and have the time to do so.

The next day I entered class intentionally late to find most of the students standing. As I entered the classroom, one student said that his mother gave him permission to sit and if I had any questions then I could call her at home. I then told the students they could sit and we had a discussion about the activity. We spoke about their anger and tried to understand how this activity reflects the larger society. Our subsequent class discussions about who has rights in this country and what these rights grant to individuals, about discrimination, assimilation, oppression, and our association with others had more meaning for these students because they at least had something to work from. Could they fully understand the lived experiences of African-Americans and the poor through this classroom exercise? No. But experiences like this one contextualize what is difficult for students to make sense of and provide "necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin" (hooks 1994, 13).

Responses to Pedagogical Transformation

Students responded in various ways to the educational environment I co-created with them. They were accustomed to certain types of educational practices couched in a process that maintained their culture of domination. These practices and understandings were antagonistic to my pedagogical approach. In the beginning, my students were frustrated and resisted change because they were good at and felt comfortable with going through the motions fundamental to a banking concept of education. They knew how to regurgitate subject matter so that they achieved high grades and to be passive consumers in their learning process instead of being actively involved. Most of my students, however, eventually welcomed this different approach and became educationally available in a meaningful way, once they discovered the freedom that an engaged pedagogy provides.

There were few students, however, who never came to accept a notion of education different from the dominant discourse of the larger school community. In these students' understandings, what we were doing in the classroom was not adequately preparing them for college. They believed my classes lacked academic rigor because I used non-standardized methods for assessment and did not focus entirely on the particulars of the subject matter. They wanted me to lecture instead of facilitating classroom discussions. Beyond their wants and beliefs, I came to realize that their educational needs were not being met through this approach to teaching and learning.

In this school, a student's persistent discontent with a teacher eventually led to a transfer to another teacher's class. Consequently, these students and I were not always given opportunities to work together in developing solutions. Most of the time their parents demanded that I change my teaching to their satisfaction. I responded to their demands by explaining the theoretical basis for my pedagogical approach. They would not accept my explanation and forced the school officials to transfer their children.

In this educational context, I didn't believe I had failed these students as a teacher. I sincerely wanted to work with them in constructing experiences that met their educational needs and welcomed their resistance to my teaching approach. From my perspective, their resistance demonstrated an act of taking ownership of their education. I had been working with some of the resisting students and developed with them individualized educational programs. But the possibilities of working together were avoided. These students and their parents rejected pedagogical transformation and found what they educationally needed elsewhere. I felt, of course, frustrated and disappointed by these situations but consistently maintained an understanding of education as an engaged teaching and learning process.

Reflecting on My Teaching

I began teaching at this school with an understanding that the dominant cultural forces within the educational community were too powerful for me to

embrace an engaged pedagogy. My initial approach to students reinforced the notion of the larger school community that education is a commodity. Teachers were the givers of knowledge and students were the receivers of that knowledge. This exchange of giving and receiving lacked a freedom for us to create a learning environment that provided opportunities for students to develop a level of consciousness about the world around them.

In his autobiography, Myles Horton (1990) contends that change will not occur without our individual change. I eventually rejected the perception that I had to teach in a way that reinforced my students' dominant cultural framework. I developed an understanding of teaching as a political act. My students were most likely going to become leaders. They were going to have power. I was concerned with what they were going to do with their power. My classroom environment provided opportunities for students to develop a consciousness of the world around them and begin working towards an authentic association with others so that they could become active agents for social change.

Through my questioning approach and our class discussions about difficult issues, I wanted my students to go beyond the hegemony of the world they already knew and come to understand that they have choices in the way they live their lives. They could decide to use their inherited wealth and positions of power to work for social justice. My goal was not to have my students renounce their wealth or privileged positions in society but instead, to begin forming "hybrid and hyphenated identities in order to rethink the relationship of self to society, of self to other, and to deepen the moral vision of the social order" (McLaren 1995, 22). In my classes, there was evidence that the methodology I developed allowed my students to work towards this goal. They no longer asked questions like, "Why are we discussing those people?" but asked, "What can be done to bring about equality?" They also challenged the larger school community's "traditions" that were embedded in forms of domination. Through an engaged pedagogy, my students understood themselves and their relations with others differently.

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Holistic Education in a Prophetic Voice

David E. Purpel

An education that speaks in a prophetic voice responds not to the possibility of becoming rich and famous but to the possibility of becoming loving and just. Its reference point is not the possible erosion of America's economic and military might but humanity's real erosion of its vision of universal harmony, peace, and fulfillment.

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It is important to distinguish between descriptive and normative analysis of education in that the former seeks to characterize what actually constitutes education activity while the latter seeks to argue which educational activities are more valid, legitimate, and appropriate. When we speak of holistic education in the descriptive sense we are probably referring to the sensible notion that we must attend to and take seriously the whole realm of human learning. In this sense, holistic education serves as a heuristic and corrective force, reminding us of the dangers of the distortions that emerge from over-determinism, on the one hand, and neglect, on the other. Holistic educators tend to perform an extremely valuable function by concentrating on those dimensions of education commonly neglected or abused by mainstream educators and educational reformers, more particularly such neglected dimensions as concern for intuition, personal knowledge, spiritual reflections, and untapped human potential.[1]

There does not seem to be consensus, however, within the holistic education movement whether this concern is primarily a corrective strategy (designed to provide a more balanced dialogue on education by adding important dimensions to it) or whether it represents primarily a more normative discourse (one in which the argument is that concern for the personal, intuitive, and spiritual is more valuable and appropriate). Of course, there are probably elements of both discourses in the work of holistic educators, but the distinction is important because it raises the question of what ultimate criteria and what conceptual framework are being used to determine notions of valid education. To do so is to immediately invoke those moral, political, and social assumptions that inevitably connect with matters of educational policy and practice. There can be no edu-

cational policy or practice independent of a social and cultural context and therefore there is no such theory as "objective" educational theory. The educative process is, for better or worse, inevitably and intimately interrelated with the historic, cultural, normative, political, and economic dimensions of particular communities.

When holistic educators argue that education must be "whole" and that it can be complete only if educators attend not just to the external social and cultural context but also to the inner world of the self and the broader context of the universe, they are both affirming and correcting for a particular socially, culturally, and historically grounded educational analysis. When holistic educators argue instead that "true education" consists of concentrating primarily on the development of personal and spiritual processes that might enable us to transcend our historical, social, and cultural contexts, they are speaking more to a particular affirmation, i.e., of the overriding importance of nourishing a consciousness that might be called more spiritual or mystical. It is one thing to say that humans do not learn by intellect alone or to say that humans are not only social beings—they are also sentient beings. However, it is quite another thing to say that our daily life is basically transient, and that it distracts us from the ultimate meaning that derives from union with the cosmos. In a word, the difference is linked to how much importance we place on the dialectic between culture and the individual and how much importance we place on the individual's connection to the universe.

The holistic education movement's contribution includes raising awareness of the neglect of the person/spiritual/subjective dimensions of education for both mainstream and critical discourses. Conventional educational discourse is of course deeply rooted in the language of technology, positivistic epistemology, and in the values of competition and socio-economic advancement. Much of the educational theory of dissent has provided very powerful critiques of mainstream education primarily on grounds that it has perpetuated social and cultural inequality, oppression, and hegemony. As acute and liberating as this critical discourse has been, it has so far been unable to successfully integrate its analysis with serious concern for the spiritual and subjective

dimensions of human existence. This paper attempts to address this issue by arguing that the concern for justice and freedom has been informed by a religious sensibility and, furthermore, that there is an important place for the religious discourse in the project of creating an education that is directed to promoting peace, justice, freedom, and joy.

In this paper I argue for the signal importance of an educational process directed at creating a just society and a compassionate culture. My hope is that this analysis responds to the human impulse for a number of powerful, basic, and to some extent conflicting impulses: autonomy, freedom, equality, justice, community, and fulfillment. Indeed, it is my position that a just and compassionate society is an absolute necessity even if it may not be an absolutely sufficient condition for a life of ultimate meaning. I also wish to emphasize that I do not at all intend in this formulation to claim that education is only, or primarily, about the process of creating a just society. Educational processes involve an incredible range of activities that include acculturation, socialization, training, initiation, as well as the promotion of inquiry and creativity. Important teaching and learning goes on in a great number of sites—within the individual, in families, on the street, before movie and television screens, in schools and universities, in factories, businesses, and offices, etc. My orientation represents both historical and moral dimensions—historical in that I view my educational concerns as emerging from the historical contingencies of the moment. Further, I believe that educators in this particular historical moment have a special responsibility to ground their policies and programs in a moral vision, i.e., in a conception of what a good society might be.

The Human Narrative

It seems to be in the nature of human beings to sort out and attempt to make meaning out of our activities, and it is quite clear that this process has produced enormously diverse accounts, narratives, histories, and interpretations. These narratives are more than just interesting and intriguing, for they also help to shape communal and individual consciousness; they provide us with meaning and hence with direction, purpose, and energy.

This paper is written within the tradition of those particular narratives that speak to the human struggle to create more just, compassionate, and peaceful communities. The story of these efforts cuts across time and space and speaks to what is most sublime and also to what is most demonic in human possibility. It is not very difficult to see humans as "animals," i.e., being driven by the absolute desire to survive and to satisfy basic needs and gratification. There is ample evidence that humans are capable of doing virtually anything however violent, cruel, and callous in order to satisfy their fundamental needs. What must be remembered, however, is that we live in a culture that has created concepts called "cruelty," "violence," and "callousness," as well as terms like "compassionate," "caring," and "justice." What is extraordinary (if not miraculous) is not that humans, like other species, are driven towards survival and self-gratification, but, unlike other species, they also struggle to transcend the limitations of such a consciousness. Although it is problematic to say "all," we can surely say that most cultures and societies create limits on what is considered acceptable and unacceptable conduct and behavior; i.e., cultures develop an ethos or spirit of community that serves as a mechanism to control, inspire, and guide its members. Durkheim has described this process as an integration of the personal and social as being grounded in moral and religious frameworks.

> Morality begins with membership of a group.... First, we shall show how society is good and desirable for the individual who cannot exist without it or deny it without denying himself [sic], and how, at the same time, because society suppresses the individual, he cannot desire it without to a certain extent violating his nature as an individual. Secondly, we shall show that society, while being good, constitutes a moral authority.... It is impossible to imagine on the evidence, that morality should serve its unbroken association with religion without ceasing to be itself.... Morality would not longer be morality if it had no elements of religion.... (in Nisbet 1974, 194-196, 197)

The history of these efforts to build moral communities reflects the incredible paradox, diversity, contributions, and mysteries of the human condition. It is a history of slavery and emancipation; of oppression and democracy; of the invention of napalm and penicillin; the Ku Klux Klan and the Red Cross; and it has produced villains, heroes, demons, and angels. Hilter *and* Gandhi — Louis XIV *and* Thomas Paine — Mother Teresa *and* Henrich Himmler — Joseph Mengele *and* Madame Curie — the Peace Corps *and* the Hilter Youth. It is also clear that the notion of civilization making steady and continuous progress toward the achievement of a more just, peaceful, and loving world is a serious distortion of reality. Although there is much evidence that many societies have made gains and positive changes in consciousness—e.g., slavery has been abolished in most of the world—there is the harsh and profound reality that even these gains may be overshadowed by significant regression in other spheres. There is evidence that over 100 million people have been killed in wars since 1700, 90% of them in the 20th Century. It is estimated that 2 billion people live in extreme poverty, 450 million suffer from hunger and malnutrition, that 2 in 5 children in American live in poverty, and that there are upwards of 1 million homeless in America. It is surely easy enough to be disheartened by such findings and to be discouraged by the attendant cynicism, apathy, and sense of powerlessness. A consciousness of impotence and cynicism of course compounds and aggravates the enormous pain and suffering that is the consequence of a consciousness of greed, oppression, and callousness. We face catastrophe from the combined forces of evil and apathy, of the dual corruption of power and powerlessness, and from the twin dangers of the affirmation of individual power and the collapse of communal authority.

There are surely new and extremely important dimensions to our present crises—the most paramount of which are the extremely serious risks to the survival of the planet, though it is certainly not news that the human community faces serious crises from a combination of external threats and the collapse of the moral order. We are, however, not without valuable resources in responding to such calls and indeed it is extremely valuable and helpful in such times to reaffirm our most cherished traditions, hopes, dreams, and convictions. A major element in our tradition can be described as a dialectic between affirmation and criticism or, perhaps to use a less linear

image, a continuous spiral of criticism and hope: expectations followed by criticism followed by renewed hope and possibility. We have learned not only to dream beyond the narrow limits of human survival and callousness but also to be wary of sentimentality as well as certainty and to be on guard against the violations of our dreams. In the human exploration of our souls, we have discovered a variety of capacities that complicate the struggle for justice—including those of personal deception, denial, evasion, and rationalization. As an antidote to these tendencies, we have come to accept the absolute necessity for maintaining a critical consciousness, a spirit of skepticism, inquisitiveness, and reflectiveness. Indeed, this critical tradition has become so strong and so integral to our culture that it has developed its own set of problematics. Chief among these is to nurture a position of detachment and distance in which a great deal of energy is applied to the analysis and interpretation of ideas, policies, practices but with little, if any, of that energy directed at affirmation. Such a posture can and has generated not only useful insights and understandings, but it has also produced a high degree of moral relativity, political apathy, and cultural cynicism.

The critical traditions that I wish to affirm are ones in which criticism is embedded in a wider and deeper vision. In such traditions, criticism is not an end in and of itself, but a powerful tool in the service of larger moral, cultural, and spiritual aspirations. In such traditions, criticisms are rooted in positive and affirmative commitments that indeed provide the very bases of critique. They are logical consequences of affirmation in that they provide a model and the criteria for making judgments, the heart of the critical enterprise. There can be no criticism without judgment, however implicit and guarded, notwithstanding claims of objectivity and neutrality. Unfortunately, our culture has been able to reify and reduce a critical consciousness through such concepts as "critical thinking" and "objective analysis." This process has the effect of removing (however artifically) technique from judgment and of eliminating the basis and framework within which the critical dimension has been embedded. It is another tragic instance of alienation, in which the meaning-making impulses

are actually removed from so-called skills and techniques.

A cornerstone of the larger moral orientation I am discussing is the brilliant Western tradition of critical rationality as reflected in the notion of the Socratic techniques. However, I wish to extend this notion beyond mere technique to its deeper groundings. When I speak of the Socratic tradition, I have particular reference to the Socrates of the *Apology* in which Socrates attempts to describe the meaning of his life and death. In this account we witness the indictment, trial, conviction, and execution of Socrates as well as the justification of his work and his martyrdom. Socrates had been accused of threatening the security of the state by undermining the beliefs of its youth and Socrates indeed admits raising troublesome questions that reveal the shallowness and inadequacies of conventional beliefs. The work is a pivotal part of the narrative of Western Civilization since it speaks so eloquently and poignantly to the human passion for freedom and truth in the face of the forces of conformity and expediency. Socrates is rightfully one of our major heroes, for he not only exemplifies brilliant intellectuality but also enormous wisdom, courage, and dignity. The images of the shrewd, elderly Socrates calmly taking on his tormentors with consummate wisdom and insight energizes us to maintain faith in the power of the mind and the authority of knowledge. The Greek legacy (as embodied in Socrates) includes the enormous power of the inquiring, incisive, skeptical mind to illumine and extend our vision. It is a legacy that has revolutionized the world and one that, though having its own serious problematics, is surely indispensable.

However, there is an extremely important dimension of Socrates's story as told in the *Apology* that is often neglected, if not forgotten. I refer to those passages in which Socrates makes it very clear that he is on a spiritual journey and indeed insists that his intellectual engagement with the citizens of Athens is intimately connected to that journey. Socrates is convinced that his search for greater clarity and understanding is sanctioned and required by the gods and thus his queries, reflections, and debates represent sacred responsibilities and obligations. In fact, he makes no separation between church and state, religious and secular, spiritual and humanistic, since a

life of meaning is one in which all these elements are in harmony. Shades of holistic education!

The point is that the so-called Socratic Method is not a method or technique at all; it is not about scoring intellectual triumphs or about making debating points. Socrates was indeed pursuing religious fulfillment by carefully examining conventional religious and social ideas intellectually, analytically, and critically not to debunk and deconstruct them but to enrich and deepen them. In responding to his indictment, Socrates has this to say:

> Gentlemen of the jury, I am grateful and I am your friend, but I will obey the gods rather than you and as long as I draw breath and am able I shall not cease to practice philosophy…. Be sure this is what the gods order me to do, and I think there is no greater blessing for the city than my service to the god. For I go around doing nothing but persuading both young and old among you not to care for your body or your wealth in preference to or as strongly as for the best possible state of your soul….

I confess to not knowing very much about the particular nature of Socrates's spiritual consciousness or of the specifics of the religious beliefs of his contemporaries. What is vital for purposes of this analysis is the paradigmmatic power of an orientation in which keen intellectuality is integrally and symbiotically related to a spiritual and moral vision. This relationship has even more particular relevance for us in the discourse of the Biblical prophets, whose narratives contain some of the most central themes of Western morality and spirituality. It is a story with images of slavery and the promise of liberation; of human striving to create communities grounded in a higher law; and of profound commitments to creating a life of piety, justice, compassion, and spiritual salvation.

This paper, to be more precise, therefore is grounded in a particular metaphor of an affirmative, critical tradition, namely in the metaphor of social prophecy. I wish to emphasize that although this concept has deep and vital roots in the Bible, the clear intention is to employ it metaphorically, recognizing that the consciousness and historic dimension of our time and place are extraordinary different from those depicted in the Scriptures. It is also important at the same time to note that in using this metaphor, my intent is to avoid significant distortion of the textual sources but, by the same token, I accept the responsibility to provide (one hopes) a persuasive and creative interpretation.

The point here is not Biblical exegesi, but rather to indicate some of the broad but profound influences that some Biblical narratives have had on our consciousness. We can and do interpret great and enduring texts in a variety of ways and indeed it is our human responsibility and destiny to do so. I associate myself with the tradition that sees within the Biblical (as well as other) narratives elements of a profound search for ultimate meaning and a life of justice, peace, and joy. A key part of this narrative is reflected in the accounts described in *Exodus* in which an enslaved people (the Hebrews) are oppressed both by powerful external and brutal forces (Egypt) and by their own sense of powerlessness and despair. The issue of their liberation is linked to the people's capacity to imagine (and hence make possible) transcending their powerfully palpable limits. The prophetic voice (represented here in the figure of Moses) is one which speaks critically, candidly, and boldly. In this case Moses himself has to struggle to accept the vision and to agree to confront the Hebrews with their refusal to fully acknowledge their slavery, and more importantly to recognize the human misery going on in the midst of luxury and splendor as indefensible and unnecessary. In addition, the prophetic voice speaks to hope and possibility by invoking higher forces and principles though the development of a higher consciousness. It becomes Moses's task therefore to teach the Hebrews not only that they are oppressed but they need not and must not be. Furthermore, it is his task to exhort them to have faith in the power of the Divine to infuse the people with the material, spiritual, and moral energy required to break the physical and psychological bonds of physical oppression and personal despair.

Moses, like subsequent prophets, commits himself to the extraordinarily complex, difficult, and frustrating task of raising the consciousness of the oppressed, confronting the power of the oppressors, and dealing with self-doubt, fear, divisiveness, and failures. Moses' early reluctance, his own slow awakening, and his inadequacies as a leader reveal the prophet as human, fallible, vulnerable, and believable, while the apparent capacity that Moses had to

be in touch with the Divine and to experience and witness the transcendent marks prophets as people who have dramatically extended the range of human possibility. The image of Moses (presumably the most evolved of the most evolved people) at the peak of Mount Sinai is a very powerful metaphor for human transcendence—the possibility of humans reaching for the heavens and of an intimate relationship between God and humanity. What Sinai also represents is the extension of liberation as flight from bondage to liberation as the quest for a community grounded in a vision of ultimate meaning—a shift from freedom defined negatively to a more positive conception of freedom. The covenant represents a commitment to deeply affirm a vision of justice, honor, and piety, and to diligently press for its realization.

This basic pattern of critique, outrage, exhortation, hope, possibility, and vision (what has been called the prophetic voice) recurs not only in other religious narratives but in other social texts as well as in historical events across time and space. In the more literal sense Biblical prophets are clearly identified within the text (e.g., Hosea, Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah) and each take on the role of alert, inquiring, outraged social critic offering both condemnation of violation of the Covenant and the possibility of redemption through the community's reaffirmation of its commitments. This is very much the configuration of the life of Jesus who severely castigates the community for not only violating the spirit of the Covenant but also for profaning it. Beyond his outrage and indignation he provides a message of renewed hope for transcendence though a consciousness of love, humility, and reaffirmation.

This is not to say Judaism and Christianity are to be equated with the prophetic tradition but only to note that the prophetic tradition remains a vital and powerful force for those committed to a world of justice and peace. This tradition also helps us consider the role of religion in social criticism. Robert Ackerman has argued that the critical function is the very essence of religion, i.e., that it is the responsibility of religion to be alert to the society's reluctance and failure to meet its deepest commitments and to become a voice of protest (e.g., as in *Protest*antism) and renewal.

Religion ... always retains the potential of developing a pungent social critique, no matter how accommodating a form they have assumed.... Critique does not exhaust religion, but religion that cannot critique is already dead.... What is being suggested here is that the core of religion is potentially critical rather than functional or accommodating. (Ackerman 1985, ix, 24)

It is important to add a note of caution at this point in regard to the problematics and limitations of the "prophetic voice" metaphor. For instance, there is the danger of becoming captured by particular interpretations, as it must be recognized that there have been and continue to be serious controversies regarding biblical interpretation, including those concerning the role and function of the prophets. Furthermore, even if there were a consensus on this, it is also clear that it is dangerous to make direct parallels between and among the social and cultural milieux involved. That was *then* and this is *now*, notwithstanding the reality that the "now" contains important dimension of the "then." We certainly have the right to be selective about which traditions to reaffirm and which to reject, but we also have to accept responsibility for making choices rather than justifying them on the basis that we are only reminding ourselves of universal and/or eternal truths. Furthermore, although I find the tradition of spirituality and morally grounded social criticism to be extraordinarily resonant with our current cultural and political crises, I do not choose to support other phenomena associated with biblical narratives, e.g., animal sacrifices, slavery, conquest, patriarchy.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the very important sub-category of "false prophet," which of course raises the basic question of the validity of prophetic voices. One can be outraged, critical, and indignant and be "wrong," i.e., criticality by itself does not guarantee wisdom or rightness. Ultimately, we search for criteria that validate and generate critical dimensions and whether we do or should do this inductively or deductively is not particularly relevant here. Put another way and more crudely, some prophets are "better" than others and this is not necessarily because their analytical capacities are different but rather because their underlying vision is more or less acceptable. The Grand Inquisitor, Mar-

tin Luther King, Cotton Mather, Ayotallah Khomeini, and Mohandas Gandhi can all be called prophets in that they integrated their political and social movements with deeply felt religious commitments. One person's passion can indeed become another person's zealotry. Therefore, we will not want to attend to *the* prophetic voice but to prophetic voices and to search for those that are most resonant with our vision of a just, peaceful, and joyous world.

The prophetic tradition has strong roots and resonance in the American experience, perhaps most clearly seen in our Puritan origins. Indeed, the impact of Puritan culture and society on our present consciousness represents our ambivalence toward a morally and religiously grounded orientation. At best the Puritans contributed the values of the authority of individual consciousness and of a morally based community and at worst left a residue of intolerance, rigidity, and self-righteousness. They apparently were not able to conduct their quest for a more just and equitable society without the certainty that they were God's appointed and chosen agents. Their experience (in one of the great ironies and oddities of American history) actually helped to foster a quite contrary religious tradition, namely that of tolerance, diversity, pluralism, and the separation of church and state. The collapse of the Puritan dream, however, did not mean the end but only the elaboration of an American moral and religious consciousness. To this day, for better or worse, American culture often reflects an explicit moral and/or religious orientation in a whole array of areas—from popular culture to foreign policy and from family life to the arts. Some of this is clearly vulgar and self-righteous as in "God Bless America" and the portrayal of certain nations as evil empires, but much of this is grounded in the impulse to create a world of meaning, justice, freedom, and joy.

This impulse is eloquently and powerfully reflected in perhaps our country's most sacred text, the Declaration of Independence. Central to this paradigmatic statement is the notion that "Governments are instituted among Men [sic], deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed," a political expression of the moral and religious principles that "all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights...." The statement goes on to affirm the vital responsibility of the citizenry to maintain patient but critical vigilance of the government's fidelity to those principles since, if the government should become despotic, "it is their Right, it is their Duty to throw off such Government." In an echo of Sinai, an emerging people commits itself to a religious and moral vision as the boundaries of a new nation.

As the author of the Declaration of Independence, it is no surprise that Jefferson saw education as a critical dimension in the creation of the new democratic society. The suspicion of government's capacity to oppress requiring "eternal vigilance" and the basic principle of the "consent of the governed" combine to require an alert, informed, and critical citizenry. Thus education in America shifted from a focus on the training of ministers and the enlightenment of an elite to an essential instrument of the empowerment of the individual and the preservation of the democratic vision. Later John Dewey saw the schools as the "laboratory" for democracy, where students and teachers could experience and reflect upon the problems and difficulties inherent in creating a world based on a commitment to dignity, justice, rationality, and tolerance. George Counts took this one step further by claiming for education the responsibility for teaching the process not only of understanding but transforming society. In a memorable statement evocative of prophetic rhetoric Counts once wrote:

> If the schools are to be really effective, they must become centers for the building, and not merely for the contemplation, of our civilization. This does not mean that we should endeavor to promote particular reforms through the educational system. We should, however, give to our children a vision of the possibilities which lie ahead and endeavor to enlist their loyalties and enthusiasms in the realization of the vision. Also, our social institutions and practices, all of them, should be critically examined in the light of such a vision. (Counts 1962, 37)

Education, Society, and Culture in the 1990s

What then are educators who strive to evoke these prophetic traditions to make of our present historical moment? How well are we as a people doing in the struggle to reduce misery, poverty, suffering, oppression and to increase justice, peace, harmony, equality,

and joy? We pose these questions not only because they are obviously of enormous import in and of themselves but more particularly because they ought to serve as the major point of departure for educators. Organized education is to be seen not predominately in the service of scholarship nor primarily to serve the state or the economy but primarily to serve the task of nurturing, nourishing, and sustaining the quest to meet our highest aspirations and most profound commitments. The standards of a society and culture (and hence of its educational institutions) involve concerns for the degree of freedom, equality, justice, and fulfillment enjoyed by its members.

The recognition of both the importance of affirming our solid and enduring social and cultural achievements as well as the dangers inherent in profound pessimism does not, however, mitigate the harsh and obscene reality of the horrors of our present condition, worldwide as well as nationally and locally. There are no end of indices, statistics, and observations to demonstrate and evoke the starkness, depth, and extent of profound and unnecessary human suffering. Indeed, this could be demonstrated by a brief exposition of only one of this century's many catastrophes: World War I, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, World War II, Viet Nam, the Sub-Saharan famines, oil spills, the greenhouse effect, Cambodia, et al. It is extraordinary that such a list can only be suggestive and not definitive; there simply is not the space to list all or even most of the truly horrible events of this century.

There have been a great many attempts to explain and provide meaning for such stupefying phenomena in the poignant assumption that there are indeed meaningful explanations. Attendant, then, to this terrible material and physical destructiveness has been a corresponding erosion of the spirit. Alienation, fragmentation, anomie, fear, and loneliness are virtually household names and routines. There is deep thirst for meaning and direction as a consequence of an increasing sense of meaninglessness and existential despair. The society and the schools urge us to work hard, strive for personal success, and compete with ourselves, our colleagues, and our enemies. Some (too many) people respond with drugs, crime, suicide, and depression. The society and schools extol individual achievement and indeed

equate it with virtue. Some (surely too many) people respond with divorce, loneliness, and anomie. The society and the schools exhort us to be "Number One" and that we are risking our loss of economic and political supremacy. Some (far too many) people respond with racism, sexism, jingoism, and homophobia. The society demands more control, discipline, hard work, and competition and the profession responds with more sophisticated tests and more clever modes of monitoring students and teachers. The people cry out for meaning, wisdom, and deliverance—and the society and school respond fearfully with more control, more jargon, more retrenchment, and less meaning and wisdom than ever.

The response of the dominant professional community has been, at best, evasive and, at worst, complicitous. Much of the profession has tried to stake out an area of expertise in which the broader cultural, moral, and social issues are left to nonprofessionals. This so-called professional orientation is one in which educators are cast as resource people charged with researching and implementing policy decisions. In a word, to follow but not to shape orders. The great preponderance of educational research is technical, and indeed the term *research* has been reified and reduced to come to mean experimental, positivistic, quantified investigation. Even the broader cultural, social, and moral issues become objects of study rather than perspectives for affirmation.

A tragic consequence of this narrow, timid, and self-serving professional posture is the appallingly vulgar and ill-informed nature of the public dialogue on educational matters. It is surely true that, in the long run, basic educational decisions emerge from a social and cultural consensus rather than from professional expertise. All the more reason, then for the profession to meet its responsibilities to help the public frame its dialogue in ways consistent with the complexities, paradoxes, and profundities of the fundamental issues. The timidity and irrelevance of the professional response to our crises is pitiful and borders on the criminal. The moral fabric of our culture is in tatters and the public debates how much homework should be assigned. There are hundreds of thousands of people living in the streets; racial po-

larization increases; children suffer from neglect and malnutrition and educators offer up career ladders, standardized tests, more requirements, and more school time.

Happily, this is surely not to say that such reactions constitute the entire range of professional response. There is indeed a very lively, imaginative, and provocative body of educational criticism and theory that goes far beyond the toadying and myopic quality of the dominant elements of the profession. Much of the critical literature speaks directly and cogently to the cultural, social, and political aspects of education and to the necessity for rooting education reform in social and cultural transformation. The term "critical pedagogy" has been loosely applied to this broad school of educational criticism in reference to its major reliance on neo-Marxist critical theory.[2] Critical pedagogy puts a great deal of reliance on raising the consciousness of people's lived experiences, particularly as they relate to issues of power, freedom, equality, and justice. This school of thought has made and continues to make very important contributions to educational theory and has energized a great number of educators with its message of criticism, hope, and possibility. Unfortunately, it has also met a great deal of resistance and, even more unfortunately, it has largely failed to enter the consciousness of mainstream professionals or of the public. There are a number of possible explanations for the failure of these powerful ideas to have more impact (e.g., genuine and profound disagreement, the complexities of the analysis, and language). Many in the critical pedagogy movement are currently working on enriching their theoretical underpinnings through moral and psychological inquiries and broadening their political base by adapting a positive inclusivist approach, by reflecting on how their theory is related to a wide array of marginalized groups.

There are other qualitatively different voices of educational criticism that speak more directly to issues of psychological constriction, spiritual alienation, and ontological sterility. These voices emerge from traditions of progressive and libertarian education that stress the vital importance of individual freedom, creativity, and unfettered human potentiality (Stoddard 1991). In addition, these voices are often augmented by chords that resonate with New Age themes of spiritual quest, ecological concerns, and cosmological perspectives (LePage 1991). This broad movement has a major advantage over the critical pedagogy orientation in that its psychological and spiritual perspectives are shared by a great many people, although the lay public for the most part has failed to extend these perspectives into their interpretation of educational policies and practices. However, what these critical voices add by way of their concern for psychological, emotional, and spiritual matters is diminished by their relatively weak efforts to integrate their ideas with the social, political, cultural, and moral dimensions of the human struggle.

Another critical difference between these two very broad schools of educational criticism is found in the extremely vital issue of assumptions regarding human nature. At the real risk of oversimplification, these differences involve degrees of optimism, pessimism, and cynicism. One side is accused of sentimentality, romanticism, and denial, while the other is accused of being overwhelmed if not energized by vision of gloom, despair, and futility. This is related in part to theories of change that involve, on the one hand, the view that transformation must emerge from fundamental changes in social, cultural, and economic structures or, on the other hand, that transformation can emerge only from significant changes in human consciousness. While both are clearly needed and are surely interrelated, the rhetoric usually stresses one or the other. Those who stress the predominant importance of cultural and social transformation are likely to see such a process as involving quasi-permanent conflictual and frustrating struggles with uncertain prospects. Many theorists who focus on the psychological and spiritual dimensions are apt to be much more optimistic, if not euphoric, about the possibilities of quantum leaps in consciousness and are therefore able to envision the possibility of attaining significant and dramatic transformation.

To sum up our present section, we see a world at serious risk from a variety of material horrors (famine, disease, oppression, war, pollution) and suffering from a variety of diseases of the spirit (moral numbness, callousness, alienation, and powerlessness). The culture's educational response to these crises tends to promote the forces that contribute to the

crises: concern for competition, achievement, hierarchy, and material success. The profession for the most part has renounced its responsibility to provide moral leadership, taking on instead a posture of being detached, technical experts. There are important and vital voices of educational dissent and alternatives, but they are divided particularly in how they view the relative significance of psychological and cultural forces and their degree of optimism.

I believe that the single most powerful contribution that the holistic education movement is making to the field of educational theory is the power of the metaphor of holism, i.e., of being aware of the parts, the sum of the parts, and that which is more than the sum of the parts. Further work is obviously needed to develop a more comprehensive theoretical framework that gives sufficient attention to all the important dimensions of human experience and education. I believe that the prophetic tradition can contribute to the further development of such theoretical work and will in the remainder of this essay sketch out some ideas on what these contributions might be.

My own view is that educational institutions can only be truly transformed by social and cultural pressures. There is no credible evidence that the schools have ever been a major force in cultural and social transformation. At the same time, it is clear that they constitute at least both a force and a resource and it is vital that whatever the degree of their influence that they utilize their valid possibilities optimally. Although it is to the culture that we must ultimately look for the possibilities of transformation, the profession has an extremely important role in facilitating and guiding public dialogue and social movements. Significant experience as practitioners and theorists provide educators with a unique and necessary perspective to interpret the meaning of educational policies and practices in relationship to the culture's most profound aspirations. This responsibility includes not only developing critical and sensitive insights but also the task of making these insights vital and accessible to the general public. This task must seek a balance between the ethical requirements to convey the complexities, paradoxes, contradictions, and sensitivities of the crises with the moral competence to offer genuine and viable possibilities for transformation. I believe that a great deal of the necessary work has already been done by our current educational theorists and visionaries and the hope of this paper is to further the development of a greater degree of consensus among the varying views of these critics.

Education in a Prophetic Voice

In this section, I sketch out an orientation toward education which reflects a selective blending of the voices of educational criticism and vision, an orientation rooted in the sacred and profound traditions that endeavor to speak in a prophetic voice. In addition to being informed by the contributions of these educational critics, I will be relying on the work of Abraham Heschel, Matthew Fox, and Cornel West to enrich and enhance these voices.

These three theologians can all be said to be in the prophetic traditions, although clearly they have very different perspectives and offer their own unique contributions. All three passionately affirm the struggle to ground moral, political, and social struggles in spiritual and transcendental visions. I believe strongly that the work exemplified by these three champions of the "wretched of the earth" has powerful possibilities and implications for educators and those interested in the educative process. Moreover, their work also would seem to provide a nexus between those educational critics now divided by their differences on the significance of social/cultural/political forces as opposed to moral and spiritual ones.

Abraham Joshua Heschel's monumental analysis and interpretation of the biblical prophets rejects the necessity for such dualism. It is the prophets, according to Heschel, who established the profound possibility that humans have "the ability to hold God and man in a single thought." The prophetic consciousness is one in which the material and the spiritual are not separate categories but vital and interacting dimensions of human existence. God is seen by Heschel not as a detached observer eagerly but remotely watching to see how humans are doing; rather the God of the Prophets is a God of pathos and compassion whose own being is intimately linked to human destiny. This God is actively involved in the Covenant with humanity and makes it clear that deviations and violations of the Covenant stir divine anger, grief, and dismay. The prophetic sensibility is

one which registers the profundity of the human activities, behaviors, and policies likely to incur this wrath and grief. In this sense, prophets are not to be seen as seers, sorcerers, or crystal ball readers but as shrewd and sensitive social and cultural critics. Their task is to interpret the degree to which the community has been true to its commitments and to speak openly of the serious dangers that will almost surely befall continuing violations of these commitments. Their message is, however, more than warning, outrage, and indictment but also one of hope, possibility, and redemption. What is recognized here is the inevitability of the human propensity to seek advantage rather than justice, as well as the possibility of transcendence over this propensity. This possibility lies in the dialectic between human imagination and divine energy. Social prophesy exists to remind the human community of its responsibilities to engage in the enormously important struggle to create a humane community worthy of divine approval and to renew its commitment to those goals.

Central to this process is the concept of responsibility, or more particularly in Heschel's terms, "the ability to respond to divine commitments and imperatives." This ability involves the capacity to be alert, critical, and active and is absolutely crucial to the struggle for human freedom and fulfillment. The ability to respond is crucial because humans have the capacity to deny freedom to themselves and to others because of their impulse for greed, selfishness, and personal gain. Indeed, in Heschel's terms, "The opposite of freedom is not determinism but hardness of heart." To be free is to be able to enjoy the fruits of life in a just, caring, and compassionate community" (Heschel 1962, 14).

There are other somewhat more subtle barriers to the emergence of such a community besides the propensity to evil, particularly the obstacles created by passivity, despair, and equivocation. Prophets speak with indignity and outrage at both flagrant and insidious violations of the commitment to the poor, hungry, and oppressed, being well aware of the dangers of both evil and indifference. In words evocative of the passion and eloquence of the prophets, Heschel says:

> Above all, the prophets remind us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty, all are responsible. If we admit that the individual is in some measure conditional or affected by the spirit of society, an individual's crime discloses society's corruption. In a community not indifferent to suffering, uncompromisingly impatient with cruelty and falsehood, continually concerned for God and every man, crime would be infrequent rather than common. (Heschel 1962, 165)

Matthew Fox, writing from a Catholic perspective, echoes the concept of co-creation in which humans participate in the further creation of a world inspired by a will toward justice, love, peace, and joy. His theology reaffirms a cosmological consciousness and insists that we situate our being in the universe lest we commit the error of intellectual shallowness and the ontological arrogance of anthropocentrism, an undue concern for human/worldly perspectives. However, his mysticism does not at all take him into a totally contemplative position but actually quite the reverse. To Fox, the mystical, the divine, the universal, the human, and the social are to be seen in their uniqueness, diversity, and in their totality. Day-to-day life is to reflect and energize a universe of joy, vibrancy, and love in which we dance with the awe and radiance of the mystery (Fox, 1979).

Fox speaks directly, cogently, and specifically to social, political, and economic concerns. His passionate devotion to the well-being of the planet is deeply informed by an understanding of how our political and economic system contributes to our ecological dangers. Indeed, he speaks out against the spiritual dangers of a religious detachment in which the spiritual agenda of creating a world of justice and harmony can be ignored. Fox is particularly concerned that we be aware of the distinction between compassion and sentimentality since human compassion is the process of creating a daily life infused with divine light. Compassion involves genuine sharing of pain and joy and is inherently communal and interdependent, while sentimentalism involves detached, shallow, and superficial recognition of the pain and joy of others. Compassion provides an opportunity to affirm and manifest human relationship and commitment while sentimentality facilitates separation and irresponsibility.

The struggle for creating a compassionate community is significantly facilitated through art, or more precisely through what Fox calls "art as medi-

tation." In this concept, art is not limited only to the specially talented, but defined as the human process of imagination, creativity, and meaning making. It is the human genius to play, to dream, to have vision, and to imagine and it is art that gives form to these images, through the creation of rituals, stories, poems, paintings, sculpture, crafts, et al. In turn, these images guide and help us to interpret our lives and to make meaning of them. Clearly this process is critical to our responsibility to share in the creation of the world that is part of a vast and mysterious universe and, hence, one that must be enriched and nourished. It is to the creative process that we must look for our ability to move beyond the horror of our present existence and to imagine and therefore make possible a more loving, compassionate, and joyful world. When we recognize that we have, in fact, created a world, we can accept the responsibility and appreciate the possibility of re-creating it.

Cornel West's academic brilliance and astonishing scholarship is powerfully nourished by his affirmation of the Afro-American experience and the traditions of the black church. He proposes a bold and critical synthesis between Marxist analysis and Christian theology with particular attention to the plight of the oppressed and marginalized. His work is a superb blending of prophetic traditions, American pragmatism, and black liberation theology written with eloquence, power, elegance, and authority. He affirms the Christianity that speaks to the poor, the meek, and the oppressed with its promise of ultimate salvation. It is this promise that West believes can enable us to overcome our fears and dread of death, loss, and meaninglessness and thus provoke us with energy to struggle for what he calls "penultimate salvation," the redemption that derives from the struggle to create a just and caring community.

He also affirms American traditions of political protest against tyranny and declarations of independence from the domination of European philosophical traditions. In his book *The American Evasion of Philosophy* (1989), West traces the origins of pragmatism to the optimism, individualism, and idealism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and to his efforts to sidestep the distraction of metaphysical speculations. West critically describes and analyzes the contributions of others (such as Dewey, Mills, James, Du

Bois, Niebuhr, and Rorty) to this pragmatic tradition and adds his own perspective which he calls "prophetic pragmatism." West approves of the American intellectual propensity to avoid traditional philosophic inquiry:

> [T]he claim is that once one gives up on the search for foundations and the quest for certainty, human inquiry into truth and knowledge shifts to the social and communal circumstances under which persons can communicate and cooperate in the process of acquiring knowledge. What was once epistemological now highlights the values and operations of power requisites for the human production of truth and knowledge.... Prophetic pragmatism makes the political motivation and political substance of the American evasion of philosophy explicit.... The emancipatory social experimentalism that sits at the center of prophetic politics closely resembles the democratic elements of Marxist theory, yet its flexibility shuns any dogmatic, a priori, or monistic pronouncement. (West 1990)

West, a deeply committed visionary, is no romantic; he has internalized the bitter struggle of his community to make even minimal gains and addresses the dialectic between tragedy and progress directly:

> Prophetic pragmatism refuses to sidestep this issue. The brutalities and atrocities in human history, the genocidal attempts in this century, and the present-day barbarities require that those who accept the progressive and prophetic designations put forth some conception of the tragic ... yet prophetic pragmatism is a child of Protestant Christianity wedded to left romanticisms.... Prophetic pragmatism ... tempers its utopian impulse with a profound sense of the tragic character of life and history.... Prophetic pragmatism ... confronts candidly individual and collective experiences of evil in individuals and institutions—with little expectation of ridding the world of *all* evil. Yet it is a kind of romanticism in that it holds many experiences of evil to be neither inevitable nor necessary but rather the results of human agency, i.e., choice and actions. (West 1990, 228)

This powerful reaffirmation of the human responsibility to avoid the twin perils of despair and sentimentality provide us with a language that helps in the struggle against contemporary weariness, ano-

mie, and powerlessness. It is to remind us of both the sublimity of our aspirations and the finitude of our endeavors, although West is not unaware of the lingering sense of futility and meaninglessness that pervades our era. He chides those afflicted with this malaise for ignoring the redemptive qualities of a religious consciousness:

> The severing of ties to churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques by the left intelligentsia is tantamount to political suicide; it turns the pessimism of many self-defeating and self-pitying secular progressive intellectuals into a self-fulfilling prophecy. (West 1990, 234)

The following quotation from West is unsurpassed in its ability to capture the essence of the prophetic tradition and to speak its essence in the context of our present movement. It can serve as a vital credo for the development of an educational process that can inform the struggle for a world of love, justice, peace, and joy. It is a statement that can energizes us with its soaring hopes and its attainable possibilities:

> Human struggle sits at the center of prophetic pragmatism, a struggle guided by a democratic and libertarian vision, sustained by moral courage and existential integrity, and tempered by the recognition of human finitude and frailty. It calls for utopian energies and tragic actions, energies and actions that yield permanent and perennial revolutionary, rebellious, and reformist strategies that oppose the status quo of our day. These strategies are never to become ends in themselves, but rather to remain means through which are channeled moral outrage and human desperation in the face of prevailing forms of evil in human societies and in human lives. Such outrage must never cease, and such desperation will never disappear, yet without revolutionary, rebellious and reformist strategies, credible and effective opposition wanes. Prophetic pragmatism attempts to keep alive the sense of alternative ways of life and of struggle based on the best of the past. In this sense, the praxis of prophetic pragmatism is tragic action with revolutionary intent, usually reformist consequences, and always visionary outlook. (West 1990, 229)

These powerful and eloquent writers remind us of what our work entails rather than provide us with job descriptions. Our work as educators ought to have little to do with increasing productivity, patriotism, and pride but much more to do with meeting our responsibilities to create a compassionate consciousness. Schools should not be objects of detached research and study but subjects of committed search and inquiry. They should be houses of study and affirmation and not sorting and counting houses. An education that speaks in a prophetic voice responds not to the possibility of becoming rich and famous but to the possibility of becoming loving and just. Its reference point is not the possible erosion of America's economic and military might but humanity's real erosion of its vision of universal harmony, peace, and fulfillment. Such an education is not rooted in strategies, planning, curriculum guides, decision plans, or programs for developing human resources but rather in the mystery that enables us to dream and hope beyond our present realities.

This educational vision encompasses the awe and majesty of the universe as well as the extraordinary capacities of humans to make meaning and create cultural and social structures. It is an education that commits itself to recreating human consciousness and structures in order to make real our dreams for justice, harmony, peace, and joy. This commitment involves a deep commitment to the democratic process that enables us to celebrate our freedom, interdependence, and individuality. The commitment also requires us to be alert to its violations and perversions and the necessity to respond to oppression and injustice with outrage and to be determined to engage in the struggle. It is an education whose starting point is not "excellence" or "achievement" but the grotesque realities of an obscene level of unnecessary human suffering. As members of the human community we need to be reminded that we have created hunger, war, poverty, and oppression and as citizens of the universe we must renew our covenant to repair the world. As simultaneous members of the human community and constituents of the universe we can find meaning in the intimate relationship between the pains we have cruelly inflicted and the healing we have lovingly extended.

Such an education links heaven and earth, moral and spiritual consciousness, and society and the individual. It also vitally requires all human ener-

gies—the mind, the intellect, the body, the soul, and their unity. It must take into account our history and our traditions of knowing and must seek to benefit from accumulated knowledge and wisdom. Such an education requires the development of the skills of experential and expressive writing; of critical and appreciative reading; knowledge of various symbolic systems; deep understanding of several cultures, languages, and histories; significant understanding of several modes of research; the capacity to create and imagine. It is an education in which knowledge, criticality, and skills are necessary but not sufficient, since such capacities need to be informed by moral energy and enriched by the social and practical skills required of those who would make a world.

What is also required is the courage and determination to maintain the struggle, especially since our education will likely reveal the depth, persistence, and well-nigh intractability of injustice, greed, callousness, and cruelty. We can take solace and comfort from the reality that the task of creating a just world is a relatively new one in the context even of human, never mind geologic, history. Moreover, we must celebrate the majesty of a struggle that binds us to the highest ideals of those who came before us and that will inspire even greater aspirations by those who come after us. As it is written in the Talmud, "The task is not for us to finish, but neither are we free not to take part in it."

Notes

1. My major sources for descriptions of the current holistic education movement are two books by Ron Miller: *What are schools for? Holistic education in American culture*, an excellent historical analysis of the movement's roots and current directions; and *New directions in education*, an anthology of articles from *Holistic Education Review*. Among the more articulate theorists in this area are Miller, Phil Gang, Lynn Stoddard, and Edward Clark.

2. Prominent among these writers are Henry Giroux, Michael Apple, Roger Simon, Svi Shapiro, Michelle Fine, and Linda Christian-Smith.

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An Open Letter on the Double Binds in Educational Reform

C. A. Bowers

Liberal and conservative educational reformers have always shared the same deep cultural assumptions that inspired the promoters of the Industrial Revolution. With the Industrial Revolution now entering its digital phase, with its emphasis on transforming data into an economic resource, the seeming antagonism between educators and market values is ending—like the final reconciliation between estranged members of an extended family. This interpretation of the current convergence of educational and corporate values may shock readers who have been "educated" to think that the values of a liberal education have always been based on a social vision fundamentally at odds with the materialism and economic values of the market place mentality. It is likely even to appear as absurd to suggest that such emancipatory educational theorists as John Dewey and Paulo Freire, and their contemporary followers, are complicit (in spite of their criticism of capitalism) in what Karl Polanyi termed the "Great Transformation" (1944) that is now being globalized.

If we examine the deep cultural assumptions that underlie past and current thinking about educational reform, which requires assessing the connections between these assumptions and the ecological crisis, it is easier to recognize that they are also the same assumptions that provided the conceptual direction and moral legitimation for the Industrial Revolution. What we are now witnessing is not the surrender of educational values that kept the instrumental and profit-oriented values in check, but the inevitable

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convergence of ideas and values that shared a common origin in the formation of modern consciousness.

There is a statement in Kirkpatrick Sale's recent book, *Rebels Against the Future* (1995) that is especially useful in clarifying the shared lineage of a vision of how the world s cultures needed to be transformed. The success of the Industrial Revolution, Sale notes, required that

> all that community implies—self-sufficiency, mutual aid, morality in the market place, stubborn tradition, regulation by custom, organic knowledge instead of mechanistic science—had to be steadily and systematically disrupted and displaced. All of the practices that kept the individual from being a consumer had to be done away with so that the cogs of and wheels of an unfettered machine called "the economy" would operate without interference, influenced merely by the invisible hands and inevitable balances ... of the benevolent free market system. (p. 19, italics added)

An examination of the deep assumptions encoded in the educational metaphors of liberal and conservative reformers reveals that their view of the educated person, who ideally is to become similarly emancipated from the self-sufficient and interdependent traditions of community life, would be dependent upon the market place of ideas, expert systems, and consumerism. That is, the influence of traditional, self-sufficient communities would have to be undermined in order for the individual to become "educated."

As Sale points out, the Industrial Revolution required a radically different form of individualism, one that took-for granted the following assumptions: that education leads to the individual becoming an

autonomous, rational thinker capable of judging the merit of community traditions (including patterns of moral reciprocity); that progress is linear and that the high-status knowledge learned in the classroom represents the most evolved stage of cultural development; that de-contextualized print-based knowledge and forms of communication are more reliable and culturally advanced than what is learned in face-to-face relationships; that the veracity of ideas and values should be determined in an open, competitive environment (the educational version of Adam Smith's "invisible hand"); that the narratives, processes of inquiry, and technological innovations learned in classrooms should be based on an anthropocentric view of the world; that the epistemology of science and the systems of expert knowledge provide the most reliable forms of knowledge for rationally managing the internal and external world—and that the resulting systems of commodification should be globalized. The following context-free metaphors of educational reformers can easily be matched with the above list of attributes: individual freedom, empowerment, emancipation, rational thought, progress, democracy, scientific management, moral relativism, and the individual construction of reality—which now is to be based on accessing vast amounts of data.

Missing from the list are the values, forms of knowledge, and patterns of intergenerational communication that would enable the individual to rely upon the non-commodified patterns of community life. As current educational and industrial goals contribute to the continual expansion of the commodification process into more areas of individual and community life (it is now moving to the genetic level), the direction that educational reform now needs to take becomes increasingly obvious—and urgent. The transformation of knowledge, skills, relationships, entertainment, nurturing, healing, and so forth into commodities leads to the loss of local knowledge of environmental possibilities and limits, and thus to the loss of cultural diversity. The globalization of a technological and consumer-oriented form of culture also contributes to the downward trend lines in the viability of natural systems. Educational reform must avoid contributing to these trends, which brings us to considering how educa-

tion can strengthen the non-commodified patterns of community life and promote the advancement of knowledge based on ecologically informed root metaphors.

As I have discussed educational reforms in previous books (1993, 1995, 1997, 2000), I shall summarize specific reforms that take account of criticisms of modernity found in the writings of Wendell Berry, Charlene Spretnak, Sim Van Der Ryn, and other thinkers who are identifying more ecologically constructive pathways to cultural reform and regeneration.

1. Educational reforms should be based on an understanding that new knowledge and technologies need to be assessed in terms of whether they strengthen the non-commodified aspects community life—and thus in terms of their ecological footprint.

2. Educators at all levels need to understand how the language of the curriculum reproduces earlier forms of cultural intelligence. They should be able to recognize how the process of analogic thinking and the use of iconic metaphors reproduce the deep cultural root metaphors that were constituted before there was an awareness of environmental limits. They should also begin the task of organizing knowledge on the basis of root metaphors that take account of our embeddedness in cultural traditions and natural systems.

3. The curriculum needs to foreground the nature and extent of the commodification process, as well as the patterns of community life that have not been commodified. In addition to mentoring in the non-commodified activities, responsibilities, and skills that sustain community, the curriculum needs to introduce students to an understanding of how to assess the ecological footprint of other cultures.

4. The curriculum needs to include an understanding of the cultural amplification characteristics of different forms of technology, as well as an understanding of how these characteristics strengthen or undermine the selfsufficiency of communities. It is also essential to understand the influence of different technologies (particularly computers) on the forms ot knowledge and social groups that will be privileged.

5. Curriculum reform should introduce students to an understanding of the strengths and limitations of the scientific method. In addition, the connections between science and the Industrial Revolution, the ecological and cultural implications of the re-emergence of Social Darwinism, and the limits of an ecomanagement approach to the ecological crisis, also need to be central concerns of any reform effort.

As most educational reformers are dependent upon the earlier forms of cultural intelligence reproduced in the language/thought process they take-for-granted, the problem of how to initiate these reforms becomes especially daunting. Feminists discovered that in spite of the educators' claim to be the chief spokespersons for Enlightenment values and rational thought, educators were unable to recognize on their own the many ways in which the root metaphor of patriarchy influenced the structure of knowledge and the systems of social privilege. While an increasing number of educators include environmental issues in their courses, pressure from outside groups may be needed to awaken them to the double bind of continuing to base the organization of knowledge as well as their justification of the purpose of education on the same root metaphors that are the basis of the three hundred year effort to globalize a market centered form of culture.

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Book Reviews

Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curricuium

John P. Miller

Published by State University of New York Press, 2000, 168 pages

Reviewed by Joseph Pearl

The words "soul" and "spiritual" mean different things to different people, but when they're placed in close proximity to words like "education" and "curriculum," they tend to elicit a strong emotional response from all. The strongest response, I suspect, occurs among those who see no distinction between the words "spiritual" and "religious." At one extreme, within this group, are the religious fundamentalists (of all religions, though in this country most notably Christians) who believe that the teachings and texts of their particular religion should be the foundation upon which the school is built: The school day should start with group prayer; the Ten Commandments should be posted on the classroom wall; "creation science" should be the core of the biology curriculum. At the other extreme are those who, whether or not they identify themselves as religious, hold that the principle of the separation of church and state requires that religion/spirituality have no place in public education, except, perhaps, as one subject of study among others, e.g., The Bible as Literature, The Psychology of Religion.

But there is another group that *does* distinguish between spirituality and religion, that views spirituality as a fundamental aspect of human nature, but tends to see religiosity as belief and behavior that is largely shaped by culture. From their perspective, one's religiosity may, or may not, be an expression of one's spirituality. This latter group has a large representation among those educators who identify themselves as "humanistic" or "holistic," and probably coincides completely with those who identify themselves as "transpersonal." It is primarily to this group that Miller's book speaks.

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Miller frames his argument in terms of the concept of *soul:* "This book is about how we can bring soul into our classrooms and schools. It is also about how we as teachers and administrators can nurture our own souls" (pp. 4, 5). He begins by suggesting that recent years have witnessed increasing interest in the concept of soul and matters of spirituality, and presenting an argument for "infuse(ing) our approaches to education with soul" (p. 9), the central plank of which is that

> the separation between the spiritual and secular is false. To deny spirit is to deny an essential element of our being and thus diminish ourselves and our approach to education. By bringing soul more explicitly into the educational process we can have an education for the *whole person* rather than a fragmented self. (p. 9)

He goes on to provide an overview of religious, philosophical, and contemporary views of soul, concluding with his own synthesis (built primarily on the views of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Thomas Moore).

He then turns his attention to the practical question of how we can bring soul into our schools. He surveys potential techniques with which students might be aided in bringing attention to their inner lives, such as meditation, visualization, dreamwork, and autobiography. He explores how the arts can nurture the soul. He examines the school as institution, suggesting how it might be structured in such a

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way that it nurtures the souls of all those who exist within it. He discusses teacher training, arguing that the development and nourishment of the student's soul and the teacher's soul must go hand in hand.

Education and the Soul has the form, essentially, of a textbook. The author's coverage of his subject is broad, with appropriate references and quotations on virtually every page to back up his arguments. Additionally, the references are useful as starting points for further study. But, as tends to be the case with textbooks, breadth of coverage seems to have been accomplished at the cost of depth. On the topic "Religious Views of the Soul," for example, Miller devotes slightly more than half a page each to Hinduism and Buddhism, a page and a half to Christianity, a page to Judaism, and three quarters of a page to Islam. On "Philosophical Views of the Soul," he offers us one page on Plato, slightly less than a page on Plotinus, and about half a page on Emerson. On "Contemporary Views of the Soul," he gives us roughly half a page each on Thomas Moore, Robert Sardello, James Hillman, Joan Borysenko, and Fred Wolf. This kind of coverage may bolster the author's credibility, by suggesting the extent of his knowledge (presumably at a level deeper than space allow him to demonstrate here), but it is not, by itself, of much use to a reader not already familiar with the material.

Education and the Soul is short enough that it might be used as a supplementary text in a course on curriculum design, or perhaps educational psychology. It provides a broad, if shallow, overview of an important subject that could be used as a stimulus for class discussion and a jumping off point for further study. But beyond that, it is not at all clear who would find this book useful. The reader unfamiliar with the subject going in won't have enough background knowledge to appreciate the ideas and issues that Miller glosses over so lightly, and the reader already familiar with the subject won't find anything here that's especially provocative or new.

Unfortunately, even as a textbook, *Education and the Soul* is disappointing. As one reads, it becomes distressingly apparent that Miller's thinking is simply muddled. To begin with, it's never exactly clear what he means by soul. The definition he offers of soul, as *"a deep and vital energy that gives meaning and direction to our lives"* (p. 9), is hopelessly vague. It could be equally well appended to *love, patriotism, need for achievement...*, i.e., to virtually any form of strong motivation.

Miller offers as examples of the growing influence of soul in the modern world "certain political leaders who are... infusing spirituality in their approach to politics" (p. 7), To take a few of Miller's examples, it does certainly seem to be the case that the Buddhist political leaders Aung San Suu Kyi, of Burma, and the Dalai Lama do not separate their political lives from their spiritual lives, but I doubt that he'd look with equal favor on the Islamic theocracy of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Miller refers with approval to Senge's (1990) discussion of "how more people are seeing their work as something sacred" (p. 5), but I can't imagine he'd approve so glibly of the "sacred work" of fundamentalist Christians attempting to "cure" homosexuals.

When *Education and the Soul* turns its attention to practical issues of schooling, it becomes apparent that Miller has failed to make a critical distinction that, it seems to me, *must* be made if the terms *soul* and *spiritual* are to be used meaningfully. The distinction is that between the perspectives of humanistic psychology and transpersonal psychology. The former holds that human development can be adequately understood in terms of the full development of the self, i.e., *self-actualization.* The latter argues that such an understanding requires some notion of development *beyond* self-actualization, some notion of *transcendence* of the self. It is only, it seems to me, by taking the transpersonal perspective that the terms *soul* and *spiritual* can be used distinctively.

That Miller has not made this distinction becomes apparent in his statements about the "soulful school," and spirituality in education:

> (In) the soulful school ... both teachers and students look forward to being at school, as they feel that their souls are nourished by the environment they find there. This environment is one of respect, caring, and even reverence. People in the soulful school feel validated as human beings and can speak authentically from their hearts. Love predominates rather than fear. When people speak, they feel that they are heard, often at a heart-centered level. Most of all, there is a deep sense of community. (p. 109) Integrating spirituality into the life of the school

means simply acknowledging that students have an inner life that needs nourishment. (p. 143)

These statements would be just as appropriate (if not more so) beginning with the phrases "In the humanistic/holistic school..." and "Integrating a humanistic/holistic orientation into the life of the school...." Ultimately, *Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum*, fails to fulfill the promise of its title because the words *Soul* and *Spiritual* are superfluous to what it has to say about education and curriculum.

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What Is Indigenous Knowledge? Voices from the Academy

Ladislaus M. Semali and Joe L. Kincheloe (Eds.).

Published by Falmer Press, New York & London. 1999, 381 pp, Softbound, $30.

Reviewed by Josef Progler

One of the dubious claims underlying Western civilization's colonization of the world is that Western man possesses the ability to define and delimit all knowledge. Apart from the effective use of murder and bribery, a lasting impact of the Western incursion is in the area of epistemology. In a two-pronged effort to dominate the world, Western missionaries, explorers, traders, soldiers, and academics worked to systematically destroy local knowledge systems and replace them with Western-derived knowledge systems. Losing their knowledge base, non-Western peoples fell pray to Western designs and perpetuated their own subjugation. However, this process was not complete, and there is an ongoing struggle to redefine knowledge according to the needs and views of different cultures and civilizations. The Western knowledge systems, once reigning supreme with a

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veneer of objectivity and universality, are being seriously questioned. This process of questioning is taking place within the West itself, but the major challenges to Western knowledges are coming from non-Western peoples who have begun to rethink their dependencies and allegiances.

This struggle over normative definitions of what constitutes knowledge is taking place on a variety of fronts. *What is Indigenous Knowledge?*, edited by Ladislaus Semali and Joe L. Kincheloe, brings together an international cohort of voices in a volume intended to introduce a series of books that will explore different aspects of the debates on indigenous knowledge both in the West and elsewhere. Since this discussion is being initiated by Western academics, it is fitting that they lay out their intentions and goals for the volume and the series.

According to the editors, the volume intends to explore the "benefits to be derived from the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the academy" (p. 3). They urge caution and care with respect to who should be talking about indigenous knowledge, and in the introduction set out to "map our positionalities and the reasons we have chosen to undertake this work" (p. 7). Thus, according to Kincheloe, "I understand my privilege as a white male and the potential for the appropriation of indigeneity that such a position possesses. Employing such a reflective awareness, I attempt to monitor my relationship with indigenous culture and indigenous knowledge" (p. 15). With this self-awareness as a baseline, studying indigenous knowledge can "foster empowerment and justice in a variety of culture contexts" and develop transformative power by seeking "epistemologies that move in ways unimagined by most Western academic impulses" (p. 15).

The project seeks to recover knowledge systems deemed irrelevant and denigrated by the Western colonial system, primarily through its educational institutions. In a sense, the editors and contributing authors seem to want to colonize the Western academy with non-Western knowledges, in full awareness of the political implications of such an endeavor. The resulting appreciation of indigenous epistemology can provide Western peoples with "another view of knowledge production in diverse cultural sites" (p. 17), while at the same time situat-

ing Western knowledge in its own cultural setting, not as a universal.

Studying indigenous knowledge fosters "greater awareness of neo-colonialism and other Western social practices that harm indigenous peoples" (p. 18), and serves as a reminder that "traditional knowledge has been lost and worldviews have been shattered" (p. 19). At the same time, the collection is not naïve, nor does it seek to provide Western recipes for reclaiming lost epistemologies. The authors recognize that "questions of cultural renewal and indigenous knowledge are not as easy as some represent them to be" (p. 19), warning against essentialist notions of purified indigenous knowledges. In this framework, indigenous knowledge studies can "facilitate indigenous peoples' struggle against the ravages of colonialism, especially its neocolonialist articulation in the domains of the political, economic, and pedagogical" (p. 19), which can also "facilitate their fight against further neo-colonial encroachments," and help in "solving their problems in their own ways" (p. 19). Nevertheless, the authors know that using indigenous knowledge studies to understand and evaluate local problems and strategies "will always have to deal with the reality of colonization" (p. 19).

The authors address the political aspects of academic work, and encourage Western intellectuals to see themselves as agents of justice, putting their studies to beneficial use. They suggest three goals of studying indigenous knowledge in the Western academy: 1) help Western peoples to relate to their habitat in ways that are more harmonious, 2) liberate peoples who have been conquered by a modernist nation state system, and 3) provide a perspective on human experience that differs from Western empirical science. The authors also offer an outline of more specific educational benefits of studying indigenous knowledges as subjugated knowledges, noting that the study of such knowledges: 1) promotes a rethinking of our purposes as educators, 2) focuses attention on the ways that knowledge is produced and legitimated, 3) encourages the construction of just and inclusive academic spheres, 4) produces new levels of insight, and 5) demands that educators at all academic levels become researchers (pp. 33-39).

Within this holistic methodological and political framework, the collection bring together a cohort of scholars and academics from a range of backgrounds and disciplines. While all are more or less working from within Western-oriented academic institutions, they represent voices from Africa, Australia, Central and South America, and the Caribbean, as well as Europe and the United States. Topics include ecological literacy from indigenous perspectives, steps toward decolonizing education, reflections on non-Western math and science, indigenous approaches to agriculture and farming, connections between intellectual and spiritual work, views on indigenous music and languages, and moves toward deconstructing Western academic representations of non-Western knowledges.

What Is Indigenous Knowledge acknowledges the role of religion and spirituality in defining knowledge, but it leaves open the question of who defines and validates them. Relying on the usual suspicion toward Judeo-Christian religion in secular academic circles may cause such a project to marginalize the role of other world religions in discussions of indigenous knowledge systems. In fact, the book begs the question of whether or not indigenous knowledges can include revealed knowledges, those forms of sacred knowledge which arise out of communication from and communion with the Divine. To accept, for example, Islamic knowledge systems in such a scheme would entail broadening the definition of indigeneity beyond the current model that seems intertwined with nationalism and cultures that are based in specific bioregions and ecosystems. In the Islamic tradition, much of what is called indigenous knowledge would be understood as revealed knowledge, since the Divine—in this case Allah—is the source of all knowledge (Nasr 1989). While opposition to Judeo-Christian religion as the foundation of modernist Western civilization with its science and colonialism seems defensible (i.e., Merchant 1983, Noble 1992, Spretnak 1999), it remains to be seen if the project can develop a coherent vision of knowledge that includes other world religious traditions, and which avoids seeing those religions through the lens of Western religions, even those that appear similar.

While the volume has promise, as does the book series, it is geared almost entirely toward a Western academic audience. The scope of the work is limited

to voices from the academy, but the series seems to be attempting to attract thinkers and activists whose legitimacy is not filtered through the subjugating lens of Western academia. To truly colonize the Western academy with indigenous knowledge will require setting in place the administrative structures to assure that people whose legitimacy and validation come from a variety of sources and settings have a meaningful voice in the academy (Churchill 1995). This may entail the rather ambitious project of rethinking the hierarchical structure of rewards and certificates currently in place in a Western-oriented system of knowledge production and validation, and may even mean abandoning the Ph.D. as the sole license to speak for academics. In a climate of faddish cooptation of exotica, and without meaningful administrative support, the present project may fall short and end up providing little more than local color to an overarchingly Western academic institutional system. This, of course, is no fault of the authors, who are aware of the complexities and challenges of their project, and so the book and subsequent series should be widely read and can serve as a useful and important introduction to restructuring Western education, along with rejuvenating indigenous knowledges for the peoples who still rely on them.

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Growing Up Green:
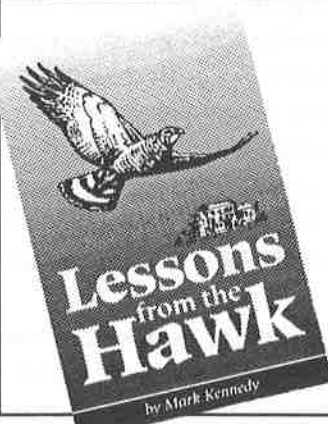# Education for Ecological Renewal

David Hutchison

Teachers College Press (New York), 1998.
177 pages. Softbound.

Reviewed by Peter Blaze Corcoran and Richard Tchen

Growing Up Green: Education for Ecological Renewal is a noble attempt to construct a case for what Hutchison calls "ecologically sensitive change in schools." He argues for changes in infrastructure, ideology, and methodology, and concludes that

> each of these efforts ultimately rests within the context of a much larger environmental reform movement which is just now beginning to address the important role of schools in securing a sustainable future world for adults, children, and the wider earth community. Our task for the immediate future must be to continue to articulate such a vision for education and build a curricular framework for schools that can best help us recover an authentic human mode of relatedness to the natural world and squarely face up to the ecological challenges which now confront us. (p. 156)

He articulates the purpose of the book by stating that "this book explores the relationship of environmental advocacy to the philosophy of education [particularly, technocratic, progressive, and holistic

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RICHARD TCHEN is a project coordinator at the Math Forum, a K-12 math education center on the Internet. Richard graduated from Swarthmore College with a major in mathematics and a concentration in environmental studies. He earned secondary level mathematics teacher certification student-teaching with the Radnor Middle School Watershed Program.

Tchen and Corcoran often collaborate, especially on environmental education in higher education.

philosophies] and holistic theories of child development" (p. 1) and "moves beyond the critique mode to argue for a strengthening of the relationship between environmental philosophies of education and ecologically sensitive theories of child development" (pp. 2-3).

He succeeds to a greater extent with the latter, we think. The promise of the former statement remains largely unfulfilled, at least as we understand the meaning of environmental advocacy. The book does advocate a certain kind of environmental education, but Hutchison surprised us by not drawing directly on the three decades-long literature and tradition of environmental education to strengthen the case for "growing up green."

In the second chapter, "Toward a Twenty-First Century Pedagogy of Possibility," Hutchison treats three philosophies applied to education: technocratic, progressive, and holistic. Over the course of a table that spans four pages, Hutchison summarizes "selected aspects" of each philosophy, such as "foremost aim" and "view of the natural world." Here, Hutchison offers the holistic educator and philosopher a valuable introduction and ideological bridges by which to approach ecological renewal, and compare competing philosophies of education. For example, the technocratic philosophy views the natural world as an exploitable source of raw materials, which human ingenuity can replace; the progressive philosophy views a natural world wherein human beings are benevolent caretakers.

He goes on to describe the holistic vision for education as arising "within the context of the perennial philosophy which forwards an ecological view of the world. From the holistic perspective, all phenomena in nature are seen to be interconnected within an interdependent universe" (p. 48). Given this theoretical resonance between holistic education and ecological education, Hutchison avers that "[t]he criticisms that can be brought against holistic education are ... less substantive in nature than those aimed at technocratic and progressive education, and they reflect "areas for improvement" in light of our understanding of the cultural dimensions of the ecological crisis" (p.52). Hutchison's criticisms of the holistic philosophy prescribe two needs: distance itself from the liberationist tradition, and redress a complicit anthropocentrism. These calls to clarify the holistic philosophy would certainly seem less difficult to achieve than would the fundamental overhauls required of the technocratic or progressive philosophies, but Hutchison does not suggest concrete actions that the holistic educator can take to redress them.

In the third chapter, "Myth and Functionality in the Cultural Construction of Childhood," Hutchison illuminates the importance of social constructions on developmental theory, socialization, and our views of the child's capacity. Hutchison invites us to move beyond the view of the child as the future adult. Instead, he asks us to honor the young person for what she can do that is unique to her development. He is particularly, and appropriately, concerned with the delineation of "a functional role for the child in the recovery of sustainable relations with the wider earth community" (p. 77).

Hutchison's fourth chapter, "The Story of Childhood: A New Interpretation and Retelling," describes developmental stages and milestones. Ultimately, he argues that middle childhood, above all others, is a "time-critical stage of development ... whereby the child comes to co-construct a functional cosmology of the universe — a 'working theory' of the world" (p. 83). Unfortunately, Hutchison ends his analysis of developmental stages at middle childhood, and does not examine adolescence and its unique qualities in a comparable fashion. With its questions of social identity, existential meaning, and sexuality — reproductive choice and rights constituting a critical piece of the puzzle of our ecological crisis — the rich turbulence of adolescence would also seem to afford its own significant avenues into advocating ecological awareness and agency, and so beg analysis. Hutchison continues this fourth chapter with informative and probing sketches of the constructions of childhood of key educational philosophers from Pestalozzi and Froebel to Cobb and Shepard.

Both Chapters One and Five contain grim views of the expected consequences of current economic and cultural practices — on both the environment and the child. At the end of Chapter Five, Hutchison asks and answers what is, in many ways, his urgent query:

How do dire predictions for the future relate to the main argument of this book, namely, that the child's search for a functional cosmology of the universe during middle childhood presents us with a unique opportunity to change the course of human and earth history? Within the context of such an uncertain future, we might say that the success of such a proposal is dependent upon the child being purposefully granted a "gift of time" by adults—a protected period often to twelve years (or more) following birth, in which she is able to become at home in the world, develop an ecologically sensitive relationship to the wider earth community, and build a functional cosmology of the universe. (p. 123)

Finally, "The Recovery of the Earth Process Through Childhood" describes some "specific elements of an ecologically sensitive curriculum"

(p. 127), such as providing natural materials in the classroom, grounding education in place, and gardening. Given the thrust of the chapters that came immediately before this sixth one, the advocate of middle childhood and the practicing teacher alike will be disappointed that Hutchison does not tailor these elements to them, but instead speaks of these elements generically.

The book is oddly structured, making Hutchion's argument difficult to follow. He offers varying aims as he works to connect elements of his text. Although we found this confusing, the chapters in and of themselves contain very thoughtful analysis. *Growing Up Green* serves the holistic practitioner or philosopher by surveying the educational landscape in view of the ecological crisis, and revealing common roots that conjoin ecological and holistic ideologies.