ENCOUNTER

EDUCATION FOR MEANING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Defining the "Spiritual" in Spirituality and Education

Critical Realism, Religious Pluralism, and Self-Realization

There is a revival of interest in "spiritual" conceptions of education, in philosophies of education that either acknowledge or are firmly grounded in a "spiritual" perspective. However, there doesn't seem to be much clarity in the discourse about the precise meaning of "spiritual." To this end what is offered below is a preliminary articulation of a conception of spirituality based in the philosophical theory of religious pluralism and Self-realization.

It can be argued that "spirituality" can be conceived in two mutually compatible ways: (1) as a worldview or paradigm wherein the sacred or transcendent is recognize as real, if not ultimately real, and (2) as a process of development toward Self-realization, the realization of the sacred as our essential nature.

Spirituality as a Worldview

Spirituality in its broadest sense can be conceived as a worldview that posits the fundamental existence of the sacred, the transcendent, and the real. This worldview constitutes a rejection of materialism, which holds that the ultimately real is the physical, material, natural world. As it has evolved historically, the metaphysical doctrine of materialism has adopted the epistemology of logical positivism, which holds that only that which is empirically observable is knowable. This epistemological assumption is coupled with the metaphysical doctrine of materialism, collapsing the multidimensional universe into one dimension: the physical. Materialism is reductionistic. In its collapse of the multidimensional universe into the physical, it provides a framework for life that is profane. In contrast, a "spiritual" perspective offers a different paradigm, a worldview that places the individual in a multidimensional, sacralized universe, wherein the transcendent, Soul, Spirit are recognized as real. Thus, "spirituality" in its broadest sense can be conceived as referring to a worldview, an orientation that is sacred rather than profane. However, there remains considerable disagreement concerning what constitutes the "sacred," the real, the transcendent.

The lack of agreement about the meaning of the sacred can be understood philosophically as a fundamental category error: the attempt to define that which is ultimately undefinable, the attempt to describe that which is ineffable. Any conception of the spiritual will be filtered, by definition, through a culturally based cognitive and linguistic framework, thereby giving a particular voice to the universal. This perspective is based in a critical realist conception of knowledge that holds that experience is always conceived in the relative terms of one's acquired cognitive structures and belief systems, as well as the limitations of the human cognitive and perceptual system. As Thomas Aquinas aptly put it: "Things are known in the knower according to the mode of the knower." Each Wisdom tradition, based as it is in a particular philosophical and theological framework, will therefore conceive the sacred in its own way. However, the sacred remains ultimately

one. Each wisdom tradition provides a different and valuable view of the sacred. A more comprehensive view of the spiritual will draw on the many wisdom traditions. From this perspective, in its broadest sense a spiritual education would entail an exposure to the sacred worldview as expressed in the major re-

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ligious and wisdom traditions of the world. This exposure could possibly lead to the free adoption of the sacred worldview by the student grounded in the rich and diverse history of spiritual experience and thought. All worldviews shape experience; with the adoption of a sacred worldview the student would be in a position to live a more enriched life. The intellectual and emotional adoption of the sacred worldview is the first step in the journey of spiritual transformation (see below). On a moral level, it can be argued that the comparative study of the world's wisdom traditions would lead to a realization of the oneness of humanity and all living beings, which in turn leads to the realization of an ethic of cosmopolitan and ecological equality and respect. Living by such an ethic may be the most powerful indicator of the authenticity of the sacred worldview. It can be argued as well that this approach is also consistent with the Establishment and Free Exercise clauses of the First Amendment, thereby allowing such a curriculum to be studied in public schools.

Spirituality as a Process of Development

In perhaps a deeper sense, spirituality as conceived here, refers to a process of internal development. The basic premise of the sacred worldview is the essential sacredness of the world and ourselves. Internally this means that there is a distinction between the self and the Self. The self refers to our ego, our self-identity, our personality, which is relative and socially constructed. The Self refers to our buing. The sacred worldview identifies our deepest and most real nature as an expression, emanation, or an essential aspect of that which is ultimately sacred. From this perspective "spirituality" can be conceived as the process that an individual undergoes in order to realize the Self: spirituality as a process of Self-realization. This can also be conceived as a process of opening to the transcendent as the ground of buing.

This process entails three dimensions found in most, if not all, of the wisdom traditions: renunciation, transformation, and liberation/realization. Internally, renunciation entails becoming wide-awake to our present condition, being aware of one's present internal condition without being attached to it. Being present also entails the development of discrimination in order to discern what is real and true from what is false and to refrain from acting out of falsehood. Transformation refers to the alchemical process of energetic transmutation. In Buddhist and Vedantic thought it is referred to as *tantra*. Liberation/realization refers to the systematic unfoldment of deeper layers of the Self via a systematic opening to Soul and eventually to the transcendent. This leads ultimately to the realization of the Self.

Of course, the above is only one among many ways to conceive the process of spiritual development. However, suffice it to say here that "spirituality" can be conceived as both a worldview and a process of development that leads to an experiential opening to Soul, Spirit, the sacred, the transcendent. A foundation can be laid in formal education for a spiritual life via exposure to the sacred worldview, which opens the possibility of Self-realization. This opening appears when the individual asks the basic existential question: Who am I? The sacred worldview can offer a profound framework for the exploration of this question, leading eventually to an exploration of one's true condition and an opening to deeper dimensions of the self. It is conceivable that schools could be organized and curricula designed to expose students to the sacred worldview and to begin an engagement in the developmental process of Self-realization.

—Dale T. Snauwaert and Jeffrey Kane

The Spiritual Child
Appreciating Children's Transformative Effects on Adults

James J. Dillon

Once we recognize—and move beyond—our preconceptions about the nature of spirituality, we open ourselves to the possibility of appreciating the true depth of spirituality among children.

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From experiences in my own childhood, as well as from my years of teaching and researching elementary school children, I have come to believe that children are prone to rather deep and frequent spiritual experiences. Let me define just what I mean by "spiritual experience" in childhood. An experience is spiritual if it involves us in a sense of unity, profound mystery, and/or value. I am claiming that children have the capacity to experience intense connection with others, the natural world, and even with the ground of existence itself. They are deep thinkers and feelers who wrestle with life's mysteries and hunger for meaning and value by which to live their lives. Children are also highly empathic and emotionally sensitive beings who, while certainly capable of selfishness and even downright cruelty, are prone to inspiring acts of kindness, self-sacrifice, and altruism.

Unfortunately, this picture of the spiritual child is not what emerges from the majority of theory and practice in education and psychology. Typically, these two disciplines view children's spirituality through the lens of "mature" adult categories and concepts that always cast the child's mode of knowing as incomplete and undeveloped. Such an "adultcentric" perspective is pervasive not only in education and psychology, but in society at large. This is of deep concern because, as I hope to argue, if the child's nascent spirituality is not recognized, validated, and nurtured by parents, teachers, and other adults, it can become repressed and seriously atrophied as the child's development proceeds. Such spiritual repression can wreak havoc on our lives when we later become adults. In this article, I first explore the reasons why education and psychology

have been so reluctant to embrace the notion of the spiritual child. I then attempt to show how, through honest and open interactions with children, the child's spirituality can actually serve as a powerful source of spiritual teaching and renewal for the parent and the teacher.

The Spiritual Child?

The idea that children are spiritual beings may at first appear strange to us. Many of us do not typically think of children as being particularly spiritual, much less any sort of spiritual teacher. This dismissive attitude is reflected in much of the educational and psychological treatment of spiritual development (e.g., Goldman 1964; Wilber 1996). Why would this notion of child spirituality be so difficult for many of us adults to accept? From my survey of the literature, as well as from some 50 hour-long interviews with parents and teachers about how children affect them, I believe that there are at least four reasons for our adult reluctance:

1. Many of us operate with an explicit, or more often, an implicit conception of human development which holds that we move through a progressive sequence of "phases" or "stages" over time toward an end state. Developmental progress, from this point of view, involves the movement "away from" or "up from" the earlier stages of infancy and childhood. With such a model of development, children are seen to have no strength or competence on their own, other than as precursors to more mature adult forms. I call this the "*Hierarchical Tendency*."

2. There is a strong tendency both in the culture and in educational and psychological research to equate spirituality with the "higher" mental functions such as language and abstract thought. Children either do not have, or have rather poorly developed higher-order linguistic and cognitive skills, so the logical conclusion is that they must not have a spiritual life until these higher functions make their appearance in later childhood and adolescence. I call this the "*Rationalist Tendency*."

3. Many of us tend to think of spirituality solely in terms of *religion*. Surely, religion is a vital expression of spiritual experience, but articulable religious attitudes take many years to develop. Thus, until the child is old enough to think and talk about such things as God, soul, Scripture etc., the child is very often seen to exist in a pre-spiritual wasteland. I call this the "*God-Talk Tendency*."

4. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, many adults tend to deny the child a spiritual life because *we ourselves have repressed our own childhood spirituality*. Recognizing the spirituality of our children

> *C*hildren have the capacity to experience intense connection with others, the natural world, and even with the ground of existence itself.

would force us to painfully come to terms with the immense spiritual losses that we ourselves have sustained as a consequence of our own "development." Following Haronian (1974), I call this the "*Repression of the Sublime*." Let me discuss each of these four factors in some more detail.

The Line/Staircase Model of Development: The Hierarchical Tendency

Many popular and influential theories cast human development as a progressive sequence of changes that move us toward a fixed end state which is usually achieved in adolescence or adulthood. For example, in Piaget's (1968) influential cognitive-developmental sequence, thought is seen to pass through four major stages: (a) a "sensorimotor" stage (0-2 years) in which the infant coordinates its sensory experiences with simple motor actions; (b) a "pre-operational" stage (2-7 years) in which representation makes its appearance and where the child fails to make a number of crucial mental distinctions (e.g., self/other, reality/appearance, cause/effect) which prevent thought from being truly internalized and logical; (c) a "concrete operational" stage (7-12 years) in which thought is internalized and logical, but relies to a considerable degree on concrete objects for support; and (d) a "formal" operational stage (12-) in which thought operates in an internalized, logical, and completely reversible system.

As one passes through each stage of Piaget's developmental sequence, one makes a series of qualitative "leaps" where the way experience is organized in a new stage is *fundamentally different* from the way it was organized in a previous stage. Piaget's developmental theory represents what we might call a "replacement" concept of development (Bibace, Dillon, and Dowds 1999). With replacement concepts, development is seen to occur in a linear, stage-by-stage fashion. In the process of development, each step is seen to "replace" the step which came before. Following Lerner (1976) such developmental theories involve a number of common elements that include sequentiality, unidirectional movement toward an end state, irreversibility, qualitative structural transformation, and universality. The guiding metaphor in replacement concepts of development is the *line or staircase*. The movement of development involves forward progression along a path which, in most cases, is seen to lead us "upward" and "forward" in time through a series of "steps" or "stages."

Ken Wilber (1977, 1990, 1996) presents a similarly structured replacement view of *spiritual* development. Wilber (1977) sees spiritual development in terms of three basic levels: the pre-egoic, egoic, and transegoic. The *pre-egoic* level consists of four stages which principally involve Piaget's sensorimotor and preoperational modes of thinking, as well as Freudian and Wernerian components of id-instinct and primary affect. The *egoic* level consists of three stages, including representational thought, concrete operations, formal operations, rule-bound action, and rational control of the emotions. The *transegoic* level consists of four stages which all involve modes of thought and being which lie beyond personal identity and logical-rational operations. At this level Wilber describes such stages as "vision logic," which involves holistic-synthetic thought, mind-body/thought-feeling integration, existential wholeness, and authenticity. Much like Piaget, for Wilber, development proceeds in a stage-wise "evolution" toward ever-higher levels of unity and integration. Wilber writes,

> Very like the geological formation of the earth, psychological development proceeds, stratum by stratum, level by level, stage by stage, with each successive level superimposed upon its

predecessor in such a way that it includes but transcends it ("envelops it," as Werner would say). (1996, 2)

In Wilber's model, "lower" levels must be achieved *before* one can move to "higher" levels so that bona fide spiritual development is not achieved until at least mid-life.

Some Basic Problems with the
Line/Staircase Model of Development

So long as we retain a model of development that involves us in a forward movement "away from" or "up from" earlier stages of infancy and childhood, infants and children are seen to have absolutely no positive role to play in the *adult* developmental odyssey other than to be superseded or "enveloped" into more mature adult modes of thought and being. In fact, from the replacement point of view, adult interactions with the infant or the child would be seen as a downright *hindrance* to adult development, an occasion for adults to *regress* rather than as a force which could actually move us forward. Replacement views of development like Piaget's and Wilber's inevitably view infants and children *in terms of what they lack*, what they cannot do that adults can. Listen, for example, to how Wilber characterizes children's mode of thinking and being: "they are instinctual, impulsive, libidinous, id-ish, animal, apelike" (1996, 2). Such views of early stages cannot help but belittle and demean children.

In the end, replacement concepts of development fall prey to a dangerous form of *adultcentrism*. Following Petr, adultcentrism occurs "when we measure children by adult standards, when we fail to suspend our assumptions about them, when we decline to see the world from their point of view" (1992, 408). In replacement models, *adults* are seen to have all of the power and competence; it is *we* who socialize children and have gifts to offer *them*. Children, from this common point of view, are seen to have nothing substantial to offer us. In one of my interviews, for example, I asked a teacher why she started teaching. She said,

> I got into this field *to change the way that kids think,* to make them make sense ... be more rational. It's like a battle all the time, I mean, it's

scary. I find myself thinking like my kids all the time. I have to catch myself.

Petr (1992) lists a number of negative consequences that can occur as a result of such adultcentric thinking, such as miscommunication with children, misuse of power to limit children's self-determination, as well as the undermining of children's strengths and competencies. I would also strongly maintain that such adultcentrism prevents us from being able to actually benefit from the child's considerable abilities to teach *us* valuable lessons and important information

Development as a Circle

Several theorists (see Jung 1933; Washburn 1995) have attempted to avoid the problems associated with the line/staircase model of development and have proposed that the movement of human development is much more like a *circle* than a line. For example, Jung (1933) presents a view of human development that consists of two major divisions, which he calls the "morning" and the "afternoon" of life. The morning of life is an "egoic" period in which we are principally concerned with self-assertion, mastery, achievement, and outward expansion. For Jung, at a certain point in our lives, usually at mid-life, forces emerge from within the psyche that call for the transcendence of the need for mastery, and even of the ego itself. Subtle signs are sent to the ego from the unconscious in the form of powerful feelings, symbols, and dreams. These signs serve to call the ego *back* to a valuable and earlier way of thinking and being that it has left behind in infancy and early childhood. So rather than characterize the movement of development as a line, Jung sees it as an "arc" or a cycle in which we start out on life's journey only to return again to where we started, albeit in a different form.

The philosopher Michael Washburn (1995) picks up on this Jungian idea of development as a circle rather than a line. For Washburn, the basic movement of development is from initial connection, to separation, to return to initial connection. Washburn's developmental theory focuses on the varied ways that we relate to the "Dynamic Ground" over the life-span. The Dynamic Ground is the basic energy and power in the universe that many refer to as "spirit" or "God." Initially in life, in what he calls the "pre-egoic" stage of development, which lasts from birth until about 3½ years of age, there is a relative state of non-differentiation between the ego and the Dynamic Ground. Experience is charged with a high degree of numinosity, wonder, awe, and enchantment. In the "egoic" stage, which lasts from about 3½ to 35, the ego begins to attain a high degree of differentiation and separation from the Dynamic Ground and achieves high levels of self-control and command of will. Experience becomes cast in more and more abstract, logical, and impersonal terms. Finally, in what Washburn calls the "transegoic" phase, which can begin as early as 35 years of age, there is a weakening of the repressive ego complex and a concomitant eruption of the Dynamic Ground back into the ego's life-world. One becomes re-enchanted with everyday life and rediscovers awe, wonder, spontaneity, as well as a sense of spiritual presence and meaning. For Washburn, reaching this transegoic level is not a linear achievement as it is for Wilber, but involves a curious form of regression, what he calls "regression in the service of transcendence." This process principally involves "the lifting of primal repression [of the Dynamic Ground] and the consequent opening of the ego to the prepersonal unconscious" (Washburn 1995, 172). I argue at the end of the paper that our interactions with actual children in both the home and the classroom can serve to open these forgotten dimensions of spiritual being to the adult. Suffice it to say for now that the theories of human development that we hold can seriously hinder us from being able to be affected and "instructed" by our children.

Spirituality and the "Higher" Mental Functions: The "Rationalist Tendency"

In *Emile*, his otherwise progressive tract on child development, the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau urges parents and educators to wait in discussing spiritual matters with their children until the age of 14. This, presumably, was the age that the child would attain the ability to reason. For Rousseau, spirituality and religion are *matters of the mind*. Since children have poorly developed *minds*, it follows that they are therefore devoid of spiritual understanding as well. Rousseau writes, "every child

who believes in God is of necessity an idolater … and when once the imagination has perceived [imagined] God, it is very seldom that the understanding conceives him" (1993, 262). Since, as he writes further on, "…there are mysteries which the heart of man can neither conceive nor believe…. I see no use in teaching them to children, unless you want to make liars out of them" (p. 264).

Rousseau's equation of the spiritual with the attainment of reason has profoundly influenced not only what many of us adults believe about children's spirituality in our everyday lives, but it has nearly dominated modern educational and psychological research as well. For example, to date, no current educational or developmental psychology textbook even *mentions* childhood spirituality (Nye 1996). This is surprising considering how large a part that spiritual issues play in Western children's lives. There have, however, been a few researchers who have explored facets of child spirituality. Most of this treatment, however, suffers from an overvaluation of reason.

The Rationalist Tendency in Early Research

Early research on children's spirituality has been nearly unanimous in its agreement with the idea that since children have poorly developed linguistic and cognitive skills, they do not have not much of a spiritual or religious life. For example, E. D. Starbuck, one of the first researchers to examine "religious experience" in childhood wrote, "… religion is distinctively external to the child rather than something which possesses inner significance" (1906, 194). Starbuck denied the child a spiritual life because he saw the child as "irrational." Since for Starbuck, the spiritual is predicated upon the rational, the "irrational" child must therefore not be spiritual.

A number of studies undertaken in the late 19th century and continuing up through the mid-20th century (see Hall 1891; Barnes 1892; Tanner 1906; Leuba 1917; Case 1921) all point to the child's developmental limitations in "religious knowledge," particularly his or her inability to comprehend Biblical stories and religious creeds. In these works, religious knowledge is regarded as a fairly late developmental achievement that arrives with the ability to employ abstract and symbolic cognitive operations. The im-

plicit developmental sequence of these early studies, which generally sees development as moving from intuitive, concrete thought processes to formal and abstract thought processes, was later formalized by Jean Piaget.

Several psychological researchers have applied the theory and findings of Piaget and other developmentalists such as Erikson and Kohlberg, to the study of "religious development" (see Godin and van Roey 1959; Godin and Marthe 1960; Elkind 1961, 1962, 1963; Goldman 1964, 1965; Lawrence 1965; Brown 1966, 1968; Long, Elkind, and Spilka 1967; Fowler 1981; Oser 1980). One of the most influential of the Piaget-inspired works is Ronald Goldman's *Religious Thinking from Childhood to Adolescence* (1964). Using Piaget's sequence of changes in cognitive operations over infancy and childhood, Goldman notes that children who are either in the preoperational (2-7 years) or concrete operational (7-12 years) stage of cognitive development cannot fully engage in abstract thinking or make symbolic transformations, and can therefore not understand the richly symbolic and abstract language of religion. For Goldman, *formal* operational intelligence is required for such activities. Goldman cites Piaget in his contention that for the child, "thought is very largely sense tied, hence the high level abstractions abounding in religion are well above the mental horizon of the small child" (p. 23).

In his work, Goldman is constantly using words like "defective," "misconceptions," "difficulties in thinking," "mistakes," and "limitations," to describe the child's way of thinking. For Goldman, the child needs to attain a high level of conceptual development before he or she will be able to "understand" what goes on in religion. Since children have not attained these levels of conceptual development, Goldman concludes that "religious insight generally begins to develop between twelve and thirteen years" (1964, 226). In other places, Goldman (1965) goes as far as to call childhood a *"pre-religious period."* Goldman's work is generally regarded as a seminal text on religious development (see Francis 1979). His theoretical approach has dominated psychological research and educational practice in the West for the past three decades.

In several other studies of religious development (see Fowler 1981; Oser 1980), it was observed that developmental achievements in children's religious thinking actually take place *earlier* than Goldman (1964) had originally found. For example, in Fowler's (1981) schema, formal operations are not seen as necessary for religious thinking to take place. Fowler observes primitive levels of religious thinking *as early as 2 or 3 years of age*. While each of these Piaget-inspired developmental studies differs in terms of its characterization of the particular sequence of changes that children grow through—Goldman (1964) says religious understanding takes place at 13, other investigators like Fowler say it begins at 2 or 3—*each is united behind the idea that spirituality is primarily about thinking, and that spiritual development parallels general cognitive-developmental changes.*

Perhaps Goldman, Fowler, and others are right. Maybe the child really does not "understand" creedal proclamations, or various parables and verses from Scripture. But is this to say that the child has no spiritual sensibility? Gordon Allport once wisely reminded those of us who study childhood that we "… do not often enough think of the participants" and that "… the religion of childhood may be of a very special order" (1955, 101). The "religion of childhood" is very special indeed, so special and different from our own, that we are prone to rule it out completely and claim that it doesn't exist because it doesn't resemble our highly conceptual adult religion. I think that we are missing something vitally important about spirituality with such an exclusive focus on *thought* and its development. Make no mistake, I believe that thought is certainly an important factor in spirituality, but when it becomes the *only* factor, it ceases to be helpful and actually starts to occlude other phenomena of interest and importance. As Farmer notes, spiritual experience "may be independent of the growth of cognitive abilities and/or emotional capacities," and that "no amount of refinement and blending of the ideas originated by Piaget, Kohlberg, and Erikson will bring us closer to understanding religious knowledge" (1992, 1). Cognitive-developmental theories may actually pose a *threat* to our understanding of children's spirituality in that these developmental sequences always seem to cast the stages of early childhood as "primitive" and "deficient," and present the child's thought processes in terms of what they *lack* rather than what they are in and of themselves.

The "God-Talk" Tendency

The tendency to equate spirituality with formal thought processes that come at the end of a long developmental sequence goes back at least as far as Locke and Rousseau. As we have just seen, in the majority of modern educational and psychological research, the child is not seen as being spiritual until he or she is able to *think* in a formal or abstract way. This view has been very influential on how adults typically think about children. In addition, many adults, as well as a great deal of educational and psychological research, tend to focus on concepts and categories from organized religion, such as "God," to the exclusion of terms which would be more reflective of immediate spiritual experience. I call this the "God-talk" tendency. Let us look now at some prominent examples of this tendency.

In 1959, the developmental psychologist Gote Klingberg published a highly influential study on the "religious experience" of 630 children between 9 and 13 years of age. Participants were asked to write compositions in response to the prompt, "Once When I Thought About God…". Klingberg analyzes the data in terms of the most frequent "conditions" under which these "God experiences" are likely to occur. Though she says she is interested in experience, Klingberg's central focus is always on the experience of *God*, a category of *reflection*, rather than on immediate spiritual experience itself. 566 of the 630 original compositions included "accounts of personal religious experiences" (1959, 212) leading her to conclude that "a genuine and independent religious life is to be found in the world of the child" (1959, 215).

Klingberg's results call into question Goldman's claim that the child below the age of 13 exists in a "pre-religious" state. In that sense, Klingberg's findings are quite illuminating. In addition, Klingberg tries to focus on *experience* rather than on understanding. In that sense, her study is an advance over the limitations of the aforementioned cognitive-developmental accounts. However, young children do

not typically formulate their spiritual experience in God terms. Adults, on the other hand, are quite good with God terms. I wonder what types of experiences we may be missing when we confine ourselves in research *only* to the experience of God. Further, while children between 9 and 13 may be starting to formulate their experiences in God terms, much younger children typically do not. Such a reliance on God terminology unfairly penalizes younger children.

The tendency to focus on God-talk has appeared in more recent discussions of children's spirituality (see Heller 1986; Taylor 1989; Tamminen 1991; Coles 1992). David Heller for example, in his book *The Children's God* (1986), has children draw pictures of God, tell a story about God, play God, answer questions about God, and write a letter to God. He provides very rich data, as well as an incisive thematic analysis, but *his focus is always on the child's experience of God.* Kalevi Tamminen, in her book *Religious Development in Childhood and Youth* (1991), presents a comprehensive study which was conducted in Finland on children from ages 7 to 12. Among other questions, she asks the children about when they feel "close to God," when they experience "God's guidance," how well or how poorly they understand the "concept of God," Biblical stories, images and symbols. JoAnne Taylor, in a wonderful little book entitled, *Innocent Wisdom: Children as Spiritual Guides* (1989), asks children from 4 to 12 years of age a series of twelve questions such as, "Is God close or far away?" "Is God in charge of the world?" "What reminds you of God?" Every one of the twelve questions contains the word "God." While Taylor nobly concludes that the child has much to teach adults, these lessons seem always to concern "God."

I believe that the child does in fact have much to offer adults, but I am not sure how much of it concerns God. As Nye (1996) points out, it is seriously problematic to take children's talk about God or religion, or their knowledge of religious creed as evidence of the presence or absence of *spirituality*. This results in large numbers of people who do not express their spirituality in religious terms, both adults and especially young children, to be judged as having no spiritual life at all. Nye writes:

> I wish to argue that this focus on the "religious" end of spirituality may be developmentally "off

target," and that evidence for children's early spiritual life needs to be sought amongst their perception, awareness and response to those ordinary activities that can act as signals of transcendence.... (1996, 111)

Nye's focus on perception and awareness puts the emphasis on *spiritual experience* rather than on language or higher-order concepts. To adopt language and higher-order concepts as criteria is, in the final analysis, to penalize the child for his or her lack of conceptual and linguistic sophistication and will always leave the child "less developed" than the adult. This is a pervasive and lamentable bias in educational and psychological research. Many who have spiritual experiences are unable to either understand or talk about them at the time that they occur. The individual may take days, months, years, even an *entire lifetime* to develop suitable language and concepts that will enable him or her to begin to approach and understand the experience.

The Need for a Different Notion of Knowledge

The pervasive denial of spirituality to cognitively and linguistically "lower functioning" populations such as children and the developmentally challenged will take place so long as we adults cling to a narrow understanding of knowing as being a solely *theoretical* and *rational* activity. Several psychologists (e.g., Jung 1933; Langer 1942; Northrup 1946; Werner 1948, 1955; Werner and Kaplan 1963; Arnheim 1969) have attempted to broaden the notion of knowledge beyond the exclusively rational.

In expanding the notion of what constitutes knowledge, we might differentiate two fundamentally different ways of knowing. Chapman (1988) discusses this difference in terms of what he, following Northrup (1946), calls "aesthetic" versus "theoretic" modes of knowing. Aesthetic knowing involves us in the "direct apprehension" or "intuition" of experience; theoretic knowing involves us in the postulation of invisible "entities or processes *which account for regularities in experience without themselves being given in experience*" (1988, 101; emphasis added). Religion typically involves "theoretic" modes of knowing. That is, religion tends to *separate out* from immediate experience certain postulated entities, e.g., God, soul, heaven, which are supposed

to *account for* or *explain* our experience. Spirituality, on the other hand, is principally focused on "aesthetic" modes of knowing. That is, spirituality is concerned with *directly experiencing* life via intuition or feeling. Though they involve different modes of knowing, one can certainly be both religious and spiritual at the same time. Religion, at its best, is about the linguistic expression and conceptual reflection upon primary spiritual experience.[1]

I believe that this distinction between modes of knowing employed in religion and those employed in spirituality is important because young children do not have very highly developed "theoretic" capacities. As Piaget (1959), Vygotsky (1986), Freud (1989a), and countless developmentalists have noted, "aesthetic" modes of knowing are very prominent in early childhood and are often lost in the course of the "development" of most Western children. If aesthetic modes of knowing can be vehicles for spiritual experience, the child is certainly capable of having a deep and rich spiritual life. Unfortunately, cognitive-developmental theories really only chart the development of *theoretical* capacities. They inevitably cast the aesthetic modes of knowing in infancy and childhood in terms of how far they deviate from vaunted adult theoretical modes rather than seeing children's ways of knowing as valid and complete forms of knowing in and of themselves that perhaps have their own course of development. There have, however, been a few encouraging books and studies on children's spirituality from a more "aesthetic" paradigm. Let me briefly explore some of this work.

Encouraging Directions: The Aesthetic Paradigm in Theory and Research

The central aspect of the aesthetic paradigm is a focus on *consciousness* and *experience*. Following Schleiermacher (1994), Otto (1950), James (1985), Jung (1933), and others, spirituality is seen to be accessed primarily via *intuition* and *feeling* rather than through *thought* and *language*. Conceptual reflection and linguistic articulation will eventually come to *overlay* and hopefully amplify this primary experiential core. From this point of view, because of children's keen aesthetic modes of knowing, they may just be in *closer* contact with spiritual experience than

well-socialized, Western adults. In 1828, the German philosopher Jean Paul Richter (1887) gave forceful expression to this view. Richter believed that childhood is the spiritual period par excellence. Far from existing in a Rousseauesque "pre-religious" period, for Richter there is "a whole religious metaphysics already dreaming in the child" (cited in Schweitzer 1991, 76). The child's spiritual experience is not reached through the word or concept. Richter calls the development of word and concept "finite knowledge." This finite knowledge differs from spiritual experience, which he calls "infinite knowledge." He writes, "Each step of *finite knowledge* is climbed through teaching and by degrees. But the infinite, which itself carries the endpoint of that ladder with its steps, *can only be intuited at once*, rather than added on. Only on wings, *not on stages* does one arrive there" (cited in Schweitzer 1991, 76; emphasis added). Richter goes so far as to characterize children's intuitive spirituality as "the true religion."

Friedrich Froebel, a nineteenth German philosopher and founder of the kindergarten movement, was a contemporary of Richter's. Froebel agreed with Richter's claim that the child has an innate spiritual capacity. "The young child, to grasp the unity of the spirit," he writes, "has his intuition, his heart and mind, his spiritual awareness" (Lilley 1967, 102). Froebel admonishes parents and educators to build on this innate, largely nonrational spiritual capacity in their teaching rather than "imposing" religious instruction "from without," as if the child needed his or her spirituality from the adult. He writes:

> If religion is to live and endure, it must come to man in early childhood when the innate divine spirit is yet dimly aware of its origin…. It is important not only for his religious training but also for his whole education that the child's progress is regarded as a continuous advance. Great harm is done if, within the cycle of the formative years, such sharp divisions and contrasts are made that their sequence and connection, their living core, are forgotten." (Lilley 1967, 62)

For Froebel, education is to build on the "living core" of the child's intrinsic spiritual capacities. This core is the most important aspect of religion and it is pre-

cisely what many religious adults lose with their "development" and "education."

Rudolph Steiner (1965), speaks of the child as more than just a growing body and mind. Steiner sees the child as enveloped within at least three higher spiritual dimensions of selfhood which he refers to as "abstract mental," "intuitional," and "spiritual." Steiner argues that children have experiential access to these transpersonal fields, even while their "lower selves" are still unfolding. Following Steiner, Harwood (1958) argues that what is typically called "development" in psychological and educational circles can be seen more as a series of substantial *losses* rather than a process of progressive acquisition. The bulk of developmental psychology and educational research is devoted either to documenting when and in what order children attain adult capacities, or how best to facilitate that attainment. Perhaps, Harwood argues, the child comes into the world with *great spiritual strengths* that are progressively *lost* with development and socialization. For example, Harwood notes that the child is deeply absorbed and immersed in the immediacy of the world. This is contrasted with the adult who approaches the world abstractly, as an "I" over and against an "It." Harwood writes, "The adult cannot enjoy the child's participation in his surroundings because his personal intelligence thrusts the world from him as an object for contemplation and speculation" (1958, 17). The child's completely different "spiritual organization" is missed by the adult who is blinded by language and abstract thought. Harwood suggests that the ability to recover these "forgotten experiences and unconscious forces of childhood" actually hold great promise for the education and spiritual development of the *adult*.

During the 1970s, the Religious Experience Research Unit, established at the University of Manchester in England, was gathering information on spiritual experience in adults. Many thousands of reports were sent to the Institute in response to questions like, "Do you feel you have ever been aware of or influenced by a presence or a power, whether you call it God or not, which is different from your everyday self?" (Hay 1974, 798). Depending on the populations, affirmative responses ranged between 50% and 72%. This result alone is quite striking. More amazing still was that 15% or so of the affirmative re-

sponses were about experiences *that occurred in childhood*. This was the case even though the questionnaire never made mention of childhood. As a result of these findings, a more refined questionnaire was developed by Edward Robinson. Results of this study are reported in his fascinating book *The Original Vision* (1983).

What stands out in this work is the power of these "original visions" to profoundly affect the course of an individual's whole life. For example, one participant reported, "When I was about 5 I had the experience on which, in a sense, my life has been based" (Robinson 1983, 12). Robinson notes that these early experiences usually involve a special sort of holistic knowing, the experience of unity, and/or the experience of profound value. The following is a report from an adult participant recalling an experience from childhood that involved him in a special type of *holistic knowing*:

> I think from my childhood I have always had the feeling that the true reality is not to be found in the world, as the average person sees it. There seems to be a constant force at work from the inside trying to push its way to the surface of consciousness. The mind is continually trying to create a symbol sufficiently comprehensive to contain it, but this always ends in failure. There are moments of pure joy with a heightened awareness of one's surroundings, as if a great truth had been passed across…. At times it feels that the physical brain is not big enough to let it through. (1983, 27)

Here is a recollection from another adult who is recalling a particularly intense experience as a young child which left him with a deep sense of *unity and connectedness* for the rest of his life:

> My mother and I were walking on a stretch of land … known locally as "the moors." As the sun declined and the slight chill of evening came on, a pearly mist formed over the ground. My feet, with the favorite black shoes with silver buckles, were gradually hidden from sight until I stood ankle deep in gently swirling vapour. Here and there just the very tallest harebells appeared above the mist…. Suddenly I seemed to see the mist as a shimmering gossamer tissue and the harebells, appearing here

and there, seemed to shine with a brilliant fire. Somehow I understood that this was the living tissue of life itself, in which that which we call consciousness was embedded, appearing here and there as a shining focus of energy in the more diffused whole. In that moment I know that I had my own special place, as had all other things, animate and so-called inanimate, and that we were all part of this universal tissue which was both fragile yet immensely strong…. The vision has never left me. It is as clear today as fifty years ago. (1983, 32)

Another adult participant recalls an experience from childhood in which he sensed *profound meaning and value* in the universe:

I had my first religious experience when I was about six and saw the whole evening sky covered by small, criss-cross, clearly defined and vividly coloured rainbow pieces. At about ten years of age I saw the entire evening sky filled with meteorites which fell like snowflakes all about me…. Both caused me to feel overwhelmed by an awareness of the awesome beauty of nature, as if I had been granted a glimpse of a state of absolute beauty, absolute perfection, and a meaning behind daily events which was incomprehensible to my intellect but is nevertheless deeply ingrained in my memory. (1983, 28)

What interested Robinson most about these reports is that at the time they occurred, *they were not shared with the adults in the child's life*. Participants recalled that parents, teachers, and other adults would often be quite insensitive to children's reported experiences. One of Robinson's participants says, "Sometimes I sat in deep thought pondering over these things, and my parents told me not to be miserable" (1977, 20). Robinson speculates that the adult's exclusive focus on language and thought may actually cause a repression of the child's immediate spiritual experience over the course of his or her development.

In addition to Robinson's book, several important works have been published which have discussed the varieties of spiritual—as opposed to religious— experience of young children (see Bachelard 1969; Paffard 1973; Bendit and Bendit 1977; Cobb 1977; Riz-

zuto 1979; Hollander 1980; Pearce 1980; Armstrong 1985; Berryman 1991; Farmer 1992; Erricker and Erricker 1996; McCreery 1996; Nye 1996; Myers 1997; Hay and Nye 1998). In addition, the journals *American Theosophist* (Quinn 1976) and *Parabola* (Dooling 1979) devoted entire issues to the topic of children's spirituality. These works generally agree that profound levels of spiritual reality are accessible to even the youngest human being.

Hollander (1980), for example, in a study of 80 adults' recollections of their childhood spiritual experience, reports that many adults have memories of intense spiritual experience early in their life. These experiences typically involve unity, joy, mystery, and ineffability. In many cases, these experiences are actually *contradicted* by the formal religious education which they later receive. One participant recalls an experience she had when she was 10:

I woke up and found myself sitting up in bed, in the middle of the night. It was snowing—everything was peaceful. I remember feeling extraordinarily clean and peaceful. A few years earlier I would go out at night when it was snowing— would dig a little hole and look up at the stars and feel that way…. There's always a yearning to find that same moment. I didn't connect this with what I was being taught in Catholic school. (1980, 27)

Farmer (1992) conducted a similar study of adults' recollections of childhood spiritual experience. She finds that many adults often spend their whole lives reflecting on the intense experiences they had as young children. She reports that many participants describe this direct spiritual experience as being quite different from what they learned from their family or school. One participant recalls:

I remember I always felt a oneness with myself and my environment. No separation, I always knew there was life other than this. (As I grew older) I argued with my Mom because she was so much with her religion. I would ask her questions and she would say 'You have to have faith, there are no answers.' But I always knew the answers. I always felt something more than we could see and feel. (1992, 4)

Another participant, recalling an experience as a three-year-old, says:

I knew that much that was being taught in my church wasn't quite right. It was too negative and didn't get to the meat of things. They didn't explain anything in a way that I knew was correct, for example the whole concept of "sin," and also what happens when we die…. I knew there was no hell fire or damnation…. I knew that when you died lovingness had some way of making it right and helping you. (1992, 4)

As a result of these early spiritual experiences, many participants report a sense of loneliness, difference, and isolation in their interactions with adults who don't seem to "get it." All but one of the participants in Farmer's (1992) study describe being inwardly "at war" between the demands of integrity to their spiritual experience and conformity with adult standards and expectations. Very often, this war leads to a massive repression of the spiritual dimension of one's being.

The Repression of the Sublime

In most studies on the attitudes of children toward religion and religious instruction (see Hodge and Petrillo 1978; Powell & Stewart 1978; Francis 1979, 1987; Turner 1980; Turner, Turner, and Reid 1980; Greer 1985; Tamminen 1991) older children consistently record much more negative attitudes than younger children. Contrary to the dominant claim that the development of language and higher-order thinking somehow *facilitates* the emergence of religious sensitivity, the overwhelming evidence is that language and abstract thinking are correlated with more *negative* attitudes toward religion rather than more positive (Hodge and Petrillo 1978, 138). By the time Western children are 10 years old, a substantial number demonstrate a "shyness or embarrassment" about anything even associated with religion (Hay and Nye 1998, 162).

I suspect that the disconnection that many older children and adolescents feel toward religion reflects the repression of their own immediate spiritual experience. The child gradually comes to learn that the world that is valued and emphasized by adults is one based on the "theoretic" mode of knowing discussed above. It is abstract, dry, and detached from what is felt in one's heart. To enter this adult world, one must "wall off" one's aesthetic capacities and the immedi-

acy of experience. This process of repression is particularly common in an educational system such as ours that involves the student in a massive indoctrination into the world of science. The scientific worldview, which many parents and educators heartily present to children, does not help the child to integrate his or her spiritual experience into language and daily life. In fact, this worldview explicitly *denies* the value of personal experience, indeed, the very existence of spiritual reality itself. Similarly, the religion that adults present to children, which is typically just as "theoretic" as science in its emphasis on abstract entities, e.g., soul, heaven, God, and vast creedal articulations, often has little or no connection to children's personal spiritual experience. When the child's experience runs counter to adult theoretic reality, the child will repress his or her own spiritual experience out of fear of being rejected, teased, or thought mentally unstable. In the West, the developmental path is more often than not *destructive* to children's spirituality, leaving us when we become adults disenchanted, empty, and disillusioned.

Modern Adulthood and Spiritual Emptiness

Many adults in the modern world are so deeply enveloped and invested in the consensually validated, abstract, linguistically expressible world that they have a great deal of difficulty gaining access to their immediate experience. Many adults feel empty and dissatisfied, as if their lives consist simply of "going through the motions." This common adult feeling of emptiness has been characterized by many psychologists in the humanistic, phenomenological, and psychoanalytic traditions (e.g., Jung 1933, 1957; Horney 1950; Rogers 1961; Gendlin 1962; Maslow 1968; Roszak 1972; Miller 1981). I want to claim that it is in the realm of *immediate experience* that meaning, vitality, and satisfaction are to be attained. Adults who feel "empty" need to regain access to their immediate experience. I want to argue further that the child can really help us here.

In his work on the spiritual alienation of modern adults, Jung (1959) discovered many archetypes, or unconscious patterns of mental organization, but he believed that one of the most vital was what he called the "Archetype of the Child." At bottom, the Child archetype presents to the ego those parts of the psy-

che which it has forgotten or left behind in its "development." Jung speaks of the archetype of the child:

> The child motif represents not only something that existed in the distant past but also something that exists *now*; that is to say, it is not just a vestige but a system functioning in the present whose purpose is to compensate or correct, in a meaningful manner, the inevitable one-sidedness and extravagances of the conscious mind. It is the nature of the conscious mind to concentrate on relatively few contents and to raise them to the highest pitch of clarity.... Our differentiated consciousness is in continual danger of being uprooted; hence it needs compensation through the still existing state of childhood. (1959, 162-163)

For Jung, the archetypal child presents to us the opportunity for rebirth, renewal, hope, spontaneity, creativity, and a zest for living. For many of us, with the passage of time, this "inner child" has been repressed or blocked out due to emotional trauma, ego development, overly rationalistic and detached educational practices, as well as our own pride, ambition, and fear. As Jung argues, the child is not just something that existed for us only in the past, never to be experienced again, *but is present in the background of adult consciousness and is available to us right now.* Jung discussed the healing potential of the child as a symbolic, archetypal reality. What has not received as much attention is capacity of the "outer child," the actual children whom we love and with whom we interact, to affect genuine healing, recovery, and renewed adult spirituality. I would like to devote the remainder of the article to this issue.

The Child as Spiritual Resource

I believe that in addition to being spiritual beings in their own right, children can help us adults to access hidden and repressed dimensions of our own spirituality. Myers notes, "when we engage in relationships with young children (or children of any age) the child within us—that child of a similar age—also has a developing edge that enters into our newly emerging relationship with these young people" (1997, 8-9). Interactions with children present us adults with the opportunity to regain a sense of connectedness, spontaneity, emotional sensitivity,

philosophical wonder and mystery, and attentiveness to value that we have long since left behind. They can teach us to view the world aesthetically again rather than theoretically. This process recovery is not simply a regressive return to childhood. Adults surely have many important gifts that we can and should share with children, so I am not talking about adults' being children. What I am pointing to occurs *in the relationship* which takes place between the adult and the child. In this wonderful dialogue, vital and forgotten parts of the adult, what I call the "Child Within," are reawakened from their slumber and summoned to "come out and play" with the real child out in the world, what I call the "Child Without." As Jung points out, in most cases, the adult "Child Within" has not been sufficiently integrated into the personality. This fragmentation causes despair and spiritual alienation. The "Child Without," our children and our students, can function as a wonderful resource to occasion such spiritual integration.

In my years of working with and interacting with children, I have nearly always experienced them as being a source of unending inspiration. Time spent with children always refreshes me and gives me "new eyes" to see the world. Subsequent research that I have conducted with parents, teachers, and others who spend a great deal of time with children confirmed these personal experiences. As one teacher in my research said, "Don't tell my principal, but every year I feel that I learn as much from them as they learn from me!" Other research shows that many adults report that their children broaden their "emotional repertoire," transform their personalities, and cause them to radically alter their existing politics, values and views on life (Ambert 1992). Kibble (1996), for example, notes that many adults report that the process of interacting with their children, even the process of childbirth, have given them renewed access to their emotional and spiritual lives.

As Matthews (1994) notes, we adults are typically so concerned with having to nurture, instruct and inspire our children that we often fail to consider and appreciate what they have to offer us. Education and psychology's treatment of spirituality, with their one-sided emphasis on abstract thinking, language, and rigid developmental sequences, are similarly

unable to appreciate the many gifts that the child has to give. I am urging education and psychology to allow *the child*, not their own adult commitments, biases, and adultcentric theories to guide research and practice. When we allow the child to affect us, we recover a sensitivity to the unity and interconnectedness of Being. Our stale and familiar categories become cracked open, flooding our consciousness with a profound sense of mystery and wonder. The world begins to look alive and becomes an enchanted place, resounding with meaning and value, rather than a cold, inert, mechanical thing.

I think through open and honest interactions with children, they may just cause us to shift our sense of what constitutes valid knowing from one that is based exclusively on higher-order thinking to one which also involves intuition and feeling. We may expand our conceptions of human development beyond the narrow straight line to include the circle, or perhaps many different lines. When we make such a shift in our view of development, the child begins to prominently figure into our own developmental journey rather than being just a stepping stone to be transcended toward the achievement of bigger and better things. The child can cause us to focus less on talk of God and more on genuine and heartfelt experience of the spiritual. Finally, the child can present us with the occasion to confront the pain and loss brought on by our own education and development. When we turn and embrace these forgotten potentialities of our own childhood, we become much more open to the spontaneity, the fullness and uniqueness of our own children in the classroom and in the home. I am encouraged and excited about a new way of teaching in which both children and adults are seen to have much to teach each other.

Note

1. At its worst, of course, religion is empty proclamation to secure approval or group membership, a narcotic to numb pain (e.g., Marx 1977), a crutch to avoid life's harsh realities (e.g., Freud 1989b), a social weapon to separate the "chosen" from the "damned" (Hill, Knitter, and Madges 1995) or, as Jung (1957) suggests, an actual *defense* against spiritual experience.
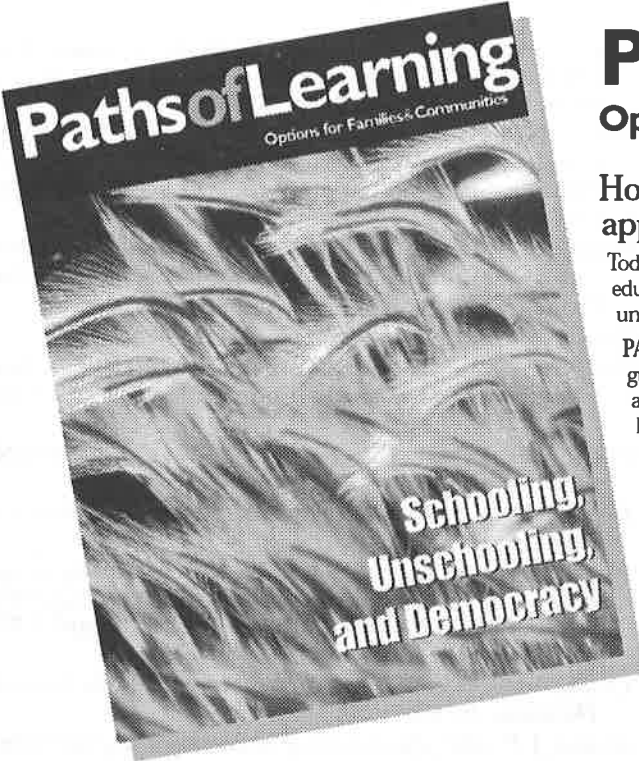
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Dragged Screaming to the Keyboard
A Teacher's Lament

Peter Quince

"I am King Canute up to my chin in water. I am a Luddite who must hold fire on machine-wrecking. I am a teacher who sees in the computer screen only a reflection of some dark destroying angel."

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This system (of computers) will give our students and your children a distinct advantage in a society increasingly dominated by the use of computers. (English high school advertisement)

One of the surest ways of making a child lose his delightful and necessary childishness is to give him a computer. (Valdemar Setzer, *Computers in Education*)

In years to come we're going to see machines beginning to dominate man in many more areas considered exclusively human. (Jonathan Scheaffer, referring to a computer chess program.)

What will be the world and the psychology of people who work, communicate, consume, play and educate themselves from birth to death by means of a screen? (Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Bluff*)

The dreaded request which I felt powerless to turn down, despite my deepest misgivings, came at the beginning of another English lesson: "Sir, can I do my essay on computer?"

"Why, Scott, when your exercise book is handy here in the classroom?"

"Because it *looks* better, sir."

The standard reply, "Because it looks better," sometimes varied by another standard reply, "Because it's easier." How could I argue? Maybe it does look better, and perhaps it is easier. But attractive appearance and ease of execution are hardly the fundamental stuff of essays and stories. Ideas and imagination are threatened with taking the proverbial back seat; style and convenience reign supreme. Such is the way of the world today, from politics to cuisine.

As a practicing English teacher I have tried to hold back the flood of a misplaced enthusiasm among students and teachers alike. I still try. But as the years roll on I feel more and more like King Canute foolishly holding a hand up to resist the incoming tide that washes around my feet and threatens, finally, to

engulf me. I speak, of course, of computers and the digital faith spawned by them.

I cannot imagine that the so-called educational use of computers can do anything other than harm to the developing mind, and yet I find it extremely difficult to marshal entirely persuasive arguments against them in the face of their apparent "success" in our schools and colleges.

What my heart knows for certain, my head cannot properly explain. And therein lies an immediate frustration and a chronic anxiety. Where will it all end, I ask myself, except in the debasement of real educational values and their replacement by hard-nosed information gathering? Should we, can we, make algorithms the basis of all life and learning?

The use of computers in schools raises fundamental questions about the role of computers in life generally. The fact that most educators do not acknowledge this drives us further down the untried road of blanket computerization.

Why do I object? Why am I called a stick-in-the-mud? Why do I carp at such heady progress in the expression of language and images? Why do people tell me that "you can't hold back progress"? What exactly do they mean by the term? And why, worst of all, does the charge "Luddite" (perversely accepted as an accolade) fly at me from all directions, with the advice "Go and live in a cave" thrown in for good measure? I wish to be neither troglodyte nor cyberlord.

I am mortally offended and expect to be so for the rest of my life. It'll be a mighty hard slog avoiding the fate of the cave-dweller in company with a diminishing band of aging dissenters, as the rest of humanity looks to outer-space colonization for lebensraum.

Some Luddites refuse to join the Hive, scorn "interconnectedness," keep virtual reality at arm's length, except perhaps that several-generations-old virtual reality that goes by the name of television. All this in a fit of nostalgia, an incurable pining for the past, the place we trusted: life was better in the Fifties, better still in the Forties, heaven in the Thirties (aside from the Depression), paradise in the Victorian age and so on.

Yes, I am one of those; I stand up for anachronisms; I am a romantic; I idealize the Past (which Is another country); I am not going to substitute the

Technological Age for my well-remembered, minimal-tech childhood, despite finding myself alarmingly adrift at the beginning of the 21st Century. The New Millennium sounds more threat than promise, more like a retreat from humanity than a fresh flowering, more silicon and plastic than sap and bark.

Why? Why the crisis in the soul of man? In *my* soul? Why the marshalling of opposing forces, techno-freak against techno-refuser? The answer, in a word as supercharged as "nuclear," "Holocaust," "Armageddon," and "nirvana," is the "computer."

Why is this single invention threatening to spoil the rest of my life in a way that "television," "motor car," and "atom bomb" never did? Why is this phenomenon more pervasive than religion, more invasive than crime, more evangelical than the Second Coming?

I struggle to understand that question as the reality dawns, thickens, ensnares: I am becoming enmeshed in a web that is almost as material as much as it is abstract. I cry out: Can't you see where this is leading? And I receive a benign smile, a pat on the back, reassurance that my eccentricity, bordering on insanity, will receive its cure on the day that I relent and agree to join the Hive. All the time the florescent screens stare at me, greet me with their clinical efficiency at every juncture: the surgery, the supermarket, the travel agency, the news agent's, the hotel, the theatre, and all points north, south, east and west. I have heard it said, "in Christ there is no east or west"; the new religion adds time to space and twists it into a neat mathematical formula.

One day I will visit a friend's house and find a computer sitting on the lounge table, another on the kitchen work-surface, a third in the bedroom, and I will go away and weep. I am serious; this means too much to me. Did Canute ever feel this way when he turned and saw the tide way inland?

I am more convinced than ever, in the face of such seemingly unstoppable technological fundamentalism, that the cyber-juggernaut must be stopped, its tracks dismantled. Where better to start than in schools?

Catch them young, warn them that their parents, their governments, their global corporations, their media manipulators, their techno-wizards, know not what they do. What better to be than a teacher, a

worm in the rosy apple, an insider sowing dissent, an anachronism who undertakes to support Nature in her wearisome losing battle with Science?

If, wielding a pencil and a simple mind, I cannot win, I'll go down fighting, relish the struggle. I want my sunsets to be real and unmediated, my food to come direct from the loam rather than the lab, my silences unpunctuated by beeps and jingles. Am I alone? As a teacher who confesses under my breath that I never watch television ("Gave it up, along with drinking, smoking, swearing, voting.") or travel the information superhighway ("I hike on the back lanes of thought.") I am treated with incredulous stares by my students. Perhaps I need to stuff myself into a glass case and present myself to some pedagogical museum ("He used chalk, too, and lectured to all his students enmasse, Old Style.") No, I am not alone but getting there.

What is my problem with computers? I ask myself why I cannot be kinder to their proponents, jump on board for the ride, lay back and relax in the digital glow. I ask myself just why my heart sinks every time a student requests, "Can I write this assignment on computer, sir?" Inside I scream, "No! For God's sake use a bloody pencil!" Outside I smile indulgently and say, "Of course, why not, and do some graphics, too." Another nail in the coffin, another lie, another missed opportunity to say, "Stuff your crazy machines!" Another swallowing of pride, another acquiescence in the latest inauthentic god.

My problem with computers is many-faceted—as man, as teacher, as father, as citizen, as living being. I teach full time, and it is becoming harder because of the widening gulf between *my* values and the values of my students, *my* understanding of what education entails and theirs. A permanent tension exists.

My Luddism smolders, occasionally bursts forth in denunciations of the latest I.T. developments; but then I clap a hand over my mouth in horror, like a man who has forgotten his place and finds himself standing up at a Nazi rally uttering favorable sentiments towards Jews. Keep your mouth shut, baffle the heresies, not so long ago you would have been burnt at the stake; now the cyberlords will simply marginalize you, deprive you of access to a gentler version of modern life by the simple expedient of making a swipe-card essential for every transaction in the marketplace. You are doomed. You are consigned to the cave. You have not solemnly taken the vow of digitalia. You cleave stubbornly, nostalgically to the old ways, the seasons, the verities of sun, moon, and stars. You must go incognito.

One major stumbling block to my advancement as a teacher is that I see the teaching/learning continuum as a *spiritual* enterprise as much as an academic/intellectual one. Computers don't fit into my spiritual scheme of things, in fact they would appear positively antagonistic towards all matters spiritual. Try as I might, I cannot see a computer with soul; what is more, I have to confess that I am dubious about technophiles having souls, or at least recognizing that they do.

Computers, it seems to me, inhibit the ungraspable, exist a lowly world away from the numinous, deal in the fatuous currency of an algorithmic code that has precious little to do with nature or spirit. Students in school, increasingly, depressingly, lack that spiritual dimension which might just remove the materialistic scales from their eyes.

The reductionism of the computer, a jazzy extension of the reductionism of science, serves to squeeze out the subtlest realities of life and learning. In a way that at the moment—early days yet—is damnably difficult to articulate, I am convinced that frequent exposure to computers reduces the truly human in us. I sense it viscerally; it tugs at the heart to see toddlers staring innocent-eyed at screens. What television made serious, computers make terminal. Machine-fodder with ribbons in their hair, little terminators.

I am writing this with a lead pencil, second-drafting with a typewriter. I have made many alterations on the plain white paper. My scrawls look beautiful to me. I can look back, page after page, and see my every smudge and emendation: the stains of my own efforts over time. I am contained in my handwriting. This writing progresses with a harmonious simplicity: man, thought, pencil, paper. Also, a not inconsiderable factor, it is very, very inexpensive. No hardware, no wires, no electricity (I write by daylight.). No network nor systems nor backup needed. I am tempted to say, "Look, no hands!" but I need one to wield my pencil. It doesn't happen by magic, but it happens without "crashing."

Why must I listen to the cry from my students, "The printer isn't working, sir," or "I lost all my work"? I don't possess a printer, my work is never "lost"; but then I am not fashionable; I am a refuse-nik, a fly in the ointment, not someone for students with keyboardingmania to attempt to emulate. I hope they all grow flowers when they are older, ride horses, fish with rod and line, stay clear of the lurid glare of that junkie screen.

Computers insist on far more information than is good for us, and that applies to students in the school setting. I ask the bursar for the remaining Library budget figure. Ten years ago I would have received a postage-stamp-sized piece of paper with one figure handwritten on it; now I receive a poster-sized print-out containing *thousands* of letters and numbers. It takes me an age to find the only figure I want. And then it's likely to be out of date!

I ask students to do a modest piece of research for homework: information about rainforests, for exam-ple. I receive, with unbelievable efficiency, page after page of densely packed information about rain-forests. Such a wealth of information so speedily ac-quired seems miraculous. It is. They haven't read a word of it; they have stroked the right keys to reach "rainforests"; they have generated paper; their "homework" is complete.

Producing undigested gobbets of information now appears, at least to many students, to pass as "research." Was it ever thus? I don't think so. In the period B.C. (Before Computers) students would typi-cally look up the relevant information in a reference book, then either copy it out verbatim or notetake im-portant points. It was not so easy then; it required ef-fort, active searching, synthesis, understanding, the necessarily laborious process of learning, if you will. It was no doubt not as zippy as punching keys and seeing images sparkle on the screen but it sank in, it was absorbed into the bloodstream at a slow, steady rate. If *I* don't feel like wading through screens of in-formation from an electronic encyclopedia, I'm sure the kids don't. In the gadget-loco society we have convenience food, but we also have "convenience knowledge." Press the right button and it all comes out prepackaged. Where did the hard slog go, the rough edges, the sweat, the satisfaction? Why so much information to so little effect?

When kids sit at computer screens they face *away* from each other. That is significant. It discourages eye contact, the face-to-face exchanges that have, un-til now, been the common currency of both social sit-uations and learning contexts.

I have also noticed that classrooms devoted to computers tend to have a sterile appearance, devoid of the softening, humanizing influence of plants, of any incursions from the natural world. Many open-plan offices are like this. Of course anyone could fill the spaces between the screens with yuccas and ivy—but they *don't*, and that in itself carries signifi-cance. A statement is being made: In the world of in-formation, of the abstract, of instant access, the natu-ral world possesses neither relevance nor potency. What *is* potent is the power of the machine and the dexterity of its practitioner. Keep your vegetation for the garden, this place is purely utilitarian, the focus of a clean and mechanized activity. What appeals to students are the instantaneous changes that appear on their screens; plants grow too slowly for us to per-ceive changes and, like the vast, negated, and ne-glected world outside, are thus boring beyond belief. Kids reared on the passive sensationalism of televi-sion have simply moved on to the spuriously interac-tive sensationalism of the computer screen. Martial arts games become worth a hundred sunsets. Ersatz slaughter satisfies more than pulling weeds in a patch.

What is lost when kids send e-mails to each other across a room, the sender's back to the receiver's back, is any serious awareness of what community could *really* mean. Communication becomes mere "fun" instead of the life-enhancing mortar of human-ity. As an English teacher, what I sense when I enter a computer room is a great deal of rapt attention and an eerie paucity of thought. What I feel when I leave is relief at returning to the real world.

Work done using computers, whatever work that may be, tends to reduce materiality, the solid, the tac-tile, the concrete, despite the fact that at present, printouts comprise paper, and enormous quantities of information endlessly repeated require enormous quantities of the stuff. Perhaps "they" are working on it; perhaps the as-yet-empty promise of the paperless office will lead by logical progression to the paperless school, and then to the teacherless

school (or "distance learning"). Give the techno-wizards time. When will they get rid of real food? Real space has been compromised by the cyber variety. Real animals were (temporarily, thank God) jettisoned in favor of cyberpets.

I love the materiality of paper-and-envelope letters and would rue the loss of that pleasure to future generations of children. I love the tactility of handwriting with pencil or pen and wish to perpetuate that time-honored tradition, despite the pressing claims of "progress." The auguries are against it. The ceaseless inventiveness of our computer-clergy, remolding the world in their own image, dictates that as many future tools as possible will incorporate that little genie called a microprocessor. Prophet elides with profit.

If it moves, computerize it. People too. We are only meat, which is slow, messy, and inefficient. With a few strategically placed microprocessors, surely we could be made to function better. Nature is clearly not as clever as our best minds. The ideal is ethereality, release from the bounds of physicality, freedom from locality.

Schools need not exist in a world of saturated communications where home, classroom, garden, office, sickbay, and lovers' bed become a bodiless extension of the Great Hive. "Landscape" then really will refers to the orientation of an oblong of eternally present phosphorescence and not the great outdoors.

If we can reduce education to the easily measurable: right, wrong, tick-boxes and circled answers, ones and noughts, formulaic assessments and mathematical relationships, then everything becomes so much clearer, easier, more manageable, less elusive. Computers enable folks to do this. What would otherwise be muddy and messy is clarified, the opacities of life are made pleasingly transparent and kids can go home and do more of the same at keyboards that provide reassurance and cosy familiarity. We can count the significant moments in life with bleeps and printouts; we can spew forth corporation fodder in the guise of conditioned young human beings.

In the twentieth century we have become more isolated from the natural world than ever before; what is left of beautiful places is "packaged" for our comfort and convenience. The more estranged we become from plants and animals and the substance of the earth itself, the more we lose parts of our own nature, and the more dysfunctional we become. Advanced technology is primarily to blame for this deteriorating situation. Cars cocoon us, television deludes us, labor-saving devices deskill us. The world *out there* becomes ever more mediated, ever more difficult for us to really see. Computers represent a gigantic step in that delusional, foolhardy direction. Computer education simply reinforces the crazy notion that we can do without nature, we can create a nature of our own, a better one; we can transcend the messiness of the soil; we can all be managers with clean hands while our robots do the dirty work. As if working with the hands (except at a keyboard) were somehow beneath us; as if our countless forebears were always miserable and unfulfilled in their labors. No doubt many were, but the dignity and earthy satisfaction of working with the whole body's exertion remain as salutary examples.

Nevertheless, today's students are convinced (by others and by themselves) that one *must* possess computer literacy in order to carve a place in the world. It is sad to witness the replacement of real literacy by the electronic variety. Computer games, especially among young males, are already replacing reading: moving images are easy, print is difficult. Who can blame kids for taking the easier option? That the imagination eventually suffers is neither here nor there. Parents, and many teachers, aid and abet this dumbing down: The digital faith is shallow but fervent.

We teach children to stare at screens while species become extinct, forests are leveled and beaches are urbanized. When information becomes more urgent than action, the planet's time must be limited. It is all so far away from us, that regrettable destruction, and we have games to play and profits to make.

Straining to strike a positive note, I have to say that computers facilitate the skill of punching keys, a skill that writers and typists have known for over a century but nobody ever got terribly excited about. These days one could be forgiven for imagining that stroking the keyboard comes close, for some cyber-hookers, to an orgiastic experience.

Ten years ago I used to sit in the typing classroom at my school in blessed silence after the mania of the day's lessons had finished. All students and most of

the staff had gone home. I was there to type some poems, or maybe a short story, from my handwritten drafts in order to submit them to publishers. I was proud of my 20 words per minute dexterity. Not a soul ever ventured into the typing classroom outside of lessons, except me. There existed no enthusiasm in students to type out their handwritten assignments, and I never once saw a teacher practicing "keyboard skills" or producing a document on one of the old manual machines.

As soon as word processors were introduced, virtually everyone wanted to learn. Why? What magic, other than pedestrian word shifting/deleting facilities, did these word processors possess? None. It became clear to me that teachers and students were falling under the spell of an insidious and pervasive propaganda.

A culture shift was being stage-managed by … whom? You guessed. The companies that build and market computers. We found ourselves in the grip of the hard sell, the new ideology, the replacement religion, the 24-hour backup. Typewriters could not be marketed as glamorous and essential, computers could and were. A modern mythology was born.

I found myself in an ironic situation. Ten years before I had utilized the school's typewriters when the only other person, to my knowledge, to do so was the head teacher's secretary. Ten years later I am the only teacher, as far as I can tell, who never uses a computer. I know I am contrary by nature. Perhaps I am also ornery. Or maybe I can read the future.

Ten years ago students were dragged screaming into the "typing pool"; now they fight over keyboard space. I am amazed at the success of this religious conversion. Is this a renewed enthusiasm for education? Or perverse gadgetry conditioning?

I mentioned earlier a "positive" side—the acquisition of a new skill. The negative side involves the sad loss of so many other, more variable, more salubrious skills. The microprocessor has taken away far more than it can ever endow. The computer may be a labor-saving, time-saving device, but it does not make muscle and it does not store wisdom.

Pupils are being shown how to use computers to replace tasks that could be done more simply, more naturally, more concretely and—this is a much underrated reason—more slowly. In a world that already spins too fast, the drive is to go *faster*. Am I insane or is everyone else out there? The song says, "Slow down, you move too fast, You've got to make the morning last." I remember that song; I hum it: I cleave to its values. I think it is called *Feelin' Groovy* or something like that. Not a wholly convincing title for the hard work of the next millennium, I grant you. But the sentiment holds. When the sun shines and there are jobs to be done, Spaniards whisper *mañana* with lazy grins on their faces. Computers are artificially cranking up the pace of life. More haste less speed. Get off the treadmill. Save yourself a coronary. Pencils and the human brain are slow by comparison. Why not? What's the big hurry? Rip out the wires and dance. Decelerate. Business can wait. Transport can wait. Stock markets can wait. Modern life is feverish and computers raise the temperature to critical levels. Hyperactive kids in school indulge in the unholy trinity of junk food, television, and electronic games. (Isn't *everything* done on computer, in a sense, a game?) Where's reflection, contemplation, communion? Throw out the hardware and get a prayer mat. Teachers, tell the kids that. Parents, buy them yo-yos and pets, that way they can watch movement through *real* space and make meaningful contact with an otherwise isolated Nature.

Computers in schools, just as much as in society at large, facilitate centralized control: school as microcosm, as training ground for business and bureaucracy, as reinforcement of technological abstraction. Students begin to see such centralized control when their personal, passwords identify them, maybe get them into trouble for writing the wrong things, or not writing much at all. It is all too easy for the experts (read "educators") to manipulate. With further refinement, every student's performance, minute by minute, may be logged, examined, used against him, surveillance which at present is being implemented in the adult workplace only, but which eventually, according to all the usual technological imperatives, will devolve down to the nursery. Why not, they will say?

Electronic networks offer the perfect opportunity for keeping tabs on everyone at all times. Students are already becoming aware of this "facility," which sits alongside all the other tricks in this newest of magic lanterns. Their awareness may be dim, inartic-

ulate, groping for wider meaning, but I have spoken to many who know what investigative power the computer possesses. It gives *them* a modest measure of control while it gives *others* boundless control over them. They know it, they begin to accept it, because they largely believe it's worth living in a hugely mediated world for the sake of their addiction to a screen that's ever available, ever willing to bend to their will, ever improvable, kaleidoscopic, and instantaneous. Unlike Nature.

When teachers defend the computer as "just another tool," they are fooling not only themselves but their students. Most teachers I know uncritically accept computer technology, thus effectively depriving those they teach of any chance of critical analysis. It appears to me that the technology is using them rather than the reverse.

At the turn of the century, apparently, blacksmiths were happy to repair motorized vehicles, unaware that one day those same vehicles would put them largely out of business as car transport replaced horse transport. They failed to appreciate the future with sufficient imagination. They were effectively digging their own artisan graves.

So with the teaching profession. The more that teachers embrace on-line learning with obsessive enthusiasm—however good or bad the resultant situation might be for their charges—the closer we get to a future in which automation increasingly renders teachers redundant. Distance learning, independent curricula, the Internet School, call it what you will, will reduce the teacher's role to that of mere technician, or facilitator, and then, in the fullness of time, superfluous observer.

Students will then lose that face-to-face socializing, with teachers and each other, which in the final reckoning is even more important than the raw information generated by academic subjects. We can get the required information anywhere, at any time; we can only get the unmediated student-teacher and student-student exchanges in a bricks-and-mortar school. By glorifying computer use in the minds of our students we hasten that day when many of the waking hours of each human being will be spent in isolation at a keyboard.

Some have invested huge amounts of time, energy, and hard cash in ensuring that the computer infil-trates every corner of our lives. And some of us deplore the possibility, resisting with every fiber of our bodies. We can sense the loss; we also have some difficulty in offering rational, as opposed to intuitive, arguments. Sometimes the poet in us rebels, and the poet speaks in metaphor rather than with cold logic.

It occurs to me—and I base this opinion on recent years' intensifying computer use by my students, quite unblessed by me—that frequent exposure to the doubtful charms of the screen produces a distinctly functional, utilitarian, mechanistic outlook, that certain subtleties are lost, and that a kind of mathematical certainty replaces such subtleties. The perpetual search for the correct format, the needed information, the pre-programmed procedures, masks a whole deeply imaginative sphere of life. What is being lost, in a word, is "culture." Science and technology, for all their startling revelations and remarkable adaptations, express only a very recent and partial explanation of reality. Older ideas, idealogies, intuitive understandings, tribal wisdoms, are being suffocated. The computer accelerates this process of driving out the unuseful the mystical, the awkwardly unprogrammable.

This loss of culture struck me forcibly not so long ago when my Year 11 Literature group entered the classroom to be confronted by individual copies of *Macbeth* on their desks. One boy—one among many with similar attitudes—groaned audibly on catching sight of the texts scattered about the room. He exclaimed loudly, "Why do I have to learn about Shakepeare if I want to be an I.T. technician?" Why indeed? He has a point, I suppose. What has Shakespeare got that can compare with computer graphics?

Perhaps we are simply in the process of replacing one culture with another, one reality—Nature's—with another: that of cyberspace. But I am saddened, not especially by present reality—there are still plenty of kids who prefer football on a pitch to football on a screen—but by future prospects, by the trend. What will the world be like when we eventually shut ourselves away into exquisitely conditioned environments? When total control over inner and outer environments is achieved? When nothing more is left to chance? When the only wilderness left is some weird musuem-piece where Luddites live? It

seems to me that we are heading that way and dragging our kids with us.

When I watch students in school going glassy-eyed in front of their screens while the wind, unheeded, bends trees in the playground, Max Frisch's words often come to mind: "Technology is the knack of so arranging the world that we do not experience it." My students, in screen-mode, are effectively denying their childlike natures. Someone needs to give it back to them; we can't trust the authorities to do that. We need to choose the right path. Either we maintain our present degree of humanity—and that means engaging with the physical as well as the cerebral—or we accept the less than human fate dictated by technocrats. Present science fiction may become future reality. Do we want our world to be like that?

The British philosopher, Roger Scruton, alluding to his rigorously physical countryside pursuits, has said, "We live in a virtual world. Television, computer screens and the simmering background of comforts create an illusion of well-being with the bare minimum of physical and spiritual exertion."

My belief is that nowadays, wired and ever ready to buzz, schools are increasingly laboring under the illusion that the force-feeding of facts and the mere celebration of. communications count as learning. They don't.

When I once asked a senior educationist why he favored cramming more and more computers into schools, his jocular reply was, "Because it looks better." Exactly. And that was the same response given to me by one of my budding essayists when I asked him why he wanted to type rather than handwrite his work.

"Because it looks better" may seem a compelling argument, but what one must say is that looks aren't everything; in fact they aren't much at all when one considers the spirit or soul which remains out of reach of any technology.

I am King Canute up to my chin in water. I am a Luddite who must hold fire on machine-wrecking. I am a teacher who sees in the screen only a reflection of some dark destroying angel.

Ecology, Anthropocentrism and the Pedagogy of Paulo Freire

Kathryn Ross Wayne

Freire's fundamental anthropocentrism delegitimizes the natural world and serves to legitimize the oppression of nature.

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Will wild animals and the natural contexts that are their homes accompany us through the twenty-first century?
—Howard L. Harrod
the animals came dancing

For many of us, looking at a seemingly unfettered landscape elicits appreciation of its beauty or drama, excitement about physical opportunities and personal adventures, and even a meditative serenity. However, few of us consider ourselves a part of the landscape we so rapaciously claim; instead, we remain apart from the natural environment enacting our self-appointed roles as stewards, managers and, I would like to suggest, oppressors. In considering core aspects of Paulo Freire's pedagogy, certainly the most widely known and debated pedagogy today, we need to ask ourselves a simple but far-reaching question: How far will anthropocentric pedagogy take up in the fight against oppression?

First, however, I would like to acknowledge the deep and abiding commitment to oppressed peoples throughout the world that Freire expressed and that the power of his conversation in pursuit of global humanization ensures its continuation from educators and others. Freire's concern has spawned several theoretical approaches to education, including critical, liberation, and narrative pedagogy as represented in the United States by Ira Shor, Donaldo Macedo, Peter McClaren, Jonathan Kozol, Stanley Aronowitz, Henry Giroux, and bel hooks, to name a few. These approaches continue Freire's naming of what many would prefer to remain nameless in education (and life) and which deliberately state the relational importance of the cultural stories we encode in language and our voluntary or involuntary enactment of them. Further, Freire's emphasis on love, life and, to some degree, the spiritual, provides an educational oasis to which educators may come and re-

fresh their emotional and, one hopes, passionate concerns for the well-being of their students. But, as we currently witness a less than subtle bid for globalizing Western economic practices via transnational corporations, is it enough to give voice to only humans and the humanizing endeavor Freire so fervently advocated? Or, ought we to consider P. T. Saroja Sundararajan's statement that

> every discipline and every ideology, every system of morality and every form of religion has to re-think its fundamentals in the light of the ecological question, on pain of otherwise turning into an engine of oppression. (1996, 8)

Freire's philosophical focus centers on the nature of oppression and the various dialectics it embeds and the necessity of praxis (another dialectic) to escape the bondage both the oppressor and the oppressed, together, endure. "Functionally, oppression is domesticating," says Freire, "to no longer be prey to its force, one must emerge from it and turn upon it. This can be done only by means of the praxis: reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it" (1985, 36). Furthermore,

> to achieve this goal, the oppressed must confront reality critically, simultaneously objectifying and acting upon that reality [demythologizing culturally and historically]. A mere perception of reality not followed by this critical intervention will not lead to a transformation of objective reality—precisely because it is not true perception. (Freire 1985, 37)

Finally, dialogue and the transformational aspect of language provide the two other major aspects of a conscientization process. For Freire, conscientization represents the way in which people "humanize" the world that, in Freire's view, illustrates a true revolutionary project:

> A true revolutionary project ... to which the utopian dimension is natural, is a process in which the people assume the role of subject in the precarious adventure of transforming and recreating the world.... Thus, to use Erich Fromm's terms, the revolutionary utopia is biophiliac, whereas the right in its rigidity is necrophiliac, as is a revolutionary leadership that has become bureaucratic. (1985, 82)

The dialectic, praxis, the objectifying or demythologizing of reality, the transformational aspect of language, and the ongoing process of conscientization represent the crux of Freire's educational and utopian vision. However, to fully consider the implications of the vision and its relationship to Freire's definition of oppression, the importance and meaning of Fromm's terminology needs to be clarified. Fromm's psychological types represent one of the three pillars (Hegel and Marx being the other two) supporting Freire's work and the one I examine in this paper.

To Freire, humans represent the central role in what Erich Fromm refers to as a biophilic orientation to life, as contrasted to one of necrophilism. Fromm, in his example of Spanish philosopher, Unamuno's response to one General Millan Astray's (1964, 37) motto, "Viva la muerte!" (Long live death!), closely attaches evil to the love of death and builds upon a distinction between those who love death and those who love life. "The person with the necrophilous orientation is one," states Fromm,

> who is attracted to and fascinated by all that is not alive, all that is dead: corpses, decay, feces, dirt. Necrophiles are those people who love to talk about sickness, about burials, about death. They come to life precisely when they can talk about death.... The necrophilous dwell in the past, never in the future ... loves force ... all that is mechanical ... control ... order ... darkness and night.... Necrophilia constitutes a fundamental orientation; it is the one answer to life which is in complete opposition to life; it is the most morbid and the most dangerous among the orientations to life of which man is capable. It is the true perversion: while being alive, not life but death is loved; not growth but destruction. (1964, 38-39)

Biophilia, on the other hand,

> is a tendency to preserve life, and to fight death, it represents only one aspect of the drive toward life. The other aspect is a more positive one; living substance has the tendency to integrate and to unite; it tends to fuse with different and opposite entities, and to grow in a structural way. Unification and integrated growth are characteristic of all life processes, not only as far as

cells are concerned, but also with regard to feeling and thinking. (1964, 39-40)

A biophilic personality, then, according to Fromm, concentrates on being productive, constructive, and finding magnetism in the new, the adventurous, the wonderful, as well as wholeness, and teaching by example.

How do these two orientations play out in Freire's work? Freire, in his attention to love and oppression, suggests that:

> Sadistic love is a perverted love—a love of death, not of life. One of the characteristics of the oppressor consciousness and its necrophilic view of the world is thus sadism. As the oppressor consciousness, in order to dominate, tries to deter the drive to search, the restlessness, and the creative power which characterizes life, it kills life. More and more, the oppressors are using science and technology as unquestionably powerful instruments for their purpose: the maintenance of the oppressive order through manipulation and oppression. The oppressed, as objects, as "things," have no purposes except those their oppressors prescribe for them. (1985, 46)

While Freire directs his commentary toward humans, thus encouraging them to understand the nature of their behaviors toward one another, he continues, through his teleological, anthropocentric focus, to contain an understanding of biophilia, thus limiting the field of possibilities. In *Letters to Christina*, Freire, briefly, moves his bio/necrophilic discussion deliberately beyond humans; but, even then, he does so only in the most general terms *in relation to* humans and *as an end goal of* "permanent liberation":

> In any case, I do not believe that the fundamental core of life, freedom and the fear of losing it, will ever be suppressed. Threatened, yes: a threat to life understood in the broadest sense as not just human life. Life implies freedom as movement and constant search; it also implies caring for freedom and fearing the loss of it. Freedom and the fear of losing it become melded in the deepest core indispensable to life, that of communication. In this respect, a regrettable contradiction is adopting a progressive, revolutionary discourse and a life-negating

practice. Such practice is polluting the air, water, fields, and forests. It destroys trees and threatens animals and birds. (1996, 186)

Freire even goes on to say that the dream of building a better world (wresting it away from necrophilics?) involves our engagement in

> a struggle strongly rooted in ethics. It is a process of struggle against all violence, including violence aimed at trees, rivers, fish, mountains, cities, and the physical manifestations of cultural and historic memory. It is a process of combating violence against the weak, the defenseless, the attacked minority, and the discriminated against, regardless of the reason. (1996, 187)

Even though Freire evidences awareness of human misuse of the natural world, certainly a subject difficult to avoid in the last twenty to thirty years, I wonder, given the anthropocentric grounding of his argument, whether Freire would consider current overuse of the environment for human betterment and consumption an act of violence, even if no human struggle existed. It is precisely this point which needs to be enlarged upon to speak to a truly biophilic concern, rather than an exclusively anthropocentric one.

In 1974, after thinking about who would "speak" for land that was up for development, Professor Christopher D. Stone, a law professor at University of Southern California Law Center, raised the question, "should trees have standing," in an essay of the same title (Stone 1974). In this essay, which encouraged the three dissenting votes in a landmark case (seven votes total, four non-dissenting), when the federal Supreme Court ruled on the "rights" of the natural environment, Stone argued a position that speaks to the concept of anthropocentrism and, I would like to suggest, oppression:

> None of the natural objects [rivers, trees, birds, etc.], whether held in common or situated on private land, has any of the three criteria of a rights-holder. They have no standing in their own right; their unique damages do not count in determining outcome; and they are not the beneficiaries of awards. In such fashion, these objects have traditionally been regarded by the common law, and even by all but the most re-

cent legislation, as objects for man to conquer and master and use—in such a way as the law once looked upon "man's" relationships to African Negroes. Even where special measures have been taken to conserve them, as by seasons on game and limits on timber cutting, the dominant motive has been to conserve them *for us*— for the greatest good of the greatest number of human beings. Conservationists, so far as I am aware, are generally reluctant to maintain otherwise. As the name implies, they want to conserve and guarantee *our* consumption and *our* enjoyment of these other living things. In their own right, natural objects have counted for little.... (1974, 16)

While lengthy, I cite this passage to bring attention to the inherent relationship between oppression and anthropocentrism. In comparing the position of natural objects to that of slaves, neither having "standing" to represent themselves and the wrongs done to them, Stone, from a legal and ethical perspective, does more than suggest the object status of the natural world; he deliberately states the slave status of natural objects to humans. *As objects or things, they can be used and manipulated for any purpose humans envision.* This is Freire's definition of oppression.

Granting the influence of Fromm's conceptions of biophilia and necrophilia on Freire's development and contextualizing his philosophical birth within a specific time period might explain some of Freire's disinclination to address ecological issues. However, reinstated in Brazil (one need only think of the decimation of the Amazon rain forest), after much travel in the United States and in countries where ecological devastation was and is all too apparent, it becomes more difficult to understand his silence concerning two immediately evident relationships: the relationship between oppression and human use of the natural habitat for production of consumer goods or the stripping away of traditional lands from indigenous peoples for production of consumer goods; certainly a condition which directly supports, at the very least, cultural genocide, a state Freire would recognize as oppressed. Freire's paucity of comment about ecological concerns, well into the 1990s, continued, however, to center on humans and the development of political awareness, conscientization:

the ecologists emerged to defend the environment in a human and poetic language. By defending the environment, they are defending everyone. I used to say, *"Sooner or later, they will overcome the dormant politics inherent in their movement"* (1985, 193-194; emphasis added),

and human superiority to animals:

Men can fulfill the necessary condition of being *with* the world because they are able to gain objective distance from it. Without this objectification, whereby man also objectifies himself, man would be limited to being *in* the world, lacking both self-knowledge and knowledge of the world.

Unlike men, animals are simply *in* the world, incapable of objectifying either themselves or the world ... submerged in life with no possibility of emerging from it, adjusted and adhering to reality. Men, on the contrary, who can sever this adherence and transcend mere being in the world, add to the life they have the existence which they make. To exist is thus a mode of life that is proper to the being who is capable of transforming, of producing, of deciding, of creating, and of communicating himself. (1985, 68)

And, in a point he stresses in many of his writings, Freire recites Marx's comparison of human and animal labor:

Marx says that no bee can be compared to even the most "modest" of human workers. Even before producing an object a human being is capable of idealizing it. Even before working, the human worker has the work blueprinted in his or her head. (1996, 186)

The conception, idealization and the ability to produce and object, then, supremicizes even the most modest worker, perpetuating a usury model of all other living beings in relationship to humans. Furthermore, conscientization via reflection, both of which are exclusively human, allow the person to

connect facts and problems and to understand the connections between hunger and food production, food production and agrarian reform, agrarian reform and reactions against it, hunger and economic policy, hunger and violence and hunger as violence, hunger and the conscious vote for progressive politicians and parties,

hunger and voting against reactionary politicians and parties, whose discourse may·be deceptively progressive.... It is clear that overcoming hunger will require the creation of jobs both in the countryside and in urban areas, which in turn requires agrarian reform. (Freire 1996, 183)

But conscientization does not, apparently, allow the same person to understand the connections between hunger and removal of traditional lands; hunger and overpopulation; hunger, overpopulation and agrarian reform; or hunger, cultural destruction, agrarian reform, and production.

Frank Margonis, in an interesting discussion of the Enlightenment underpinnings of Freire's philosophy and educational reforms, suggests that Freire cannot avoid an anthropocentric perspective, in that he thinks through the values of, among others, Karl Marx, Adam Smith, and John Locke. Briefly, the tradition they represent, that Freire continued to emphasize, includes the following ideas: the Earth as a resource for human labor, that the Earth has no value in and of itself, that labor creates value, that labor produces human growth, that humans alone can conceive of and cooperate to create/produce a product (1999).

Freire, in his own acknowledgment of influences, preferences a dialectical format referencing Hegel as his model. Certainly, much of Freire's argument in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* depends upon the examination of what appear to be opposites: freedom/slavery; oppressor/oppressed; biophily/necrophily, to name a few. Freire's work, however, provides more identifiable renderings of Marx's inverted restructuring of Hegel's dialectic. Briefly, because the difference in dialectical emphases better explains one of Freire's primary philosophical footholds, praxis, I offer a simple explanation of each. Marx's dialectic moves toward a synthesis of opposites that results in a concrete resolution inducing action, unlike an Hegelian synthesis that leads to further abstraction and better understanding of reason (Truth/Nature), of which "we find traces ... in each of the particular provinces and phases of the natural and the spiritual world" (Hegel 1968, 150). Additionally, though Hegel represents a continuation of the Enlightenment tradition in his works, I think it important to note that the natural world played a distinctive role

in its reflection of Truth, which needed to be reflected in the synthesis of any dialectic. It is partially in this light that the biophilic/necrophilic dialectic Freire posits, does not work, albeit his intent toward an ideal, utopia via conscientization, echoes Hegel's search for perfect reason.

I would suggest that only in a very temporal sense do biophily and necrophily work as true opposites. Freire, after Fromm, sets them up as contradictory ·psychological types, then nudges that contradiction into a political argument, praxis via Marx, not dialectic via Hegel, thus eliminating the necessity of the natural world. Freire assigns one, biophily, characteristics of actions good, true, loving and ethical, in that ethical represents a struggle against all violence. Necrophily, on the other hand, signifies all actions of an evil, sadistic, destructive, and oppressive nature. The only ethic necrophily has to offer, one suspects, is an ethic which recommends the use of violence at every juncture. Consequently, as Freire connects freedom with biophily and oppression with necrophily, his argument becomes one that denies the possibility of synthesis. In fact, it demands a choice in favor of *either* one *or* the other.

Indeed, when Freire speaks strictly in favor of the biophilic personality, he packs the deck, so to speak. In other words, he does not strive to identify the positive (life) in the negative (death), which results in a synthesis, a primary requirement of an Hegelian dialectic, neither does he move toward a Marxian synthesis, wherein concrete transformation occurs as a consequence of synthesis. Freire, instead, presents his audience with a *choice* between life in Utopia or Dystopia-Utopia, in this case, being the realization of a fully humanized world, in which conscientization never ends. I would suggest that even praxis has been secunded, for who would admit to desiring anything but Utopia? For Hegel, a "one-sided proposition therefore can never even give expression to a speculative truth" (1968, 154). Neither does Freire's biophily/necrophily opposition of terms allow, as Hegel states, "that life, as life, involves the germ of death, and that the finite, being radically self-contradictory, involves its own self-suppression" (1968, 148). Freire, in promoting a philosophy that rejects the interaction, or necessary synergy, between life

and death—even as psychological categories—produces an impossible understanding of life.

Freire's insistence on separating humans from Earth and the cycles that ensure reinvigoration, cycles that must include death, both metaphorically and actually, makes it virtually impossible for him to see the act of oppression through any lens but that of anthropocentrism. Further, his strong Catholic faith, which Freire entwines with Marx and Marxist thought (1996, 87), produces further magnification of that lens. In stating this, I make no suggestion that Freire ought to have made other choices.

I do, however, want to make two points: the necessity and difficulty of reflecting on knowledge/belief systems and how those systems, through the metaphorical nature of language, act as conceptual guidance systems for worldviews; and second, how such a belief system, in this case Catholicism, augments and encourages a human-centered bias, replete as it is with an Edenic paradise reprised as heaven, a hierarchical organization of life which elevates "Man" to a position subordinate only to angels and God, and an understanding that the world was created for "Man's" use. In fact, Freire echoes the Biblical Adam when he states:

> To exist humanly, is to *name* the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new *naming*" (1974, 76).

With this continual emphasis on the naming of and acting upon the world, tradition and non-progressive ways of understanding and engaging in life stand little chance of being deemed worthwhile. Freire's pedagogy and philosophical stance, then, implicitly assumes a monistic ethical stance: free oppressed humans via conscientization and all else will follow. Within such this stance, based as it is on a binary structure that encourages static categories via oppositionals, little argument can be made regarding human oppression of the natural environment. If, however, we consider viewing oppression through an ecological lens, we may, given Stone's argument for environmental standing and rights, come to a different understanding and ethical stance.

Stone identifies an ethical dimension to his argument of standing and rights for natural objects, which he expands upon in his book, *Earth and Other Ethics* (1987). As well as moving in a direction which de-centers humans, Stone's ethic calls for moral pluralism, as opposed to an ethic of monism and its sister, determinate.

Monism and determinate, for Stone,

> means that the enterprise is conceived as aiming to produce, and to defend against all rivals, *a single coherent and complete set of principles capable of governing all moral quandaries.* By determinate, I mean that *the ambition of that one framework is to yield for each quandary one right answer.* (1987, 116; emphasis added)

Pluralism, on the other hand, and more specifically, moral pluralism,

> invites us to conceive *moral activities as partitioned into several distinct frameworks, each governed by distinct principles and logical texture....* The frameworks for each of these analyses are distinguishable in their respective capacities to produce a single right (or wrong) answer, and in the strictness of the judgments they render. *In some domains we can speak in terms of what is mandatory. In other domains ... what is simply "more welcome."* (1987, 14-15; emphasis added)

For Stone, what is simply "more welcome," is Aldo Leopold's call for the development of a land ethic (Leopold 1966), as well as our consideration of arguments based on something other than human-centered interests, rights, and utility. These arguments, if eliminated, or minimized, remove the anthropocentric perspective of Freire's pedagogy but, in doing so, they also jeopardize the pedagogy entire.

To de-center humans is a discomforting thought, at best, for most of us. But, as C. A. Bowers states:

> If we can overcome the bias of Western humanism that justifies the rights of humans to dominate nature on the grounds that only humans possess intelligence, perhaps we can begin to understand that ecological systems, as [Gregory] Bateson suggests, are the unit of intelligence—just as they are the unit of survival (1997, 183).

The importance of what Bowers stresses lies in understanding what we emphasize through our everyday speech and metaphor. Within them we can see reflections of a human-centered perspective that de-emphasizes *any* necessity of situating humans

within biotic communities. As has been argued elsewhere (Bowers 1993; Weiler 1996; Margonis 1999), the Western humanist stance embedded in Freire's language (true/false word, subject/object, un/authentic forms of existence/thought, action/reflection/action, un/oppressed, dominated/liberation, static/transformation, and so forth), includes cultural assumptions that not only deny concerns ecological but also the very humanity Freire wishes to address, members of nonwestern cultures. In fact, Freire's perspective,

> delegitimates the forms of knowledge within the dominant culture that are ecologically responsive ... as well as the myriad forms of knowledge of groups that have evolved habitat based cultures—like the Hopi, the Australian aborigines, and the others. Freire's insistence that all knowledge be made explicit and judged in terms of the existential time frame of an individual (or the group, if dialogue is possible) leads to viewing traditions as a source of domination.... Traditions cannot be adequately understood in the binary categories Freire uses; nor is there in his system any way of assessing the worth of traditions overturned as his idealized individual continually renames the world. Our understanding of tradition (as opposed to the static image of the past that should more properly be called "traditionalism") *is critical to understanding how to live in an interdependent relationship with the habitat.* (Bowers 1993, 109; emphasis added]

Or, as Frank Margonis (1999) states it:

> Freire conceives of an educational program that involves bringing students around to the empirical and causal styles of thought which have become hegemonic in Europe and the United States. Freire's deficit descriptions of his student cultures allow little consideration of what might be lost in the process. When he presents less aggressive ways of thinking as "magical" and "submerged," Freire does not investigate the power and profundity of his students' ways of thinking and living. When, for instance, Navajo people speak of "walking in beauty," they are indeed describing a standard of thinking and acting that would appear docile and passive

from Freire's perspective, for the aim is less to control nature than to maintain one's appropriate place in relation to the earth and to the people in one's life. Grand efforts to control nature are often viewed as unwise and inappropriate extensions of human authority. (pp. 10-11)

Where, in the world of ongoing conscientization, is an ethic or tradition that has a language that speaks to these peoples and the lands of which they consider themselves children? Instead, within the anthropocentric perspective Freire values, humans reside in positions of managers, stewards, owners, and *namers.*

Standing well outside an anthropocentric perspective, anthropologist Gregory Bateson identified the idea of difference as an event that triggered difference. According to Bateson, being able to identify a significant difference constitutes an idea and a difference which occurs across time constitutes change (Bateson 1972). Thus, he defined and understood mind as an ecology—as the dynamic and relational interaction between humans and other life. His experiential expression of difference, that difference can be recognized *while being* experienced, helped Bateson to define the dynamism inherent in his fusion of mind and Nature. What, though, of Freire and his dialectic?

Freire also interested himself in difference, as represented in dialectical opposites; in the case of this discussion, the opposites of biophily and necrophily. However, he did not, at least in this specific case, use difference to understand and create unity; instead, Freire used difference to catapult life, a piece of the whole, to a position of eminence. And, as Freire admitted to his anthropocentric outlook, he spoke of life as related to humans and, *through* humans, to other living beings. It is, as a consequence, no great stretch to perceive Freire's positioning of humans as eminent. In focusing on humans specifically and intentionally (Freire 1998), Freire argued, erroneously, that to improve the oppressive human condition would, as an offshoot, improve environmental problems. He also, more injuriously, perpetuated the idea that humans reside outside any ecology, thus firmly seating humans in the oppressor's throne.

With all due respect to Paulo Freire and his pedagogical stance against oppression and violence, I

question his pedagogy, stated as biophilic, which ignores what might be considered, in Batesian terms, a joint epistemology of many nonwestern peoples and their traditional lands. This, I believe, constitutes oppression. Consequently, we need to do more than simply "re-invent" Freire.

As educators, we need to extend the reaches of an ecologically sound philosophy to include all human interactions within an environmental context. To continue our current lifestyles in either ignorance or reluctance exposes our adherence to a truly necrophilic lifestyle and reveals humans as oppressors of *all* other forms of life. Is this hidden curriculum and its embedded monistic ethic what educators wish to teach their students? If, however, we wish to move toward an ecologically sound philosophy, we must consider the "voice" of the oppressed; in this case, the environment and its human and non-human inhabitants, and we must, until we change perspectives, understand that we act as oppressors who see other living organisms as either without value or as material resources, rather than as systems with complex modes of interaction without which we cannot live.

What, however does this mean for those of us in education? We might, from the earliest grades on, develop curricula that actively de-center humans and engage in conversations that acknowledge complexity and interaction. In Freirian terms, we need to "complexitize" our relationship to the natural world and to ourselves as strictly namers, transformers and producers. We need to consider the idea of mind and intelligence as connected and interactive with the "outside" as well as the individual "inside." We might understand better how what we do emphasizes specific ways of thinking about ourselves in relation to other life and bring that understanding into the classroom. Perhaps attention to mind as ecology, as Bateson envisioned it, and an ethic of plurality, as Stone suggests, would open new possibilities for connection and make visible glimpses of a whole. As well, a continued discussion of rights and standing for natural objects, with the addition of liability constitutes, at a global level, how economics, justice, and political platforms influence and affect entire systems—ecological, cultural, and educational. A focus on language, especially how metaphors act as cultur-

ally specific conceptual organizers, emphasizing some ideas while de-emphasizing others (conferring value), can provide vital and necessary insights into tacit cultural assumptions, as George Lakoff (1997, 1996, 1995, 1993) and Lakoff and Johnson suggest (1999, 1980). Further, an exploration of explicit and implicit knowledge and how we come to constitute knowledge may lend understanding to both epistemological and ontological concerns.

Education, according to Bowers, needs to consider humans and other forms of life as equal participants in cultural mythopoetic narratives; further, he believes that attention needs to be paid to transgenerational knowledge; that technologies must reflect ecological design and enhance community interaction and, finally, that survival of community depends on ecological survival (Bowers 1997). For Gregory Bateson,
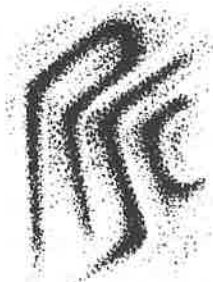
> Perhaps a curriculum is like a hand in that every piece and component of what they would call a curriculum is really related ideally to the other components as fingers are related to each other and to the whole hand. In other words, it is nonsense except as sort of a Faustian shortcut to learn large quantities of listed material unless the learning of those lists can be developed into some sort of organic whole. (1991, 311)

I believe, as educators and not taxonomists, asking ourselves the question, "what is our whole," provides the core of an exceptionally challenging educational platform for the 21st century, ecologically, philosophically, and pedagogically. In adopting it, we must also willingly accept the complexity and dynamism that answering such a question demands of us, always keeping in mind Bateson's concept that "the mental characteristics of the system are *immanent, not in some part, but in the system as a whole*" (Bateson 1972, 316; emphasis added).

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Krishnamurti and Holistic Education

John (Jack) P. Miller

The life, educational philosophy, and influence of Krishnamurti

The purpose of education is not to produce mere scholars, technicians and job hunters, but integrated men and women who are free of fear; for only between such human beings can there be enduring peace. (J. Krishnamurti)

These words written by Krishnamurti a half century ago still have relevance in today's world.

Given that so many of our leaders today argue that education should train individuals so they can compete in the global economy, Krishnamurti's insights are worth exploring. The first part of this paper will briefly outline Krishnamurti's life and then I will examine some of his principal ideas with regard to holistic education.

J. Krishnamurti's Life

Krishnamurti was born in India in 1895 where he was the eighth child born in a Bhramin family. His mother to whom he felt very close died when he was ten; after her death he relied on his younger brother, Nityanada, for guidance and support.

In 1909 at the age of 14 Krishnamurti was identified by one of the leaders of the Theosophical Society, Charles Leadbeater, as a potential spiritual leader. As a result Krishnamurti and his brother, Nitya, were brought onto the society's grounds in Madras, India, to be educated. Annie Besant, one of the leaders of the Theosophical movement became Krishnamurti's guardian and in some ways a mother-like figure to him. Besant and Leadbeater felt that Krishnamurti was a messiah and this offended many people in the Theosophical movement. One of those who left the society around this time was Rudolf Steiner who formed the Anthroposophical movement and Waldorf education. Krishnamurti and his brother were moved to England in 1912 where they stayed for ten years and were educated there. They were pretty

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much kept in isolation in the English countryside and had little contact with the outside world.

Around 1922 he began speaking around the world and fulfilling the vision that the Theosophical Society had for him. In 1925 his brother, Nitya died of tuberculosis and his death affected Krishnamurti deeply. In 1929 he renounced his connection with the Theosophical society. He had become uncomfortable with his role as "messiah" and denied that his word should be taken as scripture. Krishnamurti was always critical of dogma and particularly dogmatic religion. In a statement in 1929 he said, "I maintain that truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by an sect" (cited in Blau 1995, 85).

Krishnamurti still traveled and talked around the world. When he was in India he stayed at Vasanta Vihar, which remains today the headquarters of the Krishnamurti Foundation. His talks became more and more concise without the rhetoric of the Theosophical years. This then was the pattern for the rest of his life: to teach about the "pathless land" and to encourage people seek freedom from conditioning. Krishnamurti was also interested in education and as a result schools began to spring up in India, England, and the United States. One of the most famous is the school in Brockwood Park, England, which was started in 1969 and recently celebrated its 30th anniversary with a conference on holistic education.

Krishnamurti died in 1986. He published many books which are often based on his talks and dialogues.

Education and the Significance of Life

In my view, Krishnamurti's clearest statement on education is his book *Education and the Significance of Life,* which was published in 1953. This book offers an approach to teaching and learning that is deeply holistic. The word *holistic* was not in use when he wrote this book; instead Krishnamurti uses the word *integrated.* Two other books on education by Krishnamurti are *Beginnings of Learning* (1978) and *On Education* (1974). These books contains talks and dialogues with students at the Brockwood Park School and the Rishi Valley School in India.

I would like now to turn to some of the central themes in Krishanmurti's work that are so relevant to holistic education today.

The Problem of Fragmentation

Krishnamurti (1953) felt that fragmentation was a central problem in modern life.

He stated:

> In our present civilization we have divided life into so many departments that education has very little meaning except in learning a particular technique or profession. Instead of awakening the integrated intelligence of the individual, education is encouraging him to conform to a pattern and so is hindering his comprehension of himself as a total process. To attempt to solve the many problems of existence at their respective levels, separated as they are into various categories, indicates an utter lack of comprehension. (p.12)

The problem of fragmentation and compartmentalization are still with us more than 50 years after he wrote these words. Our inability to see relationships and interconnectedness has led to our environmental woes. However, the horrendous condition of our air and water has forced us to examine the relationship between economic activity and the biosphere. In short, our environmental problems have made us look at life from a more interdependent perspective. The problem of fragmentation has also stimulated holistic approaches to so many aspects of life today including education, health, and even politics (Williamson 1997).

The fragmentation also lies within ourselves. Krishnamurti (1953) saw that education tends to focus almost solely on the intellect, which manifests itself as "cunning minds caught up in explanations" (p. 63). Today we still educate the head but ignore the body, soul, and spirit. In the Western world particularly there is deep separation between head and heart. Krishnamurti wrote that "we are all brains, and no heart" (1953, 78).

The Aims of Education

If the problem is fragmentation, what then should be the purpose of education? Krishnamurti (1953) stated: "The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of

dealing with life as a whole."(p. 24) This ability to see life as whole involves what Krishnamurti calls intelligence. In his words "Intelligence is the capacity to perceive the essential that *what is*; and to awaken this capacity, in oneself and in others, is education" (p. 14). Perceiving *what is* means not being caught up in ideals or models that get in the way of being in the present moment. Thus education should not be embedded in ideology. Instead, its goal should be freedom where the individual is no longer confined by cultural conditioning but is genuinely a free and creative person. Again in Krishnamurti's words,

> Education in the true sense is helping the individual to be mature and free, to flower greatly in love and goodness. That is what we should be interested in, and not in shaping the child according to some idealistic pattern. (1953, 23)

Self-knowledge, or "awareness of one's total psychological process" was another important aim for Krishnamurti. He believed that the student should "observe and understand his own self-projected values" and the conditioning influences that have influenced the student. The student learns to see himself or herself clearly and his or her relationship to others and the surrounding environment.

Closely related to development of intelligence and self-knowledge is the realization of wisdom. For Krishnamurti (1953) "wisdom comes from the abnegation of self" (p. 64) When we are rooted in competition and greed, the self dominates. When we let go of the notion of me and mine and abide in love, wisdom arises naturally. Krishnamurti spoke frequently of the importance of love and compassion as he feels love and intelligence should be closely connected. He stated "to understand our responsibility, there must be love in our hearts, not mere learning and knowledge" (1953, 78).

Finally, Krishnamurti felt that education should help shape a new set of values. It should not just reinforce conformity and competition that exist in society but help in the transformation where freedom, creativity, and peace are more deeply respected and experienced in daily life.

Principles of Learning

How can these goals be achieved? First, we have to give up the educator's obsession with technique.

Krishnamurti (1953) stated: "Present-day education is a complete failure because it has over-emphasized technique. In over-emphasizing technique we destroy man" (p. 18). His words still apply today, perhaps even more so. The present day obsession with accountability and standards is just another form of deadening technique. Of course, educators must be accountable but the almost pathological emphasis on comparing tests scores between individuals, schools, and countries is actually interfering with the learning process. School has become a game where the emphasis is on teaching to the test. Alfie Kohn (1993) has done research in this area and this research indicates that the more we test students, the less they learn. In the present environment fear tends to predominate rather than risk-taking, which is one of the most important elements in significant learning.

Educational reform has also tended to emphasize technique with regard to curriculum and instruction. Unfortunately, even those who call themselves holistic educators can fall into this trap and advocate a particularly technique such as cooperative learning, without linking the teaching technique to a larger context of holism. It should be noted that Krishnamurti felt that education should offer information and technical training but within the context of what he calls an "integrated outlook."

Krishnamurti was also critical of attempts to control children and to use rewards and punishments. The reason for this is straightforward: How can the student become truly free, if is he or she has to function in an environment of compulsion? Instead of discipline and compulsion, there should be an atmosphere of mutual affection and respect. This sense of respect must start with the teacher's respect for the student that the student must sense and feel in the classroom. Mutual respect arises in atmosphere where there is no fear. In Krishnamurti's (1953) words:

> The right kind of education must take into consideration this question of fear, because fear warps our whole outlook on life. To be without fear is the beginning of wisdom, and only the right kind of education can bring about the freedom from fear in which alone there is deep and creative intelligence. (p. 34)

When rewards and punishments are used, they undermine the development of intelligence. In an environment of rewards and punishments education becomes a game where students try to please the teacher. Krishnamurti pointed out that an education built on punishment and rewards supports a "social structure which is competitive, antagonistic and ruthless." (p. 35) Alfie Kohn's research (1993) support Krishnamurti's insight. His research indicates that rewards and punishments, including grades, actually interfere with student learning. In short , the student learns more in an environment where there is not an emphasis on rewards and punishments. For example, Kohn cites several studies where students who were not rewarded with money or candy did better on tasks than those who were rewarded (p. 43). This finding held true for elementary school children as well university students. For example, in one study of high school students some students were rewarded for tasks related to memory and creativity and some were not. The students who were not rewarded performed significantly better on the tasks.

Krishnamurti felt the traditional religious education was problematic because it was based on fear and rewards. It also discouraged inquiry into the nature of things, which is at the heart of true education. At one point he (1953) stated:

> True religious education is to help the child to be intelligently aware, to discern for himself the temporary and the real, and to have a disinterested approach to life; and would it not have more meaning to begin each day at home or at school with a serious thought, or with a reading that has depth and significance rather than mumble some oft-repeated words or phrases? (p. 40)

Krishnamurti's vision of education is different than that of Rudolf Steiner who does recommend that the day begin with "oft-repeated" words and phrases. Although I believe that Steiner and Krishnamurti shared the same aims for education—that is the development of the free and integrated person—their approaches to pedagogy were quite different. Steiner outlined a very detailed curriculum for every stage of the child's development. Krishnamurti did not; instead, he outlined certain general principles for educators to follow. While Steiner had specific

prescriptions for almost every aspect of life, Krishnamurti avoided such prescriptions because he felt it might result in some kind of inflexible dogma that undermines the freedom of the individual.

The School

Krishnamurti argued that schools should be small. Large institutions by their very nature cannot be responsive to the needs of children. Again his insights are supported by the research. This research indicates that in small schools students participate more in the life of the school and actually do better in areas such as writing, dramatics and music (Barker and Gump 1964; Wicker and Baird 1969). Despite this research schools districts in North America over the past 20 years have tended to close small community-based schools and build larger institutions because they are supposedly more cost efficient. Yet there is also research which indicates that small schools can educate children at a lower cost (Sher 1977). For example in Vermont it was found that six of the top ten schools in percentage of graduates entering college were small schools (fewer than 60 in the graduating class) and that they were able to produce these results with operating costs, on a per pupil basis, of $225 less than the large schools.

Krishnamurti also felt the classes should be small. There has been recognition of this fact by some educational reformers and smaller class sizes have been mandated in various in North America jurisdictions (e.g., California), particularly at the primary level.

Another element that Krishnamurit felt was important is a committed staff. He argued that teachers should be enthusiastic in their work and care deeply about the students in the school. The staff should also work together as a whole, which again is easier to do in a small school.

Krishnamurti suggested that teachers meet often as a whole group to make decisions. Decisions should not be made arbitrarily by the principal but by group consensus. The whole life of the teacher should also be addressed. If the teacher is having difficulties at home, Krishnamurti suggested that these problems can discussed at the group meetings so that some form of support can be provided to the teacher. Krishnamurti was sensitive to the problems of teachers and stated that no teacher should be over-

burdened since this will adversely affect the teacher's work.

He also suggested that students be involved in school governance. Krishnamurti argued that student council be formed that includes both teachers and students and deals with problems such as " discipline, cleanliness, and food." Students should actually supervise each other in these matters and thus learn self-government.

The Teacher

Krishnamurti realized that teachers need to be integrated if schools are to achieve the aims he has outlined. The task of the teacher is first to wake up and be aware of his or her own thoughts and feelings. Teachers should examine their own conditioning and its influences on their behavior.

I think another word that we could use here, even though Krishnamurti did not use the term, is *mindfulness*. To be mindful is to be present in the moment so that we can see clearly and not be lost in our thoughts, habits, and projections. Krishnamurti (1974) often talked about the importance of attention.

> When you pay attention, you see things much more clearly. You hear the bird singing much more distinctly. You differentiate between various sounds. When you look at a tree with a great deal of attention, you see the whole beauty of the tree. You see leaves, the branch, you see the wind playing with it. When you pay attention, you see extraordinarily clearly…. Attention is very important, in the class, as well as when you are outside, when you are eating, when you are walking. Attention is an extraordinary thing. (p. 16)

In my own work with teachers I introduce them to mindfulness in my classes. I encourage them to be mindful in their lives for just a few minutes each day when they are shaving, preparing a meal, washing the dishes, or folding the laundry. It is usually easier to start with something simple and then apply the practice to more complex situations like the classroom.

One of the ways we can be mindful is to be aware of eye contact. Emerson, in talking to teachers, said "do not chide, do not snarl, but govern by the eye."

Rachael Kessler (1991) has also written about the importance of eye contact in classrooms:

> *Eye contact* is crucial. It establishes not only empowerment, but also connection and caring on an individual basis. Eye contact reflects confidence, and students respond to the inner strength of a teacher who is comfortable communicating this way. (p. 9)

Mindfulness, or attention, can gradually transform a classroom into a softer space. A teacher in one of my classes comments on the impact of being more mindful:

> As a teacher, I have become more aware of my students and their feelings in the class. Instead of rushing through the day's events, I take the time to enjoy our day's experiences and opportune moments. The students have commented that I seem happier. I do tend to laugh more and I think it is because I am more aware, alert and "present," instead of thinking about what I still need to do. (Miller 1995, 22)

Mindfulness is a way then that we can bring Krishnamurti's vision into practice.

For Krishnamurti, the teacher should also be open and vulnerable. Emerson (1990) wrote the following about a preacher but I think we could apply his thoughts to teachers as well.

> He had lived in vain. He had not one word intimating that he had laughed or wept, was married or in love, had been commanded, or cheated, or chagrined. If he had ever lived and acted, we were none the wiser for it. The capital secret of his profession, namely, to convert life into truth, he had not learned. (p. 116)

Vulnerability does not mean that teachers should continually be self-disclosing. It means, however, that when it seems appropriate teachers can share something of themselves. Rachael Kessler (1991) offers a good example of this process:

> One night during my first year of teaching there was a blazing fire in my community, the roads were closed, and I was unable to get home to my family. I was able to contact them and know that they were safe, but I spent the night in town and came in to teach that morning. I felt so disconnected, worried, confused, and disoriented that I knew I couldn't be present without telling

my students about the fire. I started the class by asking for their help: "You kids have all grown up here in California with fires, floods, earthquakes. This is new to me. How have you coped with disasters in your life?" This class was a turning point for that group. Previously reticent about their personal lives, and feeling. They jumped into this one with gusto. My authentic need, my vulnerability and a very hot topic had brought them to life. (p. 13)

At appropriate moments, then, as teachers we can open ourselves to our students. In these moments students begin to see us as human beings and not just as "the teacher."

Krishnamurti also refers to spontaneity as an important element in teaching. He states (1953), "Intelligence is the spontaneous perception which makes a man strong and free."(p. 103) Emerson held a similar view when he wrote:

All good conversation, manners, and action, come from a spontaneity which forgets usages and makes the moment great. Nature hates calculators; her methods are salutatory and impulsive.... (1990, pp.237-238)

I would add to Emerson's list of "conversation, manners and action" education which has often been forced into rigid models including outcome-based education where there is little opportunity for spontaneous action. Ideally, there should be a balance between planned action and the spontaneous.

The student's inner life thrives in a climate where spontaneity is present and it withers in an environment which is overplanned and controlled. In education we give room for the spontaneous when we talk of the "teachable moment." In the teachable moment the teacher moves away from the lesson plan and follows his or her intuition in working with the students. Kessler's exploring her feelings about the fire was a good example of the teachable moment.

Krishnamurti believed that teaching is not just a job but a "way of life." In some way the teacher should feel called to the profession. The teacher feels deep satisfaction in being with children and in some manner assisting in their growth and development. Krishnamurti (1953) comments at one point: "One teaches because one wants the child to be rich inwardly" (p. 113). This statement is still important to-

day, as in my view holistic teaching and learning must address the inner life of the child. In various ways the inner life the child should be nurtured rather than repressed as it is in most forms of education. This can be done through the sensitivity of the teacher, the arts, fostering a connection to the earth, and using approaches such as meditation and visualization to actively nourish the inner life. I have developed these themes in other contexts (Miller 1996, 1999).

Finally, Krishnamurti stated (1953) that "truth comes into being when there is a complete cessation. . . When the mind is utterly still ... it is silent..., then there is creation." Educators need then to be comfortable with silence. In my work with teachers, in two courses I require them to do meditation practice, which can be viewed as cultivating silence to see more clearly into the mind. I am very open with regards to which form of meditation they use; I just insist that for five or six weeks they spend part of the day in silence. Often they are skeptical in the beginning and worry about doing it right. Yet I continue to be amazed how after a few weeks they settle into some type of rhythm where they feel more comfortable with the silence. One student described her meditation experience this way:

I concentrated on my breathing patterns and I slipped into my familiar stance. Little entered my mind. I was simply enjoying the sensations of peace and tranquility.... I left the apartment and walked home. I noticed that I was humming and strolling with a light step. Children on their bicycles and little puppies in my path were making me smile. In this remote corner of the world, all was calm. I realized after a while that I was mirroring the image of my surroundings and in a small way, it felt wonderful to be part of the serenity of life.

In essence, I felt that I have participated in an education of introspection, as well as, the experience of interconnectedness with other people, with surrounding nature, and the infinite universe. (Miller 1994, 29-30)

Krishnamurti was careful not to endorse any method or practice and referred to meditation more as self-awareness than as specific technique. I am not concerned with the particular technique that the per-

son uses but more that the person bring awareness to what they are doing.

Krishnamurti Schools

As mentioned earlier there are a few schools that have been founded on the principles described above. Below is a brief description of three of these schools.

The Rajghat Besant School

This school in Varansi, India, is a residential coeducational school with about 350 students ranging in age from 6 to 18. The students reside in 12 different houses. There are about 50 teachers and half of these live in the houses as houseparents. Besides the academic program, there are also extra-curricular activities including sports, yoga, gymnastics, art, music, dance, gardening, and working with computers. The aims of the school include:

- Helping cultivate all aspects of the child— physical, intellectual, emotional and aesthetic with a holistic development of all the faculties
- Motivating children without punishment or reward and without encouraging competition
- Not conditioning the mind of the child in any belief, whether religious, social, or cultural
- Encouraging enquiry with an open mind and a respect for dissent.
- Inculcating a love of Nature and a respect for all life.

Exams are not used in grades 2 to 7; however, they are given in the higher grades because they are required for admission to the university.

Brockwood Park School

This secondary school which is about an hour's drive from London, England, has approximately 60 students aged 13 to 20. The classes are very small and the teacher-student ratio is about 1:5. There is a strong aesthetic flavor to the school which is housed in beautiful large building on 36 acres. Matthew Barnett (1999) reports that "painting, pottery, music and dance are strong and an aura of creative excitement permeates every corridor and classroom" (p. 36). Recently a new junior school, Inwoods, has been established for young children ages 3 to 6 on the grounds. Most of the graduates from the Brockwood

continue on to the university or some form of post-secondary education. The goals of the school include:

- Educating the whole human being
- Exploring what freedom and responsibility are in relationship with other and in modern society
- Seeing the possibility of being free from self-centred action and inner conflict
- Discovering one's own talent and what right livelihood means
- Learning the proper care, use and exercise of the body
- Appreciating the natural world, seeing our place in it and responsibility for it
- Finding the clarity that may come from having a sense of order and valuing silence.

Oak Park School

This school is located in Ojai, California, about 90 miles north of Los Angeles. The campus includes 150 acres and a main building and an arts building. The school serves students from ages 3 to 18. There is a preschool that focuses on children's play and nurturing their social and emotional development through art, storytelling, movement, and outdoor activities. In the elementary school the student studies traditional subjects such as math, science, language arts and social studies, as well as number of other subjects such as art, music, drama, play production, horticulture and cooking, computers, woodworking, library skills, and physical education. Classes are small with approximately 15 students in each class.

The junior high and high school offer a balanced approach to learning. There is emphasis on traditional subjects such as English, math, science, social studies, and foreign languages, as well as an opportunity to reflect on oneself and his or her relationship to others. In the junior high there is an integrated approach to learning as well as an opportunity to travel to Mexico and the American Southwest. In the high school, besides the traditional subjects, students study psychology, philosophy, culture, and interpersonal relations. The focus generally is on inquiry and an investigative approach to learning.

All the Krishnamurti schools have small classes and strive to integrate academic learning into a

broader, more holistic framework. All the schools emphasize the opportunity for student inquiry into important issues—both personal and social.

Conclusion

What is the legacy of Krishnamurti with respect to education? As I have outlined in this paper he provides a powerful holistic vision for education that has influenced educators for the past half-century. He reminds us today that we should not be trapped by our conditioning but use our inherent awareness to free ourselves and our children. We have lived in a century of ideology—capitalism, socialism, communism, and now the more eclectic ideologies of postmodernism. Education has also been rooted in ideology; the current one being the ideology of market-driven education and accountability. Krishnamurti reminds us that the essential task of education is to nurture the development of free, integrated human beings. Of course, no one can totally overcome their conditioning but Krishnamurti calls on us to bring as much awareness and insight as we can to the forces that are influencing us and our behavior.

One of the other major spiritual visionaries of this century was Rudolf Steiner who was much more prescriptive in his vision and the result has been the Waldorf School movement. There are approximately 800 Waldorf schools today, which are all based to a large degree on Steiner's very specific suggestions regarding the school curriculum. Krishnamurti refrained from making such specific curricular recommendations because he was more concerned with the general approach that the teachers and schools take in educating students.

I think both Krishnamurti and Steiner can help us shape an education that is genuinely life affirming and holistic. Much of the Waldorf curriculum and Steiner's visions of child development can provide a framework for the child's education. Yet Krishnamurti reminds us that we should not be dogmatic or doctrinaire in our education and unfortunately some Waldorf educators have become too narrow and rigid in their approach. Yet it should be noted that Waldorf education has so many more schools than the schools linked to Krishnamurti. I believe this is because Steiner provided detailed suggestions for the curriculum that teachers have found helpful.

Some educators find Krishnamurti's vision too broad to provide guidance with regard to curriculum and pedagogy.

Ultimately, I don't we think can ever rely solely on one person for our approach to education. We have many educational geniuses—Socrates, Froebel, Pestalozzi, Tolstoy, Montessori, Steiner, and Krishnamurti—to offer us guidance. Although we may feel connected to one thinker or set of ideas, I believe we need to remember that ultimately we should follow the teacher that exists within each one of us (Marshak 1997). This teacher is the divine spark that lives within each human being and is the principal source for healing the planet and educating our children. Krishnamurti agreed with the Buddha that each of us must be lamp unto ourselves.

What then is the legacy of Krishnamurti for holistic education?

Importance of Self-Awareness. Krishnamurti's goal for education is the development of the individual who is free from conditioning. His focus on freeing ourselves from conditioning provides both teachers and students with the important reminder that we must constantly be aware of what we bring to each situation and learning opportunity. Self-awareness includes an examination of the both our cultural conditioning and our own psychological conditioning.

Avoidance of Dogmatism. His reminder of the dangers of dogmatism and ideologies can help us as educators avoid becoming too rigid in our approach and behavior.

Development of Attention. Krishnamurti keeps reminding us of the importance of approaching teaching and life itself with attention and not letting our minds become clouded with too many thoughts that prevent us from living in the present moment.

Central Role of Integration. Finally, Krishnamurti asks us to view life holistically and to see things in their totality. In this regard he provided an important contribution to the development of holistic education. Krishnamurti wrote in 1953 that "the highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as whole" (p. 24). This goal and much of Krishnamurti's work is still relevant to our work as holistic educators a half century later.

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Review Essay

David E. Purpel

We are seemingly in an era in which public concern for and interest in religion and spirituality is particularly acute and widespread. This phenomenon is not so much reflected in church or synagogue affiliation and attendance but in the proliferation and success of movements, groups, and publications directed at spiritual quest and realization. There is intense interest in New Age spirituality, various modes of meditation, Eastern religions, mysticism, and Native American spiritualities, as well as the availability of any number of popular and imaginative books on the major traditional religions. Moreover, many observers note that in spite of, or perhaps because of, our current prosperity, there is a thirst and hunger for deeper wisdom, clearer direction, and larger meaning. It is therefore not the least bit surprising that this concern has been reflected in a still relatively small but growing literature linking educational and spiritual issues. There are, in addition to the many works with arguably implicit spiritual themes (e.g., Nel Noddings, *The Challenge to Care in Schools*) and a number of recent and compelling books that deal directly and explicitly with religious and spiritual dimensions of education (e.g., *Faith, Hype and Clarity* by Robert Nash and *The Universal Classroom* by James Moffett).

The two books under review also reflect the distinction between the implicit and explicit application of spiritual concepts to educational theorizing. *Dying to Teach* by David J. Blacker is a philosophical work that focuses, not on dying, but on the art of meaningful living. This wise and sensitive work that gently, but forcefully, argues for a life that seeks to transcend self-absorption and materialism speaks not only to teachers, but also to the broader culture. He argues that educators (and by implication, all of us) can achieve immortality by connecting themselves to meaningful endeavors that exist across space and time and by accepting the liberating possibilities of confronting personal death.

> My overall claim is that understanding the activities of individual teachers and learners in their temporal context will place us in a better position to glimpse the inherent richness of education writ large and small. In order to see this, one of the best angles of vision is supplied by immortality, in this study's dual senses: understanding my pedagogical effects on Others and Others' effects on me, and also becoming aware of how the seeking-imparting of wisdom depends upon factors outside of any ostensibly given teaching-learning situation. (Blacker, p. 72)

The mode of analysis is strongly philosophical (with emphasis on Plato and Heidigger), but there are also the shrewd insights of personal experience and thoughtful reflection that make otherwise obscure and opaque formulations vivid and compelling. The author has a knack of actually doing what philosophy is supposed to do, namely to connect the everyday and transient with the extraordinary and the eternal.

The other book, *The Lure of the Transcendent*, is a collection of essays by Dwayne Huebner (edited by

Vicki Hillis and William Pinar) on a variety of topics, with a particular focus on curriculum theory. Prof. Huebner has had a distinguished career in educational theory and has come to be best known for his work on the use of religious and spiritual metaphors. Although the book contains a number of thoughtful articles on a wide assortment of educational issues, I will focus on what I believe (and the title suggests) represents its essential core, namely its treatment of the relationship between spirituality and education.

One of Huebner's early contributions to the field of curriculum theory is his formulation of various "curricular languages" in which he critically examines differing educational discourses (e.g., scientific, political, ethical). Later on, his writing became less descriptive/analytic and more affirmative, albeit still retaining its rigorous analysis.

> I accept Whitehead's statement that "the essence of education is that it be religious." My acceptance of that position carries with it profound consequences. The search which engages us is not for metaphors. If "the essence of education is that it be religious," then the natural language for talking is religious language or language which articulates religious experience. (Huebner, p. 359)

Perhaps the most moving and compelling of all the 35 entries in the book is the essay titled "Education and Spirituality," in which Huebner provides us with a cogent and powerful instance of a spiritually oriented educational discourse. As a framework of his analysis, Huebner has this to say:

> Traditional curriculum concerns need to be addressed—namely the goal or meaning of education, the social and political structures of education, content, teaching, and evaluation. However, an image of education that permits the spiritual to show will depict these dimensions differently. (p. 404)

Acknowledging and affirming his Christian faith, Huebner goes on to address a number of educational issues in spiritual terms. For him the goal of education concerns "the journey of the soul" which is made problematic by a society guided by the "myth of redemptive power." For him, teaching represents a call to exercise a number of responsibilities: "The response to students results in the work of love; to the

call of content, the work of truth; to the call of the institution, the work of justice"(p. 411). His view of educational evaluation is that it ought to serve as a form of providing insight into the spiritual state of things: "Criticism calls attention to what is still beautiful, truthful, transparent for God, filled with the possibilities of transcendence and the promise of life" (p. 413).

Both of these books are powerful and provocative works that help illumine important but elusive (if not neglected) aspects of life and education and we owe the authors our gratitude for their courage in grappling with such profound and troubling matters. Such work reveals, among other things, the extent of certain academic taboos and fears. It is only fairly recently, for example, that some educators have found it safe to explicitly discuss education in moral terms, while discussing education in religious and spiritual language is still hardly in the mainstream of educational theory. There seems to be, for example, a particular aversion in the educational literature to referencing the vastly rich teachings of Western religious traditions. While there are many reverent references by educational theorists to the timeless wisdom of Socrates and Aristotle, there are few, if any, such tributes to the teachings of Moses or Jesus. Contemporary educational theorists are much more likely to invoke Buddhist and Confucian principles than ideas derived from Judaism and Christianity and more likely to quote existential thinkers like Martin Buber and Victor Frankel than theologically oriented thinkers like Abraham Heschel and Reinhold Neibhur.

There are any number of historical, personal, and ideological reasons for this academic phobia and, of course, many difficult and complex issues inherent in the use of religious or spiritual discourse in education. Still, I believe that the rising interest in the infusion of spiritual concerns into educational issues is, on the whole, a healthy and promising development. However, it is a development that has its own share of difficulties. It certainly does not help, for example, to merely invoke the term *spirituality* as some kind of master key to the struggle to provide coherence and meaning to educational policy and practice as when people say such things as "education is a spiritual endeavor" or "what we need is a spiritually groun-

ded education." Moreover, there are a number of highly complex and important issues here, such as basic definitional questions about the meaning of the term itself, questions regarding its relationship to organized religion, political questions involving inclusiveness, and moral issues about its relationship to concerns of social justice. Such issues require careful thought and attention, for the significance of such a discourse is too important to be discounted and too problematic to be romanticized. I want to address a few of these issues in the rest of this essay.

Issues in Spirituality and Education

Like most important concepts, spirituality is an ambiguous, controversial, and elusive term, one that often evokes powerful if not intense, feelings and reactions. It is clear to me, however, after some exploration into this area, that, although there is by no means any consensus about a precise meaning for the term, there are relatively clear boundaries to the term that do create a sphere or cluster of differing but related meanings. My own rough and ready category system of the term involves four general modes of usage for the term:

- Spirituality as energy, that which animates and *inspires*. We speak of a *spirited* debate, or a person who has a great deal of *spirit* (spark or spunk). The term spirituality is also often used in the discourse dealing with the matter of determining the immediate and ultimate source of such energy.
- Spirituality as an expression of the inner self. For those who posit the existence of a source of energy and influence other than environmental (social and cultural) the term *spirit* can be used as a name for that more elusive "inner voice" or "soul."
- Spirituality as a term to describe the wholeness of life and the unity of all natural phenomena. This is in reference to the belief that the whole of the universe is more than the sum of the parts and, for some, that it is grounded in an all encompassing force or entity (sometimes referred to as God or the *Spirit*).
- Spirituality as a term to describe transcendent entities that seem to exist across time and space and beyond personal experience. Many people believe in the reality of any number of permanent and "perennial" ideals and forms like justice, harmony, and meaning.

I surely do not present these formulations as definitive but rather as a heuristic device that might be helpful in grappling with both the term and the phenomena. I also want to make the point that even if these issues might seem to be fanciful, they are far too important to be left entirely to "experts" and specialists. For one thing, those of us who are relatively new to this area need to come to grips with the reality that spirituality, in all its extraordinary diversity and forms, is a vital part of human experience and that it has mattered a great deal to a great number of people for a great number of years, and will very likely continue to do so for a very long time. Furthermore, I believe that spiritual discourses can and do provide us with enormously powerful insights into some of the most basic questions that undergird educational inquiry—questions regarding our origins, our nature, our responsibilities, and our destiny.

Since David Blacker does not present his book in explicitly spiritual terms, he does not provide us with his definition of spirituality. (The term does not even appear in the index.) However, there is a very strong implicit resonance to certain notions of spirituality in his emphasis on the meaning that one finds in enduring forms of human experience (see the last bulleted definition). Early on in his book, in summarizing his first chapter, he says:

> I sketched two of the most important ways in which this concern with mortality works itself out through teaching and learning. First was the Platonic attempt to become a "lover of learning" and thereby partake of a kind of immortality-by-association with timeless Forms and Ideas. Second was the sophistic ideal of living on through one's students, focusing on the Other and caring for his or her needs and life projects. In each case, finite human beings—learners and teachers—bond together to become something more than finite: a united front against mortality. (Blacker, p. 30)

Blacker is clearly addressing quite profound, (could we not say spiritual?) concerns, i.e., immortality, personal meaning, transcendence. Blacker's re-

sponse to and analysis of these concerns is not in the discourse of particular traditional religions but more in the language of philosophy (lots of Heidigger) and informed by the considerable wisdom and insight he has gleaned from his own experiences. I certainly do not want to speculate on the etiology of Prof. Blacker's (or for that matter, Heidiger's) wisdom, but I do want to raise the more general question of what *are* the sources of wisdom and deep understanding of life's mysteries? There is a uniquely human urgency to pursue life's compelling questions of ultimate origins, meaning, and destiny and just as there is the human capacity to ask such questions, there is the equally remarkable human capacity to formulate elaborate and sophisticated responses to them. This urge is above and beyond the call to acquire knowledge (mysterious in its own way) for as much as we may value facts and knowledge, we know that in order to find meaning and direction, we humans seem to have the need to seek the kind of deeper understanding that knowledge and experience by themselves can never give us.

In contrast to David Blacker, Dwayne Huebner explicitly embraces spiritual discourse and affirms its intimate relationship to educational issues. Indeed, there are significant portions of his essays that deal with definitional questions of spirituality in a detailed and textured manner (see particularly the essays titled "Spirituality and Knowing" and "Spirituality and Education"). I offer one brief excerpt of Huebner's elaborated exposition of the term:

> Spirit refers to the possible and the unimagined—to the possibility of new ways, new knowledge, new relationships, new awareness. Spirit refers to that which makes it possible to acknowledge that present forms of life—the institutions, relationships, symbols, language, and habits cannot contain the human being.... This going beyond, this "moreness" of life, this transcendent dimension is the usual meaning of "spirit" and "spiritual." (Huebner, pp. 341-342)

Because the term *spirituality* is so ambiguous and because it often carries with it a certain preciousness, I have often thought that we might all be better off to not use the term at all. Instead, we ought perhaps to insist that we be more specific about the particular sense in which we are using the term at a particular time. (I have a similar view toward other terms like "postmodernism" and "moral education.") However, the reality is that the persistence of the term reflects the strong and enduring persistence of "real" phenomena and we would be wise to recognize and affirm this strength rather than attempt to define it away. It is, however, imperative that we maintain a critical attitude towards this realm, not only to guard against faulty thinking, but also to help clarify and refine these slippery concepts. For example, there is the question of the distinction between spirituality and religion. For some, it is a difference without a distinction while others would accept the dictum that "religion is the grammar of spirituality." Still others are wont to say of themselves that they are "spiritual but not religious." I believe we ought to view these varying positions not only as problems of syntax or logic but also as a reflection of the inherent difficulty that people have in finding, within the limitations of existing languages, ways to express elusive but genuine beliefs, feelings, and experience of a special sort. Simply put, I do not believe, on moral and intellectual grounds, that we can or should dismiss, neglect, or discount the reality or significance of these profoundly human beliefs or experiences that persist so powerfully for so long and for so many people.

Issues of Application to Education

I am clear, however, that merely injecting the term *spirituality* into the educational conversation is by itself quite meaningless. It is simply silly to say that we need to have more spirituality in the schools, not any less than the equally inane proposal that we need to restore values to the schools. The most pressing questions are about more contentious issues, namely which particular formulation of spirituality and which set of values are we talking about. Nonetheless, if we are to accept the notion that spirituality (whatever it may be) is an important dimension of the human quest for meaning and purpose, then it surely has a place in educational theory and in the life of the school. Although it is clearly beyond the scope of this article to describe the range of such possibilities, I do want to mention a number of ways that a concern for spirituality can inform a number of educational issues.

Educators and Affirmation

I am a strong advocate of the position that educators have a special responsibility to affirm their most basic moral beliefs, that is, our beliefs on what constitutes the good (i.e., the ideal) in both personal and social realms. I maintain this view while recognizing the importance of educators to be open-minded and responsible for nourishing independent and autonomous thinkers, in addition to the enormous difficulty and complexity of developing a clear and coherent moral posture. I also believe that educators typically reflect at least an implicit particular moral outlook, but in spite of this, they often seem quite reluctant to be explicit about it, preferring to give the appearance of detachment and objectivity. This, of course, flies in the face of the growing awareness among educational theorists of the impossibility, and perhaps undesirability, of being detached or objective. However, it is also painfully clear that the process of affirming is fraught with intellectual complexity, professional qualms, and personal anguish.

A major difficulty and danger involved in the process of moral affirmation is the inevitability of moving beyond the boundaries of rigorous and precise analysis into the realm of the non-rational and the uncertain. To move safely into that realm requires leaping over barriers carefully and legitimately constructed to protect us from ignorance, misinformation, and superstition. However beneficial these intellectual fences have been, they have also served another, perhaps unintended, function, that of preventing other vitally important ideas from affecting us. Some of these ideas are intuitive in nature while others originate in various wisdom traditions, be they religious, spiritual, or secular in nature. We certainly do not want to tear down barriers to foolishness, but are there not ways we can build in some mechanisms that can help us to derive value from the realm of the non-rational by differentiating cant from insight, wisdom from platitude, and mystery from magic? Ultimately, affirmation requires leaving the relative safety and security of reason and empiricism and entering the riskier and shakier territory of the so far unknowable.

David Blacker handles the issue of affirmation rather delicately in *Dying to Teach*. A major theme of the book is the importance of educators connecting to a larger and enduring project as the way to resist the tragedy of mortality and its possible corollary of meaninglessness. He certainly is explicit about the value of affirmation per se and offers a paradigm on how we mortals might attach ourselves to "the structure of nature" (p. 40). He is much less explicit about the particular nature of his own affirmation and his personal path to the process of immortality he posits. However, it is not at all difficult for the reader to discern a distinctive moral grounding to the book, e.g., there seems to be a deep faith in the possibility of a life of meaning and a passionate commitment to personal fulfillment and social justice. Yet Prof. Blacker does not lay these affirmations out in any detail nor does he venture to describe the process by which he came to make them. This kind of reluctance to go beyond an implicit and suggestive moral framework mirrors the predominant diffidence among scholars to breach the barriers of personal caution and the professional ethic of detached observation.

Dwayne Huebner is much more direct and confessional about his spiritual orientation but is scrupulous about avoiding any suggestion of dogmatism or exclusivity. Indeed, much of the book is concerned with explicating not only the centrality of spirituality to education, but also a detailed exposition of his own deepest convictions and commitments.

> One whose imagination acknowledges that "moreness" [in reference to the spiritual] can be said to dwell faithfully in the world.... I speak as one who tries to dwell as a Christian, because that is my religious tradition, and because I am more familiar with its many qualities, quirks, and language than I am that of other traditions. Those in other traditions are invited to attempt the same, thereby enriching the ensuing conversation. (p. 403)

What is remarkable here is the candor and passion with which a learned and scholarly educational theorist speaks soulfully about that which is so elemental, yet so neglected. Most educational theorists eschew explicit moral affirmations in any form, never mind religious ones, most probably because of personal predilections and because it violates the conventional canons of acceptable and proper scholarship. This reluctance to affirm is, however, selective for there are scholarly important traditions that af-

firm, usually without rational justification, broad and fundamental commitments. For example, traditional academic scholarship is dedicated to the pursuit of a capitalized Truth (after all, the motto of Harvard is *Veritas*, Latin for "truth" while the motto of Yale is *Emet*, Hebrew for truth). Other examples are the passionate commitment to social justice in the critical pedagogy movement and the affirmation of caring in the writings of many feminists. How are we to be convinced that such abstractions as truth, social justice, and caring require our commitment without some a priori assumptions?

In contrast, the degree to which Huebner speaks with candor and fervor is rare and refreshing. I hope and believe that this book will energize (inspire?) those hitherto reluctant educators with similar sensibilities to write with equal candor and passion. This is an era when many of us, troubled by the increasing vulgarity of current educational policies that validate competition and serve to legitimate greed and selfishness, are searching for more nourishing and compelling educational and social visions. Many, if not most, educators as human beings share in this anguish and quest and as professionals, they have the opportunity to respond to this yearning not only with keen insight and analysis but also with compelling visions of the good.

I would also note Huebner's courageous use of the dreaded "L" word—the term that is perhaps avoided most by educational scholars—namely, love. Not only does he use the term, he advocates that it be central to the work of educators. In the understandable and necessary zeal to guard against gratuitous and shallow sentimentality, we have stupidly deprived ourselves of the power of the most astonishing and radical concept of all, that of *agape*, disinterested universal love. Why the aversion to this idea as an ideal and as a grounding for all our cultural foundations? Is the yearning and quest for agape any less "realistic" or more quixotic than the yearning and quest for Truth and Justice? Indeed, should we assume that these differing quests are unique and unconnected to each other?

We have any number of traditions, including scholarly ones that provide insight into the relationships between and among love, justice, and truth. Why would educators ignore these possibilities?

Surely it is not sufficient to say, as true as it is, that much evil has been done in the name of love or justice. It is tragically clear that our most cherished ideas and ideals have often been co-opted, vulgarized, and abused but we must not allow this corruption to go uncontested. We need to reclaim those ideas and concepts that have the potential to enlarge our imagination and strengthen our hopes and aspirations, *especially* when they have been corrupted. I believe that both Blacker and Huebner have made a significant contribution to this important reclamation project by boldly and bravely putting such powerful and controversial concepts as immortality, love, and transcendence at the center of their work.

Education and Mystery

Another important function of a spiritual discourse lies in its capacity to allow us to ask and reflect on even more fundamental questions, the kind of questions that bring us to the realm of the mysterious and unknowable. The normal discourses of everyday life or scholarship are typically not very helpful in our encounters with questions of ultimate origins and meaning and we are required to inquire into them with quite different modes of understanding. I want to discuss two broad issues in this area; one has to do with the etiology of moral consciousness and the other with the critical question of hope.

My own work has focused on a moral critique of education with special emphasis on affirming a framework of social justice and personal meaning as foundational to educational policy and practice. Obviously, this is an area fraught with enormous intellectual and political complexity and controversies, controversies that are greatly magnified by the immensity of their significance. My inquiries have led me to strengthen my commitment to the importance of moral discourse to education, but it has also increased my humility in the face of its complexities in the process. Moreover, it has also brought me to a sense of awe in the face of the mystery that envelops the persistent and ongoing quest to know and be what is good? How do we arrive at and justify such commitments, i.e., what is the validating source of these affirmations? Is it possible and necessary to justify them? If so, on what basis?

There is also the mystery of human nature—is there such a thing? Is it substantially different from other species? If so, in what ways and why? Given our history of war, greed, violence, and brutality, it is not difficult to accept a beast-like view of humankind, i.e., as a species like all others that is concerned only with survival and gratification, quite capable of doing whatever it takes to achieve them. Indeed, this very broad description does in fact reflect much of human behaviors and attitudes. But it does by no means reflect *all* of human history for it is also manifestly evident that individuals and communities have not only striven to transcend this brutish consciousness, but, in fact, have succeeded in doing so on countless occasions. In a world permeated with cruelty and ruthlessness, the reality that people care a great deal about each other and that they are willing to give up personal advantage for the benefit of others is extraordinary. In a world where the dictum of the survival of the fittest seems more than plausible, the reality of a great number of writings and teachings that speak to the sanctity of life and of the requirement to love one another is astonishing. I am at a point in my life where I consider the impulses to seek the good, indeed, to even conceive of the very idea of goodness and to continuously quest for a morally valid life to be nothing short of miraculous.

How do we explain the persistence of these phenomena? To be sure, there are a number of "rational" theories that provide plausible and persuasive explanations for the moral impulse. For example, there is the notion of the hard wiring that impels us to preserve our genes and the theory that ethics function to facilitate the practicalities of everyday life. I, for one, am not totally convinced or satisfied by such explanations since they only offer incomplete answers to the questions of basic origin and meaning. If we are wired to preserve our genes, why and how was that particular goal established (presumably, we may also be wired to eventually destroy the species)? And as far as the notion of the functionality of moral consciousness is concerned, perhaps the practicalities of life may be functional to the expression of moral consciousness rather than the other way round. Pragmatic and biological explanations certainly cannot be disregarded, but they still beg the larger awesome fundamental questions.

What then is the source for the impulse to transcend the limits of mere survival; to put enormous energy into seeking to make a better, more satisfying, more fulfilling life; and to quest for profound meaning and harmony in the universe? Why have we been burdened and/or blessed with awareness and the capacity to reflect with such sophistication on the meaning of our existence? How do we account for the emergence of such remarkable and unlikely social constructions as democracy, justice, unconditional love, and freedom? From whence springs the outrage at injustice and what is the origin of our insistence on fairness? Such values simply cannot be merely contingent cultural artifacts. Instead, I believe that all cultures respond to these common impulses in a variety of ways and forms. For me, the source of these impulses has to be nothing but sheer Mystery.

Blacker makes pointed but guarded references to the issue of ultimate origins as, for example, in this excerpt of his analysis of Heidegger:

> Heidegger means to link authenticity to humanness; that is, to the extent that we are human, we are more *human* somehow. The meta-ethical question of why it better to be human rather than some other thing is left untouched, perhaps wisely…. Having a conscience, an obvious presupposition of any true moral code, depends upon a certain interiority of the self: the capacity we have carved out of ourselves to be guilty, to have heartstrings that Others might tug. (pp. 75-76)

This elegant and carefully worded statement provides us with sharp insight as well as with intriguing silences on major questions. Why might it be wise to leave meta-ethical questions "untouched"? What is the nature of this "certain interiority of the self"? Why and how did we come to carve out the capacity to be guilty? Is this matter of human choice or "meta-ethical" destiny? What are we to make of Blacker's concept of "Others"?

Huebner, in contrast, embraces the examination of Mystery as integral to the study and practice of education:

> The otherness that informs and accompanies education is the absolute Otherness, the transcendent Other, however we name that which

goes beyond all appearances and all conditions. Education is the lure of the transcendent—that which we seem is not what we are for we could always be other…. Education is the consciousness that we live in time, pulled by the inexorable Otherness that brings judgment and hope to the forms of life which are but vessels of present experience. To interpret the changingness of life as "learning" and to reign in destiny by "objectives" is a paltry response to humankind's participation in the Divine or the Eternal. (p. 360)

There is certainly a sharp difference in the style and substance between these two quotations, but both posit some other realm of reality, one that animates the human compulsion to seek deeper wisdom and larger truths. Many, like Huebner, seem to be able to name and be in touch with that realm, while others, perhaps like Blacker, seem to be quite open to the possibility of at least approaching that Mystery. Here then are two learned scholars, who, each in their own mode, speak to some unusual energy that grounds "conscience" and "judgment," and both of whom stipulate (and capitalize) a concept of "Others." Clearly there are important differences between the two books in discourse, emphasis, and focus and I do not want to leave the impression that they neatly complement each other. What I do see reflected in both authors, however, is the growing movement among educational theorists away from a somewhat narrow conception of what constitutes educational issues to one that encompasses not only the social and the cultural but also the spiritual and the metaphysical.

To a large extent this movement reflects larger cultural and intellectual shifts, particularly the failure of modernity, i.e., our disenchantment with the capacity of science and rationality to create a more just society and a more fulfilling life. Moreover, we have become increasingly aware of the myth of objectivity, the dangers of detachment, as well as the problematics of essentialist thinking. We have also come to see the limits of materialism, especially in its ugly economic manifestations of rampant greed and indulgence with its consequent steady and perilous erosion of authentic community. In addition, the extraordinary growth of technology has produced an explosion of tortuous ethical dilemmas with which

we as a culture seem so desperately unprepared to deal. We are confronted with such troubling, but nonetheless quite real, questions as: When does life begin? What constitutes a life of quality? Who is to make such decisions? And how are we to ration life-saving, but rare, medical interventions like organ transplants? These are not hypothetical case studies that one often finds in Ethics courses designed to stretch our thinking, but are as real and present as an ice storm. In such situations, we confront once again and with added poignancy, the limitations of knowledge and rationality to provide meaning and direction in addressing issues of life and death significance.

In addition to mirroring the larger cultural and social disenchantment with modernity, we, as educators, have some particular reasons to become more sensitive to the pull of moral and spiritual discourse. There is, first of all, the matter of the multiculturalist movement with its strong emphases on the affirmation of identity and on a policy of inclusiveness. Honoring and affirming all communities and traditions involves including not only people who differ in race, ethnicity, gender, class, and sexual orientations, but also presumably also those who largely identify themselves by their association with particular religious and spiritual traditions. Such inclusiveness, no doubt, creates some very troubling and sticky educational difficulties, e.g., how are schools to be inclusive to those who have certain deeply held fundamentalist Christian beliefs such as creationism and school prayer? One hopes that such potentially divisive issues can be resolved in the context of good faith negotiation grounded in respect by and for all the concerned groups. One also hopes that this growing awareness of the significance that religion and spirituality have for so many people can help us to realize that secularism and materialism are for many people as hegemonic and canonical as other aspects of the culture of dead, white Europeans are to others.

An even more indirect link between spirituality and education emerges out of the disaster that is the current condition of the public schools. The immense pressure for ever tighter control, the increasing reductionism of education to test scores, the legitimation of harsh competition, and the vulgarization of education as a mode of achieving material success

have radically transformed public education. What was once the dream that schools could nourish young souls and be a bulwark of democracy has become the nightmare of an institution that is an engine for the global economy and personal aggrandizement. Schooling has become the primary site in which to gain the edge required in the increasingly cruel battle for dominance and privilege. Surely there is more to education and life than the incessant struggle to compete, surpass, and achieve for the sake of higher income and status. Whatever happened to education for expanding personal horizons, for the joy of learning, for strengthening democracy, and for contributing to social justice?

Educators in this situation must confront the overall failure of the profession to significantly affect neither the contours of present day educational policy nor even the direction of day-to-day school practice. Indeed, much of the profession once again finds itself forced to administer policies they neither developed nor approved, often reduced to the task of easing and limiting the foolishness and wickedness of these policies as much as possible. Are we witnessing the death of the hope for an independent and vigorous professionalism that is wise enough to guide the public debate on education and strong enough to influence it? Do we dare examine the degree to which policy makers are even aware of, never mind sympathetic to, the richness, diversity, and creativity of alternative educational theory, research, and practice? Has our enterprise been reduced to providing technical support for policies totally determined by the demands of the market economy and by the demagoguery of pandering politicians?

That the gap between the hopes for the public schools and their present reality has grown into a chasm is graphically illustrated by the almost surreal quality of the two books under review. Reading them was a very inspiring and pleasurable experience for me largely because of the passionate ways in which they describe so eloquently how we might add a significant measure of profundity and joy to the educational process and thereby to our lives. Yet, the possibility that these books or books like them, will even be read by—never mind influence—those who control the public schools is exceedingly remote. Perhaps this is a personal projection, but my sense is that

neither author really expects that their ideas will have some important impact on current school practice. I certainly do not and neither do I expect any of the imaginative and liberating ideas of other talented educators to have any chance of penetrating the appalling crudeness of the present day public discourse on education. To write about an education that is primarily focused on personal meaning, social justice, and a more joyful community would seem to be nothing more than an exercise in futility and wistfulness.

There is, however, something represented in these two books that is much more powerful and sustaining here than mere fantasy, and that is the vibrant presence of hope, the most valuable aspect of a spiritual consciousness. Perhaps the most corrosive cultural characteristic of our times is the increase in cynicism and despair, the ways in which we reject the dominant social values but simultaneously are suspicious and dubious about efforts to change them. To be sure, the viability of optimism is highly questionable in a time when the empirical evidence strongly supports pessimism about the possibility of turning our priorities around. The presence of widespread despair (a highly contagious condition) only deepens the crisis by contributing to the dynamics of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

However, it is precisely *because* of the depth of the despair and cynicism that educators must persist in the struggle to develop and implement an educational program that resonates with the culture's highest aspirations. The task of the profession is not to get on board but to try to stop the runaway train and set it on a new and more attractive route. But, we all know that, barring a miracle, it is virtually impossible to stop a train that is intent on speeding. The spirituality that resonates most for me is the kind that provides the energy to persist even in the face of the merited pessimism about the possibility of stopping such a train. What is required is hope, the spirit that animates the impulse to sustain our continuing quest for our ideals, *especially* when they are at serious risk.

When we are required by reason to be pessimistic we must abandon reason and adopt hope instead. History is full of examples of communities in the most dire circumstances that have been energized

and sustained by hope, usually a hope grounded in a religious or spiritual tradition. How else can we explain, for example, the way in which African Americans were able to endure and prevail over their slavery? Let us not, however, sentimentalize this process for there are also many instances when such hope was not sufficient and when hope has been betrayed. Hope by itself can only energize the vigorous and determined action required for transformation and, indeed, hope can lull us into the fallacy that equates wishing with agency. This is the enormous risk that comes with faith, but then there is even greater peril in despair, for despair is a kind of living death while, as that wise cliché puts it "where there's life there's hope." Or is it vice versa?

In our quest for hope, we have been and continue to be nourished by powerfully moving spiritual and religious traditions. Jesse Jackson implores us to "keep hope alive." Michael Lerner reminds us of the God of Moses who allows for "the possibility of possibility," while Harvey Cox speaks of God as "that power which despite all setbacks never admits to final defeat." Dwayne Huebner writes of a consciousness of love, care, and hope:

> Hope makes possible patience and peaceful waiting in the midst of turmoil and unsettledness. With openness, love, and hope, new creation is possible…. Openness, love, hope—this is the story of human life as celebrated in religious traditions—the traditions that keep the spiritual acknowledged in collective and individual consciousness. (pp. 350-351)

It does not seem wise that we should exclude considerations of such spiritual concerns as hope, love, or immortality from educational dialogue. Obviously, to do so will require us to take seriously the varying forms and substantive contents of spiritual writings and teachings. In a time of cultural despair and professional disillusionment, this would seem to be an especially propitious moment to delve more deeply, respectfully, and boldly into the language and images of the spirit.

Certainly there are dangers in the use of a spiritual discourse in education. David Blacker alludes to some of these dangers in his cautionary chapter on the problematics of his proposals. He writes,

> As with any moral or political ideal, education as immortality may fall victim to its own peculiar corruptions…. Accordingly, wariness is always recommended, as in all human undertakings. Yet it seems to me a risk worth taking: Education is—as it must be—epistemologically, morally, and spiritually dangerous; and therefore something about it must surpass even the most humane political program. (p. 109)

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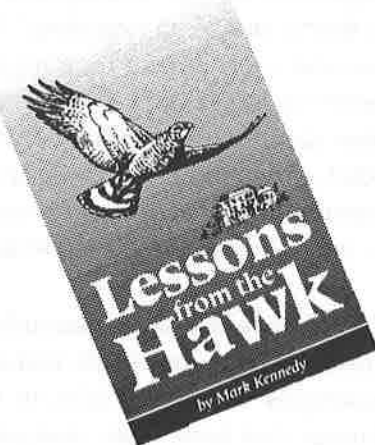
Book Reviews

Dancing with Bigotry
Beyond the Politics of Tolerance

By Donaldo Macedo and Lilia Bartolome

Published by St. Martin's Press, 1999

Reviewed by Ellen Swartz

In *Dancing with Bigotry, Beyond the Politics of Tolerance* (1999), Donaldo Macedo and Lilia Bartolome draw upon media, politics, popular culture, and educational research to analyze the inequalities produced and perpetuated in society and in schools. They explain how relations of power are regulated through institutions (e.g., schools) designed to superiorize the white middle class and to control those whose subjectivities fall to the "other" side of race, culture, class, language, and gender divides. In many ways, this book is a lament about the large gaps between democratic ideals and cultural practices in the United States—a lament that, unfortunately, does not develop into modeling the social transformation for which the authors advocate.

Before exploring this further, the useful critique in *Dancing with Bigotry* should be noted. Macedo and Bartolome propose "multiculturalism" as a response to inequitable power relations, but caution that the way it is practiced often serves to further denigrate oppressed groups through tolerance-motivated approaches that are patronizing.[1] For example, white liberal professors state their value for multicultural education and for having students of diverse backgrounds in their classes, yet often fail to support the same diversity in upper administrative university positions. *Overseeing* diversity has appeal but being "managed by diversity" (p. 82) does not.

An argument is provided for multicultural programs that address the core issues of inequitable power relations and include the ways in which languages are understood and taught. A colonial legacy and ongoing xenophobia have devalued the languages of colonized peoples which affects how bilingual programs are viewed in public schools—less valued than so-called foreign language programs even though the former are more successful at pro-

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ducing fully bilingual speakers than the later. This example and many others demonstrate how schools are social locations that reflect and reproduce the dehumanizing inequalities in the larger society unless educators make strong efforts to transform them.

Macedo and Bartolome are teacher educators whose *discourse* has a critical sound. Teaching, they say, is a moral, ethical, and political act—never a neutral one. Preservice teachers should avoid deficit-model thinking and acting that historically were shaped by the political ideology and practices of white supremacy. To address the inequalities of schooling, curriculum and pedagogy need to be tailored to each teacher's students. Packaged, "teacher proof" programs are discouraged because their "magical" methods have limited benefit and often deny students access to their historical, cultural, and languaged realities. This is a book that intones many of the principles and practices of multiculturality, but in many ways contradicts the sound of its own discourse.

To Whom is This Book Talking?

While its framework is built with critical positions, the essential question that looms beneath them is, *"To whom is this book talking?"* Even though the book is about teaching, it doesn't seem to be talking to or about teachers; what many have been and are doing to address the authors' critical concerns has no presence in this book. It doesn't seem to be talking to people of color because too much of the book is given over to "proving" that racism exists, that media give inordinate amounts of time and space to the right, that liberals have problems, and that "minority languages" are devalued. Instead, it does seem to be talking to white people—ranging from easy-to-identify racists to conservatives to liberals to progressives who are given disproportionate space in a book concerned with effectively educating people of color.

This attention to the promoters and detractors of white supremacy is set in the context of imploring readers on the second page of the book not to reduce analysis of the racist social order to only discussions of white racism toward black people—what they call "reductionistic binarism." White dominant ideology,

they explain, affects groups of people based not only on race, but other subjectivities such as language, gender, class, and culture. This of course is true, but why would we *exclude* an examination of the originating context of dominant white ideology in the U.S. in order to *include* other groups in its ill affects? Rather than reduce or abridge analysis of racism, examining the relationship between white people and people of African origin sheds much needed light on the workings of all forms of supremacy in the U.S. While the racist gaze variously turns on many "others," the particularities of its gaze need not be lost as we expand the inventory of dominance. More fundamentally, one wonders why the authors don't acknowledge Africanity in other cultures, ethnicities, genders, and classes (e.g., Mexicans, Dominicans, Cambodians, women, poor/working classes). This denial of past and present African presence in the peoples of diverse cultures and groups is divisive and contradicts the authors' critical analysis throughout the entire book.

As a case in point, the cover photograph that introduces readers to the book is of four people—two white and two black— sitting outdoors on two passenger-labeled wooden benches. The two white women sit on the bench to the viewer's left with their backs turned to the black man and woman who sit facing forward on the bench to the viewer's right. This black and white, circa mid-twentieth century photograph is placed under the book's title, *Dancing with Bigotry, Beyond the Politics of Tolerance*. The photograph is easily read as an echo of the title, particularly its imaging of white bigotry. The full title seems to suggest that even if we roll the clocks forward on the picture—it's in color and everyone is chatting—tolerance as a standard for human interaction is too low.

The authors have exhorted us to "avoid falling prey to a binaristic approach to race analysis," yet the two women who turn their backs on the cover, turn them primarily out of their whiteness—that social position that fosters superiority—not out of their female, class, or ethnic identities. And, if the two people of color facing forward were Latino, Asian American, or Native American, the women's backs would still be facing people seen by them as people of color—the "other." Might the women's gender, class,

and possibly less-favored white ethnic identities—all marginalized locations in mid-twentieth century America—be part of their socially constructed relationship to people of color? Yes, but the impulse that their actions turn on is their commitment to whiteness, to the group identity that is promised to guarantee them a place of security in America—where they will never have to be on the bottom again (Goodwin 1999a). Generations of assimilationist-minded Europeans who could "pass" enough to gain entry into the melting pot "agreed" to abandon their ethnicities (at that time, nationalities) in exchange for being white. It isn't binaristic to recognize that this unholy deal between European immigrants and American white, upper-class men was made through the social construction and perpetuation of two separate races, one white and the other black. This is historical. To buffer their interests, the dominant white group crowded as many European immigrants as possible (even the women among them) into the bottom rungs of whiteness—extending to them the unethical hope that perhaps one day they too might rise up that ladder (of bigotry) to join them (Swartz 1999). White people have not been stripped of their ethnicity as the authors suggest on page 15, rendered "colorless" or invisible in multicultural discourse. They have collaborated in stripping themselves in a trade-off for privilege.

Whiteness is psychologically, politically, economically, and socially constructed in its historic relationship to blackness or Africanity, and, as Toni Morrison has pointed out, is clearly revealed in a critical review of American literature (1992, 1989). There is no need for Macedo and Bartolome to delimit this reality because their interests and expertise rightfully lead them to pay attention to issues of language and the past and present oppression of Latino peoples—issues that are clearly central to multiculturality. However, we need not overlook that contempt for a people's language begins with contempt for the people themselves—in this case, their African and Indigenous ancestries. In relating to people of color, understanding the foundations of the American dominant ideological paradigm doesn't exclude anyone (e.g., Latinos, Asians, Native Americans) unless they are unable to identify with or see the African in them. There are rich opportunities for solidarity in educa-

tion—for creating an emancipatory paradigm in which each groups' multiple and overlapping identities are acknowledged and respected and put to work in the interests of children.[2]

The authors' concern about the analysis of the racist social order being viewed only in a white-black context has also precluded valuable information and insight. A book contesting bigotry can certainly draw upon primarily Latino examples. Yet how can one focus on the politics of language in the dominant paradigm without discussing and drawing parallels to Ebonics/African American home languages—especially when Macedo and Bartolome cite African American authors' and other researchers' accounts that exemplify the disdain and disregard for speakers of Ebonics? References to the speech of African American students is not called Ebonics in this text or African American home language; it is referred to as "utterances in English that are difficult for their middle-class white teachers to understand" (p. 59). Granted, Ebonics may not be the authors' area of expertise, but so much scholarship exists on this topic to bring it past the low/no status that this text's silence about it reinforces (Delpit 1998; Duncan 1997; Secret 1998; Smith 1998; Smitherman 1986; Williams 1975). Without this scholarship, the real discussion of what curriculum and pedagogy to use with students whose home languages differ from the English that schools promote is obstructed. This again is a lost opportunity to understand that contempt for the cultural productions of a people is directly connected to contempt for the people themselves.

Advocating for first languages to "live" in classrooms *in concert with* code-switching pedagogy and culturally responsive curriculum is an emancipatory way to discuss language as a contested cultural terrain (Delpit 1988; Gonzales-Habes 1999; Secret 1998). Acknowledginng similar ways of knowing and being is also a way to identify and begin to address the similar experiences around language for black and Latino students. For example, standardized tests, which influence teachers' expectations of students' academic performance are linguistically and culturally biased in similar ways against black and Latino speakers (Hoover, Politzer, & Taylor 1991). The potential relationships and alliances between bilingual and Ebonics scholars and practitioners are full of opportunity because they both understand that acknowledging and building upon first languages is essential to students' success. To separate these struggles around language, promotes—whether conscious or not—a conceptual divisioning of people of color that doesn't exist other than through the dominant eyes and practices of those who are white or white-identified.

Moving Past the Limitations of Whiteness

Dancing with Bigotry is effort-full in its attempts to "prove" the existence of racism, neo-colonialism, and classism. It is replete with examples of savage inequalities related to the practices of these "isms." The book seems bent on "talking truth to power" by exposing power's dominant discourse and practices with grueling detail. Yet, when all proofs are said and done, don't educators need to know what to do differently—not only what the representatives of power are doing wrong? Spending energy on deconstructing white dominance to the exclusion of providing approaches that seek to do otherwise denies teachers opportunities (e.g., pedagogical and curricular practices) that can guide them to teach toward emancipation and democracy. "Talking truth to power" *only* may be cathartic, but it's also very white in its disconnection from all "others." *White people can not reconstruct dominant ideology by themselves.*

Who speaks to the "master" when planning the revolt? What does the "master" need to know? Does "talking truth to power" cause the talkers to think that "masters" might use what they hear in the interests of emancipation and democracy? Is there an expectation that the "master" will talk back in other than "power to truth" terms? While "talking truth to power," Macedo and Bartolome actually empower what they denounce. For example, they state that Murray's and Hernstein's *The Bell Curve*

> not only activated what had appeared to be a dormancy of racism in the United States after the enactment of the civil rights laws, but it also has resurrected an old form of intellectual lynching that, unfortunately, has been embraced by ever more powerful representatives of the far right and, with some exceptions, by liberals through a form of silence. (p. 85)

To whom did it appear that there was a dormancy of racism after the passage of the civil rights laws? Certainly not to black people—even those who entered previously denied locations of employment and residence, only to find that racism mutates while it remains the same. I am reminded of the recent efforts of Japanese members of the IMF who, barricaded behind Washington, D.C. police lines (set up to "protect" white Western dominance), advocated for a Japanese candidate for Managing Director of the IMF. They were contesting the fact that only European men have headed the IMF. A Japanese official commented that "there's a sense that this has always been a white man's club, and that needs some rethinking" (Kifner 2000). Clearly, some of the people on the inside—who were also representatives of powerful interests—were still dealing with the same racist realities that prompted those on the outside to protest.

The Bell Curve didn't activate racism; it was activated by it. Racism doesn't recede; it slightly changes forms as it nourishes the system that bore it for the benefit of the people who profit from it generation after generation. "Powerful representatives of the far right" privately pay for and in other ways require such treatises as *The Bell Curve* (albeit anti-scientific); they only appear to embrace them after they become public.

Being exposed to proofs of dominance may be necessary but it is not sufficient to create the pedagogy of hope called for by the authors. Hope in education comes from exposure to teachers who are creating models and practices able to equitably educate and expand the consciousness and sense of social responsibility of future citizens (Gonzales-Habes 1999; Goodwin 1996; 1999b; Goodwin & Swartz 1993; Hollins & Spencer 1990; Ladson-Billings 1994; Meier 1995; Secret 1998; Shakes 1993; Smith 1996). Even when critiqued, whiteness—and the supremacist worldview it embodies—creates endless roadblocks that prevent knowing about and achieving a liberatory worldview. There are teachers whose practices navigate around these limitations of whiteness—and their presence and practices need to be acknowledged.

Absence of Teachers' Presence

The authors' critique is ultimately aimed at schools and teachers of children. Yet its potential to border-cross our still-too-separate educational locations is limited due to an absence of suggestions for operationalizing most of their critique. Critique without the practices to steady it represents shifting and unfriendly ground for teachers who interact with children every day. Authors of topics that inherently cross multiple boundaries need to cross those boundaries themselves.

As an advocate of border-crossing pedagogies (1992), Henry Giroux discusses linking the academy with the world outside its borders in a Chapter Three conversation with Lilia Bartolome. His analysis of multiculturalism as fast becoming a tool of the marketplace—"a kind of Benetton multiculturalism" (pp. 99-100)—results in his timely call for students to become critical agents of social change rather than agents of consumerism. This call is another reminder of the need for examples of teacher practices that encourage students' critical agency. As academics we can contribute to such a desirable outcome by acting critically ourselves—by acting on knowing that teachers must have a real presence in our research and scholarly productions. Can we spend more time talking to the group of people who have "signed up" to teach our children? What is our discourse for them? Can we partner in heterarchical ways with teachers who are using emancipatory practices to develop representational curriculum and pedagogy; and can we model such practices in our own education classrooms?[3] The lack of such border-crossing examples results in the absence of a teacher presence in *Dancing with Bigotry*. Talking about border crossings and the politics of race, class, and gender in schools is needed, but it is only authentic if the talk is informed and exemplified by school projects that seek to counteract the limiting "isms" that historically have been taught in schools (Goodwin 1996, 1999c).

There are university researchers and classroom teachers who study what goes on in schools—producing research that describes and models practices in ways that encourage teachers to consider them (Bigelow 1996; Foster 1997; Gonzales-Habes 1999; Goodwin 1996; Ladson-Billings 1994; Peterson 1998;

Shakes 1993; Smith 1996; Swartz 1996). Whether teacher-educators work with teachers in classrooms to conduct action research projects or support teacher-research projects, teachers become involved in the construction and negotiation of studies about their practices or in studying their own practices. As teachers participate in research in the interest of improving their practices and students' learning, their findings reveal the potential of research to produce changes from which other educators can learn. These changes or outcomes might reflect disciplinary concerns such as improved approaches to teaching a particular subject or humanistic concerns such as practices that reduce inequitable outcomes across race, class, language, gender, and culture. When these concerns for excellence and equity are merged, outcomes are particularly rewarding.

In the one paragraph in *Dancing with Bigotry* where studies of the practices of exemplary teachers are mentioned, it is stated that they

> share an anti-assimilationist and anti-deficit ideological orientation.... [They] question, in one form or another, the 'correctness' or 'fairness' of the existing social order and actively work to prevent its reproduction at the school and classroom levels" (p. 150).

However, no specific examples are discussed and, unlike all other mentions of research, no citations of these studies are provided to direct readers to sources that might exemplify what these exemplary teachers are doing.

Macedo and Bartolome briefly discuss two "promising teaching approaches" (culturally responsive instruction and strategic teaching), but they overshadow them with research findings that charge the predominately white, middle-class teaching ranks with deficit-model thinking and other practices that disproportionately affect students across race, culture, and class. While the presence of white, middle-class teachers results in conscious and unconscious perpetuation of dominant ideology as seen in their expectations of students, attitudes about the communities where they teach, curriculum selections, and pedagogical choices, isn't the presence of teachers of color a potential for solutions to these problems? The knowledge, experiences, ways of knowing, and resources among these teachers are often (and were in

this text) ignored in demographically based discussions of teachers' identities. As the net is cast for strategies and solutions, leadership for emancipation will come from teachers of color (most white people erroneously think of themselves as already free) because their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives provide more ways to know not only what is problematic in the current educational system but how to transform it (Goodwin 1999c).

While all teachers need to develop ongoing critical analysis of schools and schooling, their practical rethinking and reworking of ineffective traditional practices will depend on their ability to work with each other across the historically drawn borders that represent the inequalities they hope to remove. Teachers actually have more in common than their race and class divisions might suggest. As Goodwin explains, "As teachers, when we come to understand our own marginalization at the bottom of the hierarchy in the "old" [education] model, we can then understand the positioning of others—whether by race, class, or gender" (1999c, 111).

With seven pages to go, Macedo and Bartolome finally provide evidence of an experienced classroom teacher's pedagogical engagement of his students with reading the text of a soccer ball in order to read the world and the lives of the children who produced the ball. In 1997, Bill Bigelow wrote in *Rethinking Schools* how he used an interdisciplinary approach to connect students to the realities of global commercialism and exploitation of children in other countries for the benefit of children (and others) in the United States. Bigelow studies his own practices to demonstrate what *Dancing with Bigotry* has talked about for 150+ pages. If I didn't know better, I'd leave this book thinking that Bigelow was an anomaly.

For all their absence, teachers are ironically positioned in *Dancing with Bigotry* as central to all the problems in schools. This echoes the views of most school districts who *call out* teachers when test scores are low, but rarely *call on* them when curricular decisions are made, when schools are designed and sized, and when the structure of the school day is established. In fact, so few fundamental decisions about schooling are in the hands of teachers, that we must be careful not to blame teachers for problems that are beyond their power to fix alone (Apple 1999;

Urbanski 1994). The authors' call for teachers to develop political clarity and courage will help. But responsibility to change a deficit-modeled, supremacist-designed system—whose historic purpose (notwithstanding all its democratic potential) has been to sort, sift, and reproduce a social hierarchy based on race, class, gender, language, and culture—requires collaboration in the rethinking and construction of representational content and pedagogy. Yes, there are so many things that teachers can do to address inequalities in their classrooms, but failing to name and describe how the structure of schooling "feeds" and maintains status quo practices suggests that teachers are mainly responsible for schools that fail children, families, and communities. Administrators, superintendents, government officials, parents, school boards, and community groups also bear responsibility for schooling as we know it.

Choosing Words, Choosing Identities

Macedo and Bartolome ask readers to see the relationships between cultural texts that perpetuate inequalities and the actual experiences of these inequalities. While they differ, cultural texts and the supremacies they exemplify fuel each other. So why would the authors ubiquitously use the term "subordinated" to identify students and cultures who have been/are oppressed? Notwithstanding their explanation in endnote #3 in the last chapter,[4] being pummeled by the image and sound of sub-status throughout an entire book serves to de-name cultures/races/classes just as the term "minority" does. Their endnote states that these groups are "perceived" as inferior. So who is doing this perceiving and why are their perceptions being used to name the people they oppress? Why not call people as they call themselves—as often as possible? The use of external descriptors such as "subordinated" panders to the dominant ideology the authors claim to oppose. Their description of themselves as "minority professors" (p. 120) (why not subordinated professors?) is suggestive of what is problematic about this book. If the authors conceptualize themselves as "minority professors" (whether numerically or ontologically) they frame their own identities in deference to whiteness. Deferring to whiteness while having the authorial power to define/describe one's own and others' identities is a choice—one that obstructs agency and self-definition. Defining oneself and others independent of dominant ideology occurs when dancing with bigotry is unappealing. With all this book's "talking truth to power," it is unnecessary to be called subordinated on almost every page rather than African American, Latino/a, Native American, or Asian American.

Closing Thoughts

Reviewing *Dancing with Bigotry* has affirmed for me the necessity of teacher-educators establishing research and other reciprocal relationships with classroom teachers so that we can work together to actualize the democratic potential of schools. If we mainly talk to ourselves *about* teachers, children, and schools, we miss valuable opportunities to bridge the two institutions whose missions are similarly focused on effectively educating young people. To avoid complicity with the separatist pulls and practices of dominance—to stop dancing with bigotry—we need to stop dancing *only* with ourselves.

In order for teachers to rethink dominant ideology and rework its traditional practices, they need books and other cultural productions that critique dominance and then exemplify counter practices that are emancipatory. Teacher-educators have a supportive role to play in this process, but in order to do so, we must be talking to teachers (as much as to power). Our research and the words we use can veil supremacy and its ideological constructs or unveil it. While unveiling the inequitable practices of schooling is preferable, operationalizing this knowledge with examples from practitioners who can rethink dominance moves us past deconstructive chroniclers to constructive actors in the change process itself.

As we critique the potential of multiculturality to reinvent traditional curricular and pedagogical practices, we need to avoid creating artificial divisions among ourselves—divisions that serve the perpetrators of oppression more than anyone else. Our practices should not encourage a "crabs in the barrel" mentality that occurs when members of oppressed groups *are more interested in talking to those who oppress them than to those who share their realities*. While nuanced group differences and particular issues are apodictic, similar epistemological and ontological

realities are the basis of powerful collaborations. As we critique the separatist ways in which institutions have responded to the demands for inclusion from race, class, gender, and language groups, we need to study and better understand the originating elements of white supremacy. While group identities are interpenetrating, there is no way to understand, for example, the marginalized realities of poor white people or the complexities of *mestizaje* for Latino/a people without understanding how the social construction of two separate races—one black and one white—is at their root. Dominant white ideology, in its separatist fashion, reinforces itself through practices and productions that aim to reduce and split the whole of humanity into parts. This removes the focus from their dominance and tempts various groups to take the "What about me?" position. This is counterproductive to creating the solidarity and consciousness needed to contest and reinvent the ways in which representatives of dominant ideology use schools to promote and secure their agenda.

Notes

1. In the case of the term "multiculturalism," the suffix "ism" is used in the formation of a noun denoting a doctrine or group of principles. The term "multiculturality" may be more useful because it signifies the values and practices of being multicultural (e.g., inclusivity, representation, indigeneity, accurate scholarship). This differs from "multiculturalism" which holds within it the hegemonic potential of a tightly defined, categorical, and closed system. We have seen that the practice of such a system produces replicable and packaged forms of multicultural education, whereas the practice of multiculturality has the potential to produce a continuous evolution of multicultural values and practices.

2. An emancipatory paradigm is a worldview built with theories and practices that contest and refigure dominant patterns of knowledge formation, dissemination, and perpetuation by identifying them and demonstrating how to replace them with patterns that are multiperspectival and antithetical to privileging relations of power. Praxis in an emancipatory paradigm centers students in a process of teaching and learning that is question-driven rather than based upon the transmission and reproduction of information. Students—who all have multiple and overlapping subjectivities—are viewed as critical agents able to combine scholarship with self and cultural knowledge that can liberate them from dominant patterns and practices. Equity and excellence are mutually inclusive and necessary to avoid practices that limit the life chances of some groups of students while privileging the life chances of others (Apple and Weis 1983; Freire 1970, 1985 Giroux 1983, 1986, 1992; Swartz 1998).

3. The term *heterarchy* comes from a combination of two Greek words, *heteros* meaning different, other and *arch* meaning leader. In comparison, the term *hierarchy* combines two Greek words, *hiero* meaning holy, sacred and *arch* meaning leader (Lincoln & Guba 1985). In reference to different groups working together, heterarchy means that there is no innate "natural" ordering or pre-arranged superiority of ideas, beliefs, groups, methods, etc. Rather, there is a shifting leadership determined by multiple, overlapping, and contextualized factors.

Order and selection are human constructions and therefore differ and change. No one group inevitably rules or leads.

The term *representational* is well defined by educator Susan Goodwin as meaning "...that the people and cultures being included and/or studied are the source of the knowledge being presented by and about them. In the absence of representation, what we learn about others has more to do with external perceptions and ideas" (1999c, 109).

4. Endnote 3 in chapter 5 reads as follows:

"Subordinated" refers to cultural groups that are politically, socially, and economically subordinate in the greater society. While individual members of these groups may not consider themselves subordinate in any manner to the white "mainstream," they nevertheless are members of a greater collective that historically has been perceived and treated as subordinate and inferior by the dominant society. Thus it is not entirely accurate to describe these students as "minority" students, since the term connotes numerical minority rather than the general low status (economic, political, and social) these groups have held, and that I think is important to recognize when discussing their historical academic underachievement. (p. 162).

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Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century

by Edmund O'Sullivan

Published by the University of Toronto Press, 1999

Reviewed by Robin Martin

In this critically acclaimed book published by the new University of Toronto press (1999), O'Sullivan takes a critical view of human history that shows how we are ready to transcend the limitations of modernism whose rational-industrial mode has reached its fruition and is now on a terminal path. He then offers an alternative view of a functional cosmology for a more transformative approach to education which he argues is essential to our survival.

First, O'Sullivan outlines the ecologically destructive trends of history within the "terminal cenozoic" period of the dominant culture. (He uses the term "cenozoic," rather than postmodern or post-industrial, to draw attention to earth history rather than simply human history.) He shows how the dominant rhetoric of the marketplace and individualism fails to take into consideration an ecologically sustainable vision for society and the planet. Building on conceptual foundations laid by such authors as Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme, and David Orr, he describes three tensions between the cenozoic and the next potential period in history which he labels "ecozoic." These three tensions are between progressive, conservative, and transformative elements and their corresponding educational visions. The progressive vision, O'Sullivan argues, traps us in an individualistic model that is blind to power dynamics in which we sway between "the yin and yang for 'liberal progressive reform' and 'back to the basics' reform" (p. 51). It keeps us firmly rooted in a "global market vision" that ultimately supports business at the expense of the planet. The conservative vision, a reaction to modernism, shows no awareness of contemporary ecological problems and maintains traditional authority structures. The transformative eco-

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zoic vision is the one that O'Sullivan builds as the center of the book because he believes it is the only one that provides a viable planetary vision. From educational perspectives, the transformative vision brings together critical pedagogy, holistic education, and global education associated with a heightened planetary consciousness.

O'Sullivan carefully dismantles today's "Western cultural mantras" and sacred symbols of discourse, including the concepts of progress, growth and development, globalization, competition, and consumerism. This lays the ground for the next chapter in which he attempts "to elucidate the ecological implications of four of the main dominator structures in our times": sexism, racial superiority, class exploitation, and anthropocentrism (species superiority).

In the last section of the book, building again on the work of Thomas Berry, O'Sullivan presents a "universe story" (cosmology) of principles that integrate a "planetary consciousness," in contrast to global consciousness. For O'Sullivan the globe is "a mapping device made for commerce today. The language of globalization is first and foremost for commercial purposes" (p. 194). O'Sullivan's key point for educators is that a new universe story is needed to evoke the creative energy for transformation and a sense of direction. Unfortunately, in my view, O'Sullivan's educational suggestions toward curricula for "ecological literacy" and focusing curricula more on bioregional communities (pp. 199-207) do not adequately merge his ideas with the previously mentioned and more complex processes of critical pedagogy and holistic education.

In the final chapters, O'Sullivan defines and repeatedly returns to three principles exemplified as necessary for the development of the earth: differentiation, subjectivity, and community. In the chapter on "integral development," he discusses the awakening of our senses to our connection with the primordial self and a deeper connection with the earth. In the chapter on "quality of life" education, he discusses education in the context of human needs, community, diversity, civic culture, and biocentric diversity. Finally, O'Sullivan concludes with a chapter illustrating his personal framework for addressing core elements of spirituality needed to sustain the "dream structure" of a transformative vision,

with direct references to the works of John Miller, David Purpel, and many others.

With this book, O'Sullivan has attempted to move educators on a journey of intimacy, rather than estrangement, with the natural world. Yet ironically, he does so at such a philosophical and analytical level that it may estrange those teachers who are emerged in mainstream culture and do not yet grasp the primary premises of the book. The more story-like qualities of "Ishmael" (Daniel Quinn) or even the Gaian writings of Elisabeth Sahtouris may be better suited to awakening the cosmological awareness of many teachers. Nonetheless, this book is well grounded in theory and offers some sound analyses of multiple educational and global theories from integrated perspectives, and thus is well suited to graduate students and researchers specializing in educational history and philosophy. Rather than simply one magazine issue (*Encounter*, Summer 1999), it offers a whole book for contemplation and reflection on the significance of cosmology within education.

I read this book somewhere between my initial readings of Krishnamurti, Rousseau's *Emile*, and visits to an array of alternative schools. Amid this context, I felt that O'Sullivan was going to present some revolutionary way of thinking about "transformative learning" that I had not yet encountered. By the time that I reached the end of the book, however, I was somewhat disappointed when I realized that he was simply summarizing much of what I had encountered elsewhere. Further, he did not seem to venture as deeply as others have in creating a framework around the nature of the learning process itself (Mezirow 1991; Martin 1997) or in articulating visions that go beyond the curriculum (Krishnamurti 1953). Still, O'Sullivan does synthesize many works across the fields of education, cosmology, and Western civilization, putting it all into a framework that is both readable and insightful in many ways.

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