ENCOUNTER

EDUCATION FOR MEANING AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Editorial

Traditions, Elders, and Teachers

It is an honor to assume the position of editor of *Encounter*. This journal plays a unique role in educational discourse. It is a place where scholars and educators challenge the narrow, skills-and-tests focus of mainstream education, a place where we can discuss the full development of the growing person.

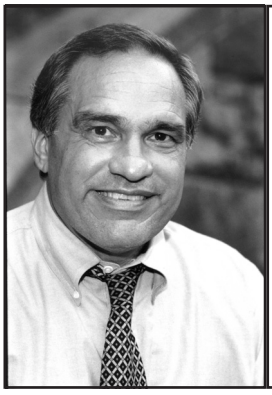
The Journal's Beginnings and Development

Encounter began in 1988. Ron Miller, a former Montessori teacher who was working on his doctoral dissertation at Boston University, wanted to create a journal that could give voice to a desperately needed new educational movement. Miller looked through the journals in his university library and saw that a small publishing company in Brandon, Vermont, produced the kind of journal he had in mind. He phoned the publisher, Charles Jakiela, who invited Miller to Vermont. Jakiela was deeply sympathetic to Miller's viewpoint and provided Miller with the information he needed to give reality to his dream.

Miller called the new journal *Holistic Education Review*, and led off the first issue, in 1988, with a definition of the holistic paradigm. Above all else, he said, holistic education "is an expression of profound respect for the deeper, largely unrealized powers of our human nature." Education must address more than the raw intellect; it must nurture emotional, aesthetic, moral, and spiritual growth. It must consider how the child relates meaningfully to the community, nation, and planet.

Miller's editorial was essentially a manifesto, with ringing phrases such as, "Let us challenge the Sputnik mentality," "Let us question the meaning of 'basic skills'," and "Let us examine the myth that public education guarantees social and economic equality." Miller called for a special emphasis on spiritual growth: "Holistic educators see each child as a precious gift, as an embryo of untapped spiritual potential." At the same time, the holistic approach must be an ecological approach. "Respect for the depths of the human being necessarily involves respect for Nature and for the Earth: It is a reverence for all life." Indeed, Miller urged a recovery of the "intuitive knowledge, shared by traditional cultures around the world, that our existence as human beings is embedded in the grand unfolding of the universe."

In the journal and in his first book *What Are Schools For?*, Miller described the historical roots of the new paradigm. He showed how various writers—from Rousseau and Pestalozzi to Montessori and Steiner—had pointed to an inner force or energy that guides healthy development. In Miller's view, this force is spiritual, coming from a transcendent source. But the important thing, Miller said, is not whether one calls this force spiritual, but whether one respects it. Today, it is largely ignored; the overriding goal is to produce children who will succeed in the high-tech workplace. Still, there are child-centered educators who look for the manifestations of the creative energy within the



William Crain is a Professor in the Psychology Department at the City College of the City University of New York. He is the author of *Theories of Development: Concepts and Applications* (Prentice-Hall, 4th ed. 2000) and *Reclaiming Childhood: Letting Children Be Children in Our Achievement-Oriented Society* (Holt, 2003).

child. These educators—Montessorians, Waldorf teachers, progressive educators, and others—provide tasks on which children work with intense concentration because the tasks fulfill the child's inner urge toward healthy growth. The journal gave these educators a new voice.

After Miller got the journal underway, he contracted with Jakiela of Psychology Press to produce it. Four years later, Miller decided that beginning a new family and other practical considerations made it wisest to step down as editor. Miller and Jakiela selected Jeff Kane, then Dean of the School of Education at Adelphi University (now Vice President for Academic Affairs at Long Island University) as his replacement.

Kane shared Miller's fundamental views, but he felt he had to alter the journal somewhat to move it forward. Under Kane's leadership, the journal became less a tool of a movement and more of an open, scholarly forum, with a peer review process for submissions. It became more academic.

As early as the first discussions with Kane, questions were being raised whether the growth of the journal was being retarded by the term *holistic* in its title, which struck many as having too much of a New Age connotation. (In psychology, the term describes a rigorous research tradition that includes Kurt Goldstein, Gordon Allport, and Heinz Werner, but this wasn't the term's popular connotation). The title made it difficult to get the journal into libraries and attract many potential contributors. So in 1998 the title was changed to *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice*. The term *encounter* was inspired by Martin Buber's statement that "All real living is meeting." Following Buber, Kane believes that our approach to others—indeed, to the whole world—should be a loving embrace. It should be a personal I–Thou meeting, and not a detached, impersonal, I–It analysis. Kane's only regret is that the title does not also include "Education for a sustainable environment," which also is central to the journal's focus. But there are only so many words a title can bear.

Up Against Enormous Power

From the beginning, the journal has provided a wealth of insight. But neither the journal, nor the educational movement it was established to promote, grew to the extent that any of us had hoped. Both ran up against the standards movement. Just as the new journal was getting started, the standards movement was beginning to pick up momentum, and it has swept across the nation with enormous force.

Nearly every state in the nation has established new academic standards and rigorous standardized tests to measure students' progress. State governments have increasingly attached high stakes, such as grade promotion, to the test results. The upshot is that dreary test-driven education dominates school life. Under pressure to prepare students for the tests, there is no longer time for activities that children find meaningful and call forth their creative powers. There is no longer time for children to engage in imaginative play, explore nature, work on artistic activities, conduct research, or think deep thoughts. School days are becoming longer and even recess has been eliminated in several parts of the country. As testing dates approach, children commonly develop stomachaches and headaches. Many feel pure dread.

But none of this matters to the standards advocates. Education has one goal: to prepare students for the upcoming tests. The standards movement is the triumph of the I–It mentality. Children are no longer considered full, living beings, with hopes, fears, creative impulses, penetrating questions, and a sense of wonder. They are reduced to test scores.

To be sure, pockets of resistance have emerged. In May 2000 a brave group of parents and students boycotted the state-mandated testing in Massachusetts. In the following two springs new boycotts developed in Marin County, California; in Scarsdale, New York; in New York City; and elsewhere. But opposition was soon countered by federal intervention. In January 2002, Congress passed the Bush administration's No Child Left Behind Act, which

mandated standardized testing in grades 3 through 8. Testing has become increasingly commonplace in the younger years, too.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration is acting recklessly in a volatile and precarious world. It has broken numerous international treaties, has established a policy of first-strike military intervention, is curtailing civil liberties, and is letting industry loose on the natural environment. With violence erupting worldwide, I fear that the fires of Hell may scorch the earth.

How do we respond? We keep working. We continue to explore and articulate the alternatives to political and social forces that undermine the child's full development, exploit nature, oppress the poor and people of color, and spread war. We continue to work on behalf of the dignity of all people and all life. The problems may seem so large and varied that the task is overwhelming, but we just work even harder.

Elders and Teachers

In traditional societies, people dealt with particularly difficult situations by turning to their elders. Modern societies have largely abandoned this practice. We value change, cutting-edge developments, and the latest thinking—not the thinking of people from past decades.

In this issue, you will find some writers addressing the issue of tradition. Joseph Suina, a Native American spokesperson, and C. A. Bowers, an environmental scholar, speak directly about the value of traditional wisdom. Lawrence Rushing, a psychology professor and African-American activist, and Ron Miller draw upon the teachings of activist and spiritual leaders so naturally that one hardly notices them doing so. Their work on two of the great issues of the day—educational equality and peace—gains power in the process.

Despite the originality of such scholars, many people worry that a turning to tradition will result in uncritical conformity. This might be a danger, but it shouldn't detract us from the value of tradition. On this point, an anecdote in Suina's essay is instructive. Some Native American children in a kindergarten class faced a dilemma. A few days before Christmas, the teacher wanted to illustrate the meaning of the holiday with a birthday cake for Jesus. The children wanted to participate, but who could play the role of Jesus and blow out the candle? None would even consider playing the role of the holy child. The children discussed the problem among themselves, and they hit upon a solution: They took the cake out of the room, and let the wind, which in their Native American tradition is a spiritual element, blow out the candle. The children drew upon traditional views, but they also engaged in creative thinking.

Although modern American society appears to devalue traditional elders, it does have people who are, or who are in the process of becoming, inspiring teachers. These aren't just people with knowledge and classroom skills; they are people who squarely confront oppressive forces and think deeply about ways of liberating the human spirit and nurturing growth. Teachers in this larger sense sometimes focus on social action, as in the case of Martin Luther King, Jr., and sometimes their principal work is scholarly, as in the case of our journal's past editors. Most often, their primary work is with individual students, as when a teacher frees a student from self-doubt and enables the student to believe in herself.

The teachers who inspire us don't always find answers and solutions. Not even Socrates did. What matters is the quality of their struggle and their search. In this issue of *Encounter*, the social critic Peter Sacks illustrates this process in an unusually self-disclosing way. The search as a process—not necessarily an answer—is also captured by the comments about Donald Oliver in Ben Wilson's piece in the Book Review Section. More generally, I believe our journal's founders, contributors, and readers are unique in their ongoing efforts to lift the forces of oppression in order to nurture life, growth, and the human spirit.

— William Crain, *Editor*

The Pueblo People and the Dominant Culture

Conflict, Confusion, and Astonishment

Joseph H. Suina

Although the American educational system has the effect of suppressing indigenous cultures, sensitive teaching can still affirm them.

Joseph H. Suina is Associate Professor of Teacher Education at the University of New Mexico. He is a tribal councilman and former governor of the Cochiti Pueblo in New Mexico.

It is nearly 500 years since the first meeting between my native Southwest Pueblo people and our uninvited European guests. That first encounter must have been one of astonishment for my ancestors. Who were these bearded men, with their swords glinting in the hot Southwest sun, astride gigantic snorting horses shifting uneasily beneath their riders? Where did they come from and what did they want? What were they like? The sight of their vicious war dogs restrained only by fraying leather leashes was an ill omen.

At the time of that first contact, the native culture of my people was intact. It was viable in all ways. The Europeans subordinated it to their own culture, sometimes through brute force. The result was tremendous conflict, confusion, and astonishment, as well as heartbreak and tragedy.

Having lived almost my entire life in Cochiti Pueblo, and having served as the Lieutenant Governor and Governor, and now as a tribal Councilman, I have experienced these feelings time and again. Almost always a tribe like mine has had to follow the dictates of the dominant culture, of the "Great White Father," with no consideration for the wishes of the tribe.

The purpose of this paper is to share a few experiences with our native communities and our children, and to offer the dominant culture a glimpse of the results from the point of view of the individual and the group in the subordinate role. Perhaps the presentation of different views can produce some broader understanding and sensitivity, especially if the reader is an outsider who may make decisions that affect minority lives.

Conflict and confusion seem to be most pronounced when members of the subordinate group are forced to assimilate, however justifiable the reason might seem to be to the dominant culture. Those having to change may not want to, but may have been given no choice, or they may have been fed information about themselves that caused doubt in their own ability to provide "homegrown" solutions to life's challenges. In either case, they have been made to feel that they have to abandon their traditions and ties to their loved ones in order to live more fully the "Good Life" which is yet to be attained. Such was the case for me many times over the years.

Undermining the Sense of Self

The dominant society's Eurocentric curriculum can do much to undermine the sense of self as it is tied to the culture of first identity and can result in confusion that can last for many years to come. Memories of such encounters remain among the most piercing that I have from my childhood.

My fourth grade teacher was very proper, always well dressed and highly educated. Undoubtedly, she was the perfect model for Indian children for the Bureau of Indian Affairs School. This white teacher was very articulate; she prided herself in being precise with her words and rich with description. Because she seemed to care for us and wasn't particularly cruel, she had the respect of most parents in the village. We sat in rows and columns listening to her English roll off her tongue as she explained different concepts with great authority at the front of the room.

Once when we were studying about thunder and lightning, she made it clear to me that this phenomena could be explained simply by science. It seems that when hot air and cold air merge in the atmosphere, the result is a form of charged friction called electricity. It then appears as a flash of light racing across the sky and the crack of thunder soon follows; evidently light travels faster then sound.

There was no need for faith in the unknown, just pure and simple facts that could be tested and proven by white men in white coats in white laboratories with remarkable machinery and always in control. It was all rather amazing. There was no questioning that the teacher was correct. With her carefully articulated explanation, I finally understood how the world really worked. There was just one small problem: I was confused by my grandmother's explanation, which was quite different.

Grandmother, with whom I lived, told me that the lightning and thunder accompanying moisture were the power of the Spirits announcing the blessing of the rain to the people. Before the rain, there would be a quiet stillness in the air. Even the birds and the insects would fall silent as if aware that something powerful was about to happen. And then a gentle breeze would pick up and escalate. When we were in the fields, the cornstalks would rustle, whispering in anticipation. Next, a gust of wind would come to carry the sweet scent of moisture from a distant rain to heighten our own anticipation.

On a scorching July afternoon, the possibility of refreshing rain carried such promise, a respite for us and much needed moisture for our crops. Grandmother would say, "A blessed rain from the Spirits, so much better than the water we could supply with irrigation." She would immediately stop our work in the fields if either of us spotted even the slightest flash of lightning in the distance, for it was the first indication of the presence of the Spirits. Grandmother would reach for her offering pouch, hand me a pinch of corn meal and pollen, and the two of us would face the direction of the lightening. We would sprinkle the air gently with the offering and whisper prayers of gratitude and encouragement for the blessed water to descend upon us. I trusted something very special was about to happen. This was a moment as holy as the Catholic priest raising the offering chalice at the Sunday mass in the village. When the rain finally came down I would run, splashing through it, ruffling my hair in euphoria, shouting repeatedly, *Nahweghatra! Nahweghatra!* (May I have long hair! May I have long hair!). I wanted to make certain that every hair on my head was touched by the holy water so that I would grow strong and fruitful, just as grandmother had instructed.

But the teacher's information was very different and so clear, so sensible and coming from an intelligent and educated white person! What my grandmother told me was NOT true. How could she know? She never went to school! She couldn't even speak English! She was just superstitious.

This conflict tore at me; caught between what was so obviously sensible and what let me touch the Spirits. My mind sided with the teacher, but I could feel my heart tear.

Confusing Language

In a Pueblo that neighbors mine, a kindergarten teacher could not get his pupils to grasp the concept of "big, bigger, and biggest." He told me that he had no such difficulty in a kindergarten class he taught the year before in Illinois. He showed me a worksheet that the Native American youngsters could not grasp. It illustrated the concept with cartoon sketches of an elephant, a man, and a snake—in diminishing size.

It is not enough for teachers to speak perfect English, to be knowledgeable, and to be good role models for the dominant culture.

I realized that the problem stemmed from linguistic differences. In their native Keres tongue, words that refer to size also inherently account for an item's volume and direction. Thus, the word *matseche*, which describes a large animal such as an elephant, also denotes roundness. The word would not be used to describe the size of a man, who is slender and upright. Another word, *makutsru*, more appropriately describes a man, but this word would never be used to describe a long, slender snake that is close to the ground. Consequently, these teaching materials asked the children to make comparisons that made no sense according to young minds shaped by their native language.

What is the toll of many such school experiences on the young learners and teachers? Do they eventually come to believe they just aren't capable as learners and teachers? Where does the blame eventually rest? Is that why the standards are lowered, or do the teachers and students finally give up and just go through the motions of school? Native American students continue to score the lowest and have the highest dropout among all the different ethnic groups in the state. What is distressing in the incident above is that the children might have had a chance to contrast the meanings of size in their different languages, but instead ended up with only a shaky self-confidence in their learning ability and a bad taste for schooling.

Conflicting Forms of Prayer

Religion is the mainstay of Pueblo society. Our dances and ceremonies are forms of prayer and are observed much more frequently than in Christianity, which is often a one-hour Sunday experience. Children acquire the fundamental meaning of Pueblo spirituality through modeling and explanations by significant relatives and older siblings in the process of worship. Young Pueblo children have an understanding of religion that probably exceeds most peers their age in other cultures. The following suggests that this statement is true.

In a visit to another kindergarten classroom, I encountered another non-Indian grappling with the children's native culture. To her amazement she discovered that the answer to a practical teaching problem evolved out of the religious orientation of the five-year-olds she affectionately referred to as "mere babes with a deep understanding of life."

It was near Christmas and this teacher was perturbed that her young charges were bombarded with only the shopping mall, consumerism version of Christmas — lights, glitter and toys — since that was all they talked about. She thought she would instill in them the true meaning of Christmas through a simple, concrete activity that was geared to their developmental level of understanding and within their realm of experiences.

Thinking that a cake would be just the thing to illustrate that this was Christ's birthday, she and the class baked one for the celebration. This got the kids all excited and eager for the occasion. When the time came she set the luscious chocolate cake, complete with a single flickering candle, before the young beaming faces.

Heartily, the children sang the familiar "Happy Birthday" song as if the one being celebrated was present in the room, as would be case for any classmate's birthday. What the teacher did not anticipate

was the one question that was on the minds of all the children, "Who's going to blow out the candle?"

The children looked at the teacher, then at each other in puzzlement. No one was eager to serve in the role of the Jesus Christ. A brief consultation in their native language ensued among the children, leaving the teacher completely in the dark. After their brief discussion, it appeared they had come to some kind of consensus but she wasn't sure what it was. As she was about to call out the name of an individual to step forth to pretend to be the "Birthday Boy," two five-year-olds got up and moved quickly toward the birthday cake with the flickering candle. As if rehearsed, one picked up the cake and the other hurried ahead to open the door, with the rest trailing behind. Just as anticipated, the outdoor breeze blew out the candle! The teacher was dumfounded and completely amazed at what she had witnessed.

To these children Christ, God, the Great Spirit or whatever name we attach to the creator, is in the wind, the rain, and the sunshine. There was no need to pretend to be Christ; sacred spirits are everywhere, all around us and even within each and every one of us. In attempting to teach these "mere babes," the teacher admitted that she was taught more then she could ever teach them that year and this was just one example. The teacher went on to say that she learned more about herself than anything else:

> The culture of the children was held up to me like a mirror with which to check myself. I learned among other things that I didn't nearly have the faith and respect in the metaphysical that they and their community have. Although I always considered myself an environmentalist, my fundamental view was that you do something to the environment to affect it, to harm it, to protect it, or to harness it. I never thought of it as having inherent spiritual power, as these children did.

The teacher explained that she had to reexamine some basic approaches in her teaching in order to be more inclusive. In being open to the world of differences, she was able to see her own beliefs and actions with greater insight and consciousness. Being self-knowledgeable and self-aware are very important teacher qualities for working with diverse student populations for without them, teachers never realize how they are relating to their students. Although teachers almost always start out well-intentioned, all too often they leave their culturally different students in confusion and conflict. Perhaps even worse, they render them incapable of finding their own solutions to problems, which happily was not the case for the young children above. Students must come to learn that some solutions will evolve out of their native worldview. After all, their native world provided answers for their forefathers for hundreds of years before the white man came on the scene. Learned helplessness is a problem many tribal leaders worry about: Indian youth have come to have little faith in their native abilities and their community's viability. They too often wait for the next outside paid program to fall on their laps, instead of taking the initiative to find their own solutions.

Disrupting an Entire Life Pattern

The conflict, confusion, and astonishment of the type experienced by teachers and students are not a constant minute-to-minute occurrence; they come at different times in different forms in the process of sharing intimate lives. They are experienced by individuals in situations where what is familiar is challenged or altered. At other times the whole community is exposed to a situation that causes conflict, confusion, and change in the collective experience. The following is one such example.

In the mid 1950s when my child world was rapidly expending, I came to appreciate the dual existence of life in our Pueblo community. We had a home in the village where we lived in the late fall, winter, and early spring. Except for the days when we had dances and ceremonies we lived the rest of our time in our summer homes in the fields. Each extended family had a well-defined parcel of land with the summer home that reflected great care and pride as did the fields where we nurtured corn, chilies and watermelons: the staples of Pueblo farming.

One day, soon after the harvest, the monster machines appeared. Huge earthmovers, some with giant steel blades under their bellies and others with steel buckets the size of a small house came to do their business. They shoved and gouged at our summer homes and everything around, including the

well-established borders and neatly terraced gardens until all was erased. In a matter of weeks, the dust settled and all that remained was one huge, boring, level field without personality. Gone were the fruit trees, shady lean-tos and small outdoors ovens around the back of the summer homes. Gone were the side corrals and woodpiles. Even gone was the special grove of bamboo-like reeds that provided us fellows with the straightest and lightest arrows for our hunting escapades and shooting contests. Gone forever because the U.S. Government had another bright idea for the Indians: that more level land would increase crop production and introduce Kansas's style of tilling the earth.

The following spring the Government provided seeds and even the services of modern tractors to encourage the use of the "much improved land." No one took advantage of the offer except for two, more ambitious individuals without their extended families. Most people began to change their work pattern over to making crafts to satisfy tourists' cravings.

Farming, which sustained my people long before and after the arrival of the European, ceased almost altogether at that point. It seemed that the spirit of farming as we had practiced it, was also gouged out. To be sure, our traditional religious orientation, based on an agricultural society, remains with us today. That is, our petitions for blessing and thanksgiving revolve around Mother Nature. But now our songs, dances, and prayers have to be personally transformed into meanings that are realities for us, such as petitions for healthy relationships and productivity in the workplace and other important needs in contemporary Pueblo life. Some things are important enough to persist as "rituals redefined," even when the literal meaning in everyday life situations no longer fits. Perhaps this is the way we hang onto important traditional values, such as our relationship with the land and all of nature. Inflictions from the outside are handled in remarkably resilient ways. We also hang on to the hope that one day we will go back into farming and recapture more completely the spirit of that cooperative lifestyle that the land allowed us to have.

As if the leveling of the land were not enough, the U.S. government tore at our way of life with another "technological wonder." This was a gigantic dam in the heart of our Pueblo land. It spanned two and a half miles on each side of the river and was two hundred feet tall at its center. The installation of the dam was a sacrilege to the Pueblo, who revere the land and the river. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers did a poor job of constructing it. It leaked beneath the base, leaving the land the U.S. government had leveled now water-logged and full of alkali. Twenty five years later, my tribe won a legal settlement that forced the U.S. government to fix the damage done by the dam. The land has been brought to life once again, although it still lacks the fruit trees and the special character that it once had. It is up to the young to work to restore it.

Resolving Conflict and Confusion: Layers of Culture

As a framework for understanding the kinds of conflict and confusion described above, I like to think of culture being comprised of three distinct layers.

The first and most obvious is the "what" of culture, the materials layer, which consists primarily of the artifacts and activities unique to the culture. This layer would include foods, clothing, and entertainment, such as songs and dances and all else that is translatable to tangible things and actions we can touch, see, hear, taste, feel, and smell. Far from being confrontational to non-members, this "icing" of the culture is usually sought after by outsiders: witness the countless ethnic restaurants and curio shops patronized by thousands in any sizable town across America. Every state with large numbers of indigenous people considers tourism a major industry and expends a considerable amount of resources to advertise people like us, ironically after many failed years at changing us.

The middle layer, which I shall refer to as the procedural layer, deals with the "how-to" of the culture. It serves as sort of the road map to cultural organizations, such as government, education, social systems, daily behaviors, and all other acceptable formal and informal ways of doing things in the culture. This layer is not as easily accessible as the first, although with some effort a non-member can learn the procedures to varying degrees of proficiency without having to adopt the values of the culture. For example, many Americans working in Japan become very

proficient in the culture with the passage of time but do not adopt the values of the people there. Rejection of the culture, in spite of knowing "how to" in the culture, has shortened the stay of many foreigners.

The third and least obvious of the layers, deals with the "why," or the beliefs, of the culture. This might also be referred to as the "values" layer and it is the layer most likely to lead to conflict, confusion, and astonishment. In the worst of situations it can lead to extreme ethnocentrism and a total rejection of another culture. This may ultimately result in hatred and even war. Within the United States, the lack of understanding of Indian beliefs has led to attempts to completely assimilate Indians into "American" culture. In dominant–minority relations, there is a roughshod riding over the "lesser" culture and the consequent resentment and retreat from any meaningful involvement on the part of the powerless.

The U.S. Government–Indian relationship is clearly of that superordinate–subordinate nature which has obligated the Government to lead its wards to the "good life." The Government saw no reason to consult with the tribe in leveling the land. It saw leveled lands merely as more cultivated lands leading to bigger returns and greater ability to purchase more material things. But to the Indians, what mattered most was not the size of the profits but the value of their unique relationships with nature and with one another. Each location highlighted the passage of each season with ceremonies and other events for the ordinary and extraordinary days of their lives. The reason the tribe did not initially protest the drastic redirection of the community is that prior experiences with the Government have proven to be futile. Perhaps it's part of the learned helplessness that the minority comes to feel after many such disappointments. It was only after the fact that our people protested level fields by silently refusing to participate in the Kansas farm approach.

The defeat of the Government in the courts was a major feather in the cap of our people. It is unfortunate that "little people" have to rely on small victories and major ones if that's possible, to regain some of the sense of dignity and self-confidence taken from them by their own Government by being treated as helpless and unworthy of consultation.

Implications for Teachers

What happens in the classroom to undermine the heritage culture will also happen to the children later as adults in community life. Who is to say which consequence reaps greater tragic results: the child who loses faith in his grandmother for even a part of his life, or the community that loses faith in Government. In the end it is the children who will eventually fight for justice for their people, and to do so they must have faith in their original culture.

The value of the teacher cannot be overestimated. It is not enough for teachers to speak perfect English, to be knowledgeable, and to be good role models for the dominant culture. Although the "birthday cake" teacher started out imposing her idea of Christmas onto the children with the best intentions, she recognized that there was a special quality in the perception of her students even though they were "mere babes." More importantly, she allowed the children to shape the event according to *their* interpretation of the world instead of further imposing her own. The children will remember that their world was honored and they will develop inner strength to face the challenges that lie ahead.

Not every teacher can know about everything in every culture he/she will encounter. Being open to other cultures, remaining a "work in progress," and taking every opportunity to learn more, will keep the teacher alive and viable for the students. But more importantly teachers will allow their children to keep the faith in the culture of their birthright, which in all cases is just as viable as the one which they will have to adopt to some degree as a minority.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my own words from a presentation in 1993:

> This nation can learn from its rich and diverse population. We can and must humble ourselves to honor the many rich perspectives on life. It is in the first culture that child will find the inner strength to manage the challenges from the second one and life in general.

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The GRE & Me

Prestige Versus Quality in American Higher Education

Peter Sacks

The author of *Standardized Minds* describes his own protest against the Graduate Record Exam, which, despite its well-documented predictive limitations, is still widely used in the academic sorting process.

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Several years ago, I set out to write a book. I was motivated, initially, by the observation that we Americans have been engaged in a long-running love affair with mental testing to label individuals as either capable or incapable, or to classify educational institutions as being excellent or mediocre. At the time, during the first Bush presidency, I was not long out of the daily grind of newspaper journalism, and I knew also that a good story was waiting to be told about the rise of the test-driven accountability movement in our schools. The book I wanted to write would be firmly rooted in social scientific research about the uses and misuses of standardized mental testing in our society. But I also wanted to blend the research with stories about the struggles of the real children, students, adults—all of us—who are measured, sorted and labeled on the basis of mental tests we are required to take from the time we enter kindergarten through college and beyond.

From the extensive body of research about testing that I sifted through for more than four years, I sought to shed some light on several questions. For example, how did the "testing culture," as I came to call it, become such an entrenched part of American life? Why, even in modern America and its seemingly progressive attitudes about education and democracy, do institutions continue to allocate opportunities to individuals on the basis of performance on such gatekeeping tests?

After I began to find patterns, insights and evidence about the uses and misuses of testing—and the considerable stakes involved—I especially wanted to tell the stories of people who have been stigmatized by their performance on these high-stakes mental tests. I found people who had spent

their entire lies fighting to overcome the larger society's presumption of the virtual equivalency of test scores with academic talent or potential for success in the workplace.

The book I set out to write was published a couple of years ago. As a former journalist, I had grown accustomed to jumping onto the next investigation, the next project, or the next timely article that beat my competition. But this testing story became much different for me, because it spoke to my sensibilities of basic fairness and justice about education and opportunity in a nation that increasingly, even blatantly at times, seems to be about the right connections and right schools and right jobs, where opportunities are allocated on the basis of class privilege and overly narrow definitions of merit that appear to primarily serve the interests of elites.

My book, which I called *Standardized Minds*, was published. But it was woefully incomplete, because the heart-rending stories never end. I know a man named Casey, for instance, who has taught as an adjunct professor at Boise State University in Idaho in the construction management program. He has a master's degree—the terminal credential in his field, by the way—and years of impressive professional experience on top of a stint in the Peace Corps. After teaching as an adjunct for two years, Casey has become one of the best teachers in the construction management program, and was even voted the department's best teacher by students. I know Casey, and he's a natural teacher, and it's easy for me to see why students might think so, too.

Casey decided that he would like to make a full-time career of college teaching and has applied two or three times for tenure-track openings in his department. Despite his proven track record as a teacher, despite being the choice of the department head and its faculty, the university itself has vetoed his hiring because he lacks a doctorate degree. But here's what made me angry. Casey, knowing about the work I've done on educational testing, has confided to me that he's afraid of taking the Graduate Record Exam, which of course is required for admission to virtually any doctorate program you can name.

Of course, one might say, Who isn't scared of taking the GRE? But with Casey, the fear is more intense than for most. Indeed, his fear of taking the exam has frozen him into a state of complete inaction. He simply won't put himself into the position of sitting for the GRE and exposing himself to the humiliation. Casey has confided to me that he's always done poorly on standardized tests and that he can't tolerate the thought of being considered "stupid," as he put it, because of his GRE scores. Casey is frozen by fear over an exam that will demonstrate remarkably little about his ability to complete a doctoral program, while students and the university lose out on a great teacher.

Indeed, since completing my book, I've discovered that the struggle for justice never ends when it comes to confronting the inordinate weight that mental testing plays in our culture and the psychic damage it inflicts on people like Casey. The testing culture as we know it is entrenched and changes ever so slowly and often only on the margins. When we hear stories like Casey's or encounter public schools like Hunter College Elementary in Manhattan, which screens 5-year-olds for the school's kindergarten strictly on the basis of IQ test scores, I often feel that we have made little progress as a society, from the so-called old days when the nation's early mental testers, the likes of Lewis Terman and Charles Brigham, designated recent immigrants like Italians, Jews and Poles to be feeble-minded idiots on the basis of an IQ test (Sacks 2000, 39).

Even in post-millennium America, institutions simply do not use testing technology wisely or even abide by the professional counsel of testing experts. Consider the new way in which the U.S. Naval Academy has decided to use SAT scores. A few months ago, according to the advocacy organization FairTest, the Naval Academy told a promising student named Daniel Wurangian, who lives near Los Angeles, that his modest SAT score wasn't good enough to even allow him to submit an application to the academy. No matter that he had earned a 3.64 GPA and had spent four years as a cadet in the Naval Junior Reserves Officer Training Corps, serving as the school's highest ranking cadet. What's more, Daniel's congressman had also nominated him to the Air Force Academy.

But owing to the intense competition for admission to the Naval Academy, officials opted to make the sorting process easier for them by setting a mini-

mum cut-off score on the SAT for one to merit consideration. The policy might be bureaucratically convenient to the Navy but it's an outrageous offense to professionally acceptable testing practice. Indeed, the academy admitted that it had not even done validity studies to prove that the SAT is the "effective predictor" of success at the school that officials claim it is (Schemo 2002, A20).

But such lameness is par for the course. Time and again, we find cases of institutions simply assuming that test scores are good predictors of future performance, without doing the hard work of demonstrating the validity of that assumption. For years, the National Collegiate Athletic Association has set minimum SAT scores for athletic eligibility. State governments sponsor so-called "merit" scholarship programs that give money to prospective college students based solely on standardized test scores. The so-called "Bright Futures" program in Florida is illustrative. In the academic year 2000-2001, the state of Florida doled out $164 million in full scholarships to students who scored above 1270 on the SAT I or above 28 on the ACT (FairTest 2002, 1).

Primarily a result of test-score differences between whites and most under-represented ethnic groups, these "merit" scholarship programs often amount to a massive taxpayer giveaway to white, upper-middle class families. In Florida, for instance, African Americans represented 22 percent of all high school graduates, but they received only 8 percent of the Bright Futures scholarships, according to a recent study by the Harvard Civil Rights Project. In contrast, white students received nearly 77 percent of the scholarships despite making up just 61 percent of high school graduates (Heller and Marin 2002, 31).

The case of the City University of New York shows the extent to which gatekeeping policies that place undue weight on test scores really harm students of color and offers no demonstrable gain to anyone except those administrators and institutions who benefit when they get to report higher test scores to such arbiters of educational excellence as *U.S. News & World Report*.

In 1999, CUNY's Board of Trustees adopted a new admissions policy for its senior colleges by imposing a new layer of testing in math, reading, and writing the so-called Freshman Skills Assessment Test, FSAT. CUNY required students to pass all three skills tests to be admitted to a bachelor's program. Or, students were able to waive the FSAT requirement with sufficiently high scores on the SAT or New York State Regents Exam. This, even if students had met or exceeded all other requirements for admission, including high school grades and courses taken (CUNY 2002, 1-3).

With the new policy being monitored by the U.S. Office of Civil Rights, CUNY psychology professor William Crain and Sandra Del Valle of the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund have analyzed data showing that African American and Hispanic applicants have been barred from the senior colleges at twice the rate of whites (about 44 percent versus 21 percent) due solely to the new testing requirement.

According to Crain and Del Valle (2002, 1):

> At first glance, it might seem reasonable to expect students to pass these standardized tests. But all the tests are of unknown or poor validity when it comes to predicting success at CUNY.
>
> All the above applicants had met a senior college's general admissions requirements for its bachelor's degree program (requirements which, in combination, are respectable indicators of academic success). CUNY is disproportionately excluding students of color solely on the basis of highly questionable tests.

How questionable? According to a 2000 study by the Rand Corp., scores on three FSAT exams combined explain no more than 6.2 percent of the variance in freshman grades at CUNY senior colleges. The very same correlations held for the College Board's SAT, meaning that these gatekeeping tests were simply terrible predictors of student success in CUNY's bachelor's programs (Klein and Orlando 2000, 8-9).

In 2000, CUNY modified its admissions program to include the American College Testing Program's (ACT) college placement exams in reading and writing. To date, CUNY has yet to prove any evidence whatsoever that the ACT tests are useful predictors of classroom performance at CUNY (*Senate Digest* 2002, 3). In fact, the available evidence points to the contrary. In one recent evaluation of the CUNY ad-

missions policy, English language learners who failed the ACT admissions tests earned virtually identical college grades, on average, as all other freshman who passed the tests (New York State Education Department 2002, 78).

If the tests are such relatively weak predictors of academic success, then why do administrators insist on using them? Again, it's often about marketing and prestige, as administrators strive to make their institutions shine in the educational marketplace. When administrators raise an institution's supposed "academic standards" 'via higher test score cut-offs, two things will eventually happen. First, colleges can claim to have better quality students, which, with the help of *U.S. News & World Report* and other sources of "market" information, attracts more of the same kind of students; and second, by attracting these supposed better qualified applicants, colleges are also attracting students whose parents need less financial aid for college.

When institutions set minimum test scores for admission or scholarships, they are also suggesting that actual performance on endeavors of substance, such as Daniel Wurangian's classroom performance or his accomplishments as a junior cadet, don't matter, that they aren't equally valid evidence of accomplishment as a few hours spent on a pencil and paper test.

In fact, just the opposite is the case, and the research literature is quite clear on this point. Accomplishments on endeavors that are very similar to the desired traits one wishes to predict—high school classroom performance as an indicator of college freshman performance, for instance—are virtually always better predictors than standardized test scores. In fact, the single best predictor of college success, defined as bachelor's degree completion, is the academic intensity and rigor of one's high school course of study (U.S. Department of Education 1999, ix).

When one adds to the mix the harsh effects of predetermined test score cut-offs on students of color and those from modest economic backgrounds, the more nonsensical and unjust such policies become. But at the very least, institutions like the Naval Academy are obligated to run the numbers and prove to themselves and the rest of the world that their use of test scores as a gatekeeper to the school makes sense and that it's an educationally effective tool. In other words, they must prove that they're using test scores as more that a mechanistic sorting device of illusory validity.

Reinventlng the Meritocracy

It took me about four years of full-time work to finish the research and writing of my book, and the aftermath has turned out to be more personally profound that I could have imagined. As I continued to gather information and evidence about the America's "testing culture" and its effects on schools, students, school children, employees and our society at large, I was sustained during this effort by my increasingly firm belief that we can do better.

Naively, perhaps, I came to believe that we could actually re-invent what is commonly believed to be a meritocracy in order to make it more humane, just and, above all, reflective of genuine accomplishment on endeavors of substance—the sorts of endeavors that people like Casey and Daniel engaged in day in and day out to prove, over and over, their high levels of competence.

I came to understand that the prevailing model of academic merit that institutions have adopted and grown accustomed to over the last century or so, a model of merit that relies heavily on one's success on standardized mental tests, is not a model handed down from some higher power and carved indelibly into stone.

Those realizations were reflected in the passion with which I completed my book, an effort that, I can now admit, drained me physically and emotionally. That passion, however, was informed not by idealism, naivete, and wishful thinking. With my training and experience in the social sciences and investigative reporting, I became persuaded by evidence. I became persuaded by the evidence such as the lackluster predictive validity of gatekeeping exams, such as the Graduate Record Exam. I became persuaded by evidence that a GRE, SAT, or LSAT score often says more about the educational background of one's parents and their net wealth than it does one's probability for success in advanced study.

But was the public at large getting the straight story on these issues? I wondered.

As just one example, the Graduate Record Examinations Board states unequivocally: "Research indi-

cates that GRE scores are valid predictors of success in the first year of graduate school for all students." (Sacks 2000, 275) Of course, the crux of the issue is the degree of validity, and the gritty details on this score do not paint nearly as bright a picture as that GRE Board's public pronouncements imply.

According to studies by the exam's administrator, Educational Testing Service, covering some 1,000 graduate departments and 12,000 students, GRE scores could explain just 9 percent of the variation in first-year grades. In the natural sciences, the GRE analytical test accounted for 7 percent of the variance in first-year grades. What about the GRE math section and its success at predicting grades in engineering? That must be a powerful correlation, right? In fact, the GRE quantitative test could account for no more that 4 percent of the variation in student engineers' classroom performance (Sacks 2000, 276).

Many other independent academic studies also leave little room for doubt about those basic relationships. Consider one 1995 meta-analysis of a few dozen studies covering some 5,000 test-takers in the years 1955 through 1992, as reported in the journal *Educational and Psychological Measurement*. The researchers discovered that the combined GRE verbal and quantitative score could explain just 6 percent of the variance in first-year grades. The researchers remarked:

> The average amount of variance (in graduate grade point average) accounted for by performance on these dimensions of the GRE was of such little magnitude that it appears they are virtually useless from a prediction standpoint.
>
> When this finding is coupled with studies suggesting that performance on the GRE is age, gender, and race-specific, the use of this test as a determinant of graduate admissions becomes even more questionable. (Sacks 2000, 277)

Evidence of this nature sustained my beliefs that American educational institutions could abandon or significantly reduce their reliance on these cognitive screens, and do so—against the dire warnings of the Chicken-Littles—without harming academic quality and perhaps even enhancing quality. And, at the same time, institutions could improve their diversity in terms of ethnicity and social class by rethinking their definitions of academic merit.

In fact, that is exactly what has happened at several colleges and universities, big and small, public and private, which have chosen to place less weight on gatekeeping exams in their admissions programs. Consider, for example, the University of Texas at Austin. In 1996, a federal appeals court, in the "Hopwood" decision, ordered the university to dismantle its affirmative action program, which historically had relied upon a two-tiered admissions system based on race.

In response to the court order, the state created the "Top 10 Percent" plan, which guaranteed admission to any state campus, including the flagship University of Texas at Austin, to any high school graduate ranking in the top 10 percent of his or her graduating class—regardless of one's performance on college entrance examinations like the SAT.

Typifying the road-to-ruin outcry that ensued over the Texas plan was the dire warning in the December 1999 of the *New Republic* (1999) that the Texas plan and others like it would come "at the cost of dramatically lowering the academic qualifications of entering freshman" and that such solutions that diminish the importance of test scores in admissions are "a recipe for the destruction of America's great universities."

Those were mighty strong predictions, which turned out to be dead wrong. Consider the academic performance of those admitted under the Top 10 Percent program. As just one example, take the top 10 percenters who earned GPAs of 3.12 at the university. Their SAT average coming in was about 1145—fully 200 points lower than non-top 10 percenters who earned slightly lower GPAs of 3.07. In fact, the GPAs of 3.12 for those automatically admitted students with their modest SATs was equal to the academic performance of non top 10 percenters with SATs of 1500 and higher (Lavergne and Walker 2001, 7). (I've chosen the 3.12 GPA simply as an illustration. The same relationships hold for all GPAs and test score intervals, according to research at the University of Texas at Austin.)

What's more, while proving that UT–Austin could place less credence on test scores without harming academic quality—far from it—the university found

that its ethnic diversity, which had declined precipitously in immediate aftermath of "Hopwood," had been restored to the pre-Hopwood days, when its affirmative action program was in full force.

Prior to the Top 10 Percent law, just a few dozen high schools in mostly white and upper middle class neighborhoods of the state had fed students to the university. But in the aftermath of the policy change, UT–Austin also discovered that significantly more schools from the inner cities of Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, as well as more rural high schools, also began to send more students to the Austin campus (Montejano 2001, 2).

Personal Choices

As I said, completing my book turned out to be more personally affecting than I ever would have imagined. In fact, I found myself having to make some very important ethical choices, forcing me to decide whether my work in this area was merely an academic exercise or a lifetime project that I had to reconcile with my own life's choices. After completing the book and continuing to write and speak about the history and the present day uses of standardized testing in America, I made the decision to pursue a return to graduate school to complete a doctorate in education. Why study education for one who had already completed graduate studies in economics and journalism? Unlike any field of study I'd previously explored, I found myself to be intellectually consumed by the study of education. The reason, I suspect, is that what we call "education" is a complex interdisciplinary nexus of many subject areas, including economics, sociology, psychology, public policy, philosophy, anthropology, history, and other fields. Education, as a policy arena, encapsulates many of our society's central and most pressing concerns, including the grossly unequal distribution of opportunity in our society along race and class lines—problems that mirror my personal concerns about social and economic justice.

And so, I sought information and application packets from five doctoral programs. Without naming names, I'll simply say that two were very prestigious private national universities, one on the East Coast, the other on the West Coast. Two others were large regionally focused state universities. And one was in my own state of residence in Idaho.

Which brings me, again, to the Graduate Record Exam. As one might suppose, all the programs to which I applied required the GRE in their application process. My first task was procedural, really, but I wrote each school's dean requesting a waiver from the GRE requirement, briefly citing my philosophical opposition to the testing requirement. It's not surprising that none of the schools would budge on its policy: Take the test, or leave it, they in essence told me.

I wasn't going to let them off the hook that easily. I completed the application process as required by all institutions, and I took the opportunity in my statement of purpose, the personal essay explaining my reasons for pursuing doctoral study, to elaborate on my position regarding the GRE requirement.

"The GRE process has confronted me with an ethical dilemma," I wrote. "I could submit to the exam and avoid the possibility of alienating members of the admissions committee, or I can adhere to my sense of intellectual and personal integrity.

"I have chosen the latter path," I continued. "I understand that the GRE is a requirement for admission. But I cannot in good conscience undermine all that I have been working for during the past several years and submit to the GRE exercise.

"Therefore, to meet the requirement," I told the committees, "I have taken the GRE only by answering its questions at random. The score you will receive is therefore a random score."

I realized that my refusal could damage my chances of admission to the programs, and I conceded this much in my statement to the admissions committees. But I also asked that the committees to evaluate my record on the basis of what I have accomplished on endeavors of substance.

"Indeed," I wrote, "I would like nothing better than to be part of such a community of fair-minded scholars."

Initially, my wife, Kathleen, thought I was nuts not to play the testing game.

I recall our having dinner at a Mexican restaurant in Seattle some years ago, when I first told her about my idea of writing a book about mental testing in America, and the spirited argument that ensued. She, like many of us, had been persuaded by years of

schooling and test-taking that such testing, at worst, was a necessary evil to sort the capable from the incapable. But I know she would be the first to admit that, as one who is persuaded by scientific evidence in her work in medicine, that my work in this arena has completely changed her thinking and challenged her long held beliefs.

Nevertheless, Kathleen thought I was naive to submit random scores on the GRE. And I have no doubt that friends and acquaintances also thought me a bit odd tilting at such an intractable windmill as the entrenched testing enterprise in higher education.

"These people have rules to follow," Kathleen told me, referring to the doctoral programs' admissions committees.

"They probably won't even see your statement of purpose, but they will see horrendous GRE scores," she said. "And even if they do get by those scores and read your statement, they'll brand you as a rebel."

From that perspective, then—a very sensible and practical one, I would readily concede—I was embarking on a lose-lose proposition: I lose if the graduate committees read my statement and brand me a rebel. And I lose if they do not read my statement and label me as intellectually incapable due to my obviously feeble GRE performance.

Of course, I too had doubts as to whether I was being foolhardy. But, if not me, of all people, a 40-something former economist, journalist, and college teacher turned education analyst, who had staked out at least a modest reputation as a thoughtful critic of the testing in schools and higher education, then who could challenge this entrenched system?

So I paid the Educational Testing Service what I recall was a rather exorbitant testing fee and scheduled a day to take the computerized version of the GRE.

How could I forget that day, Sept. 12, 2001, at 9 a.m.? I arrived at the testing center, operated by a company called Prometric which contracts with ETS. As directed, I arrived 30 minutes prior to my test time. The woman in charge introduced herself as Melanie. Melanie handed me a clipboard containing a sheet of paper with some typed information on it.

"Copy this statement in long-hand," Melanie ordered, and I proceeded to write out the statement in my impenetrable scrawl, promising not to reveal any of the test questions to a third party.

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I signed it and handed Melanie my driver's license. She shot another photo of me, which she digitally filed away on the computer linked to my test. She led me into a sealed room and a seat in front of one of the dozen or so computers in the room. After sitting down at my computer, the first task before me was a tutorial about the mechanics of test-taking on the computer. I took special care on the tutorial, because I wanted to ensure that my responses on the test itself would be recorded accurately. I learned how to use the mouse, how to answer a multiple-choice question, how to confirm my answer, how to keep track of time on each section of the test, how to get help on the mechanics of test-taking, and so on.

After 15 minutes on the tutorial, I was ready.

One might think that giving random answers to a standardized test like the GRE would be straightforward, but doing so actually requires some thoughtful strategy. At first, I simply picked the first choice of answers on the list, repeating it for several more test items before switching to the last choice, and so on, back and forth. But, feeling sort of like Joseph K. in Kafka's "The Trial," an existential cloud began to envelop me. I feared that the computer might abruptly stop the testing session because it had been programmed to detect strange response patterns. That's when I switched to a purely random mode, trying as best I could not to fall into any particular answer pattern.

As I gained my stride, I discovered this more random and less systematic approach to test-taking wonderfully liberating. It took me all of 30 minutes to complete my random responses to the verbal, quantitative, and two analytical sections of the GRE. Upon exiting the computer's testing program, the ma-

chine quickly tabulated my scores, which were predictably abysmal—in fact, the lowest scores possible.

I left the sealed testing room and went into Melanie's office, where she sat at her desk.

"You're done?" she asked me in disbelief.

"Yes," I said, sheepishly, slightly embarrassed at my deception.

I surely wasn't going to inform her that I had completed the test with random answers, again not wanting my test results to be derailed.

"You must be a genius!" Melanie said. "That's the fastest GRE I've ever seen!" she said.

I couldn't leave the Prometric testing center without one last shot that I hoped would be eye-opening for them as well as a source of mild amusement.

For the occasion of my GRE protest, I brought along a copy of my book and a short letter. After Melanie finished gushing about my GRE performance, I handed her the book and note.

"As people who daily administer standardized tests for education and the workplace—such as the Graduate Record Exam that I am sitting for today — please accept a copy of my latest book," the note said.

"In case you would ever wish to reflect upon just what tests such as the GRE really mean."

Driving home, I reflected on what had just happened, especially Melanie's gushing about my genius in response to my record GRE time. Didn't that just say it all? I thought. Didn't Melanie's reaction sum up our culture's take on such issues as intelligence, merit, and accomplishment?

We live in a culture in which anonymous sperm or egg donors inform us about their intelligence by quoting their SAT scores. Where job applicants to law firms list their LSAT scores on their resumés. Where a newspaper feature story on the healthy adult brain defines it as the ability to do puzzles and play games.

And, one is a genius when they turn in the fastest GRE on record. I also considered how the Prometric staff might react to my letter and gift of my book. Of course, we all know the Prometric staff wasn't in the reflection business. They were in the business of collecting fees for standardized tests, and were joined up with some of the testing industry's biggest players to do so. I had few illusions that I would change any hearts and minds at this one testing center in Boise, Idaho.

But unlike Kathleen, I really was hopeful that the doctoral programs to which I applied would seriously consider my statement and respect my philosophical position regarding the GRE. After all, in a very genuine sense, as members of a university community, these committees were supposed to be in the "reflection" business, as it were.

As it turned out, it seems we were both right. Recall that I applied to five programs, including a state institution my state of residence; two large regional public universities, including one in Seattle and the other in Colorado; and two elite national universities, one on the East Coast, the other on the West Coast.

As it happens, I was admitted to all the programs to which I applied—except for for two. Yes, just as Kathleen forewarned, the two very prestigious national programs declined to admit me.

Of course, the methods such doctoral programs use to screen their applicants is often shrouded in secrecy. But the differing ways in which the five programs communicated with me may say volumes about degree to which they had fully investigated my application file. Interestingly (and forgive me again if I sound like Joseph K.), even before making their selections, the programs that wound up admitting me always addressed me by my preferred name in their correspondence with me. The two programs that did not admit me appeared to robotically insist on not doing so.

Did that depersonalization signify something fundamentally different about the selection process of the elite programs compared to the others? Was Kathleen correct in assuming that my applications to the elite programs were automatically tossed into a reject pile because, according to the face value of my GRE score report, I was clearly not among their top candidates?

Of course, I'll never really know the answer to those questions. But I do know that the programs that did welcome me had in fact considered my complete application file with a process that went beyond the terrible test scores. Clearly, they had in place procedures in which human beings had been given the responsibility to make human judgments. Accordingly, these people were given institutional permission to go beyond the numerical indexes of grades or test scores in order to see a far more com-

plete portrait an applicant's skills, abilities, and accomplishments that were germane to successful graduate study.

At this point in my story, I must now make an important confession. My reasons for applying to doctoral programs were not entirely pure, although my interest in pursuing doctoral study was genuine. But in addition to that simple desire to learn and be among colleagues pursuing similar interests, I could not pass up the chance to perform a sort of social experiment involving the admissions game. I wanted to see just how the doctoral programs, with significant differences in their selectivity and perceived prestige in the educational marketplace would handle a candidate who already had made at least a small contribution to the field in which he proposed to study. By submitting random test scores and clearly and fully backing up my ethical position with careful arguments and evidence, I tried to position myself as a good "test case" for an alternative way of looking at merit than the prevailing one inextricably linked to standardized test performance.

And I do think the responses of the various programs to my application are telling. Upon being admitted to the two large regional programs and the one in my home state, I was overwhelmed with the enthusiasm of the faculty and other representatives of the universities who began to "recruit," me—for lack of a better term—in earnest.

At one program, my would-be adviser made the effort to schedule a day of individual meetings with faculty and other doctoral students. All went out of their way to make me feel most welcome. With each meeting, I became all the more convinced that the people in this program had placed a high value on, not just what the program might offer me, but how I, warts and all, might also contribute to their efforts.

In other words, I felt highly valued, not because of my test scores or grades or letters of recommendations, but because of my actual performance and accomplishments on endeavors that were relevant, tangible and real.

Indeed, I even found evidence that some people on these admissions committees admired my stance on the GRE. For example, I met with Carolyn, a professor and graduate adviser at the program in my home state, at her office. In fact, we had a couple of meetings, in which we got to know each other a bit. At one of those meetings, Carolyn asked me, "Have you taken the GRE?"

I said, "Well, speaking of the GRE, I've got something to tell you about that. I'm going to take it randomly."

She gave me an inscrutable, half smile. I couldn't tell what she might be thinking.

"It's not that I'm trying to be a rebel," I continued. "I simply cannot in good conscience participate in the GRE exercise given everything I have been working on the past few years."

Carolyn knew of my writings about education and testing. In fact, she had borrowed my book to use in one of the doctoral seminars she taught. Thus, she was well aware of the context in which I was making these outrageous statements.

Finally, she spoke.

"I couldn't agree more," she told me.

"I've taken my own kids out of the standardized tests at school.

"We in the department know the GRE is meaningless in predicting success and every year we keep voting to use it and upping our minimum scores."

As I was listening to her, I was astonished that she would make these confessions to me. But I was also relieved. I felt a sense of peace to have this meeting of the minds, especially with a person I hardly knew. For me, and I think also for her, it was a moment of genuine feeling and truth telling.

The Pursuit of Prestige

As I've stated, part of me wanted to set myself up as a "test case," to conduct a sort of social experiment to see how different doctoral programs with varying degrees of "prestige" would react to me as a candidate. But, truth be told, privately I also wanted to throw my hat into the ringer of those highly competitive, elite institutions. Yes, the ambitious, image-conscience, *U.S. News & World Report* part of me, went for the prestige. I thought I stood as good a chance as any other candidate, despite my stance on the GRE, to be admitted into one or both of the highly selective programs I applied to.

The pursuit of prestige was like an inexorable, hypnotic force, even though I probably knew that succumbing to it probably wasn't in my best interest.

I knew that, in terms of geographic location, affordability, and disruption to my family, actually picking up my life to attend either of those fancy institutions would be enormously challenging. I also knew that, after researching the faculty and their academic strengths and emphasis, I would be equally well served, if not better served, by some of the smaller programs.

But despite all those very logical reasons not to chase prestige, I did so anyway against my better judgment. I fell victim to the very same cultural pressures that we all encounter on a daily basis when making choices about higher education.

The pursuit of prestige. That's really one of the essential forces behind America's testing culture, isn't it? At least in higher education, the testing culture continues to be propped up by our unmitigated pursuit of prestige. The power of prestige, it would seem, overwhelms all else, including the highly questionable ability of gatekeeping exams to predict academic success, or the vastly unequal distribution of educational opportunities among classes and races. SATs, GREs, LSATs, and MCATs—these are the coin of the realm in this game.

Despite the often told claim that these admissions tests represent just a piece of the puzzle for even highly selective institutions, the tests still carry enormous cultural weight. As I told a *USA Today* reporter recently for a story she was doing on the SAT, "It's just pregnant with cultural connotations about what intelligence is, who is smart, who is capable, who is not capable" (Marklein 2002, 1A). I should have added that results of such exams are also loaded with connotations about whether a college is considered a good college or merely a mediocre one.

In completing my book, I came to the notion—some would say the idealistic notion—that we need to reinvent the American meritocracy. Instead of the pseudo-meritocracy that we now have, so heavily reliant on test-taking strategies and gamesmanship, I envsioned a genuine system of merit based on actual accomplishments on endeavors of substance, measured from a variety of perspectives.

After all, I had found examples of true meritocracies that do work, whether a highly selective liberal arts college called Bates in Lewiston, Maine, or a highly regarded medical school in the desert in Beer Sheeva, Israel.

What's more, I would go so far as to say that I found examples of true meritocracies in the smaller, less prestigious doctoral programs which I applied to. It's quite the opposite of how we normally think about merit, but they in fact had the sheer guts to completely disregard my GRE scores and instead look at my real-world performance.

That, to me, is a meritocracy.

But I fear that there will be no lasting and fundamental change in the entrenched American testing culture until we stop the irrational pursuit of prestige at almost any price, which in fact blinds us to reality. It blinds us to what's real about individual students and their real-world skills, academic or otherwise, that might not be captured by standardized tests. It also blinds us to real quality of those colleges and universities that choose not to play the test-score game.

In the aftermath of writing my book, I have finally come to terms with the disappointing fact that no amount of academic studies about the practical utility of test scores in higher education, no matter how rigorous the evidence, will change these troubling facts of life in American higher education.

At least to judge by our popular culture, I see few promising signs. Our beliefs about the power of testing to compare individuals are deeply ingrained in our culture, and I'm constantly shocked back to reality at the bald truth of this. In the TV drama, "The Education of Max Bickford," a smart and caring college professor played by Richard Dreyfuss confronts a student acting in an ethically questionable manner, and the first thing out of his mouth is, "How'd you get in here? What are your SAT scores?" Just the other day, I listened to the public radio program, "This American Life," which featured a segment about the culture of sperm donors. I was dumbfounded listening to people in the piece, including its narrator, toss out this or that sperm donor's SAT scores as if they were talking about a guy's weight, height, or hair color.

No matter how eloquently the testing culture is refuted, whether by famous scientists such as Stephen Jay Gould in his book, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Banesh Hoffman almost 40 years ago in his classic, *The Tyr-*

anny of Testing, I'm afraid we are stuck with our pseudo-meritocracy until individual Americans themselves change the way they think. And, I'm afraid I'll never be convinced of real progress until I no longer see silly references to the SAT on TV dramas and profiles of sperm donors.

And we will never find the proper role that gatekeeping tests should play in higher education until we stop confusing the notion of prestige with quality. There is a difference.

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African Americans and Higher Education

Still a Dream Deferred

Lawrence Rushing

With open admissions under attack, the educational opportunities of minorities are once again being threatened.

In the 1950's during my first year at the Juilliard School of Music, I lived on Convent Avenue, Harlem's Sugar Hill, a few blocks from the main gate to City College with its impressive neo-Gothic Great Hall, towering over the valley to the East. I can still vividly see, in my minds eye, hundreds of students rushing to classes after exiting from the 145th Street subway stop. What I do not recollect—and didn't comprehend at the time—is seeing any black faces in the crowd. I didn't know then that only an average of 33 African Americans graduated from City College each year (Marshak 1973; Lavin 1996, 8)

I was also unaware of the significance on Convent Avenue of the statue of Alexander Hamilton which graces the front of his former home, not far from the college entrance. I later discovered that, as the co-founder with John Jay, of the New York Manumission Society in 1785 and the African Free School two years later, Hamilton symbolized the counter-tendency to racial and underclass exclusion in American life (Ottley 1967, 45). In spite of some progress in expanding opportunity since the 1950s Brown decision, it is unfortunately still the case that the poor and racial and ethnic minorities are underrepresented in good public schools and in higher education generally.

As a faculty member at LaGuardia Community College of the City University of New York, I am deeply concerned with the proposed policies of the CUNY Board of Trustees which will result in the denial of a meaningful future to thousands of students. The fact is that the future of the students we serve in the CUNY community colleges has been under siege for more than a generation. We teach working class

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black, brown, and white students, many of whom are foreign born, and most of whom have been poorly served by educational systems before coming to us.

The condition of African Americans is indicative of the condition of many, if not most, of our students. They have attended some of the worst schools in America, which perennially fail to equip them to meet New York State standards in reading and math. Black males have especially been the victims of educational neglect, which results in their being excluded from the advantages of higher education. Among all ethnic and racial groups, African Americans have the most disproportionately low male to female ratio of college attendance: only 37 percent of black college students are male (*The Chronicle* 2002, 23). In contrast to 18 years ago, in most of my psychology classes, I have practically no black men. Even more disturbing is the fact that this takes place in a community college that consistently ranks fifth in the number of Associate degrees granted to African Americans (LaGuardia Community College 2002, 34).

The unemployment rate of black young men in the urban ghettoes remains at depression levels, while the wages of those with jobs have been decreasing for the past 20 years (Wilson 1996, 25-26). As a consequence, most black children are born within single parent families and the majority live a portion of their lives in abject poverty (Wilson 1996, 87-91). If the children are male they are almost as likely to be admitted to a prison as to be admitted to a college or university (*New York Times* 1998; *The Chronicle* 2002, 23).

Nevertheless, education remains the most significant road that African Americans have traveled historically to build a better future for themselves and their children. From the time of slavery, education has been a primary means for African Americans to attain freedom and achieve a better life. The aspirations of slaves to learn was so strong that it was necessary to enact laws to prohibit teaching them to read. Frederick Douglass (1963, 39-46) risked flogging and brutal treatment by surreptitiously learning to read and write. Booker T. Washington (1986, 29-30) said that when emancipation came, virtually all of the newly freed slaves sought to learn to read, because they saw in reading the power to be free.

It is not surprising, then, that during Reconstruction the newly enfranchised freedmen and newly empowered black state elected officials were the major impetus for establishing a system of free public schools in the South for black and white children (Anderson 1988, 25). Unfortunately, the freedmen's hopes for quality education never materialized. Separate, inequitable systems of substandard schooling were established through violence and fraud in order to impede black education progress. It has been apparent to most black leaders ever since—from Douglass and Du Bois to King and Malcolm X—that unless blacks overcame inferior caste schools, the promise of citizenship and the hope for social mobility would not be fulfilled.

The nation, however, viewing an educated Negro as dangerous and insubordinate, set the terms of the black educational dilemma: How do you acquire education in a society that devalues your humanity and intellect and establishes a system of substandard education to enforce your inferior social status? Over 100 years after the cessation of slavery, it is a dilemma still requiring a solution.

In the 20th century, Charles Houston, Thurgood Marshall, and others began the half century struggle to obtain educational parity for black children. Although progress resulted, upon his retirement from the Supreme Court, Marshall was forced to conclude that the education of black children remained unequal.

At present, CUNY is again confronting this historic educational dilemma as the Board of Trustees engages in the age-old attempt to relegate blacks and other people of color to the doldrums of ignorance and enforced inferior status. They are carefully and deliberately dismantling remediation and support services, introducing racially biased entrance examinations, and abrogating the promise the university made to open its doors to all members of the working class, but especially to people of color who historically have been the major targets of exclusion.

In the last speech Lorraine Hansberry (1989, 52-55) gave shortly before she died of cancer in 1965, she stated that the most injurious aspect of the discrimination to which she was subjected was substandard black public schools. Administrators of Chicago's ghetto schools didn't think it necessary, she said, for black kids to learn math. As a consequence, the first women to have a play produced on Broad-

way spent her life unable to confidently do simple arithmetic. Hansberry would probably not have qualified to attend the highly selective City University of the 1950s. And if she was beginning college today, she would almost certainly be excluded from the CUNY senior colleges which have eliminated remedial math.

A policy of open admissions with remediation rightfully attempts to compensate for the harm society has done by not living up to its obligation to provide each and every student, black as well as white, rich as well as poor, Hispanic as well as Anglo, with a primary and secondary education of high quality. We are fortunate that Open Admission students have persisted against the odds in substandard public schools to pass their courses and get their diplomas. Somehow they have retained hope and motivation to improve themselves through education. Their answer to Langston Hughes's query, "What happens to a dream deferred?" is that it does *not* dry up like "a raisin in the sun." Our students have not lost faith even though the system demonstrates a lack of faith in them.

Fairness demands that we do not block the schoolhouse door. The City University of New York must position itself on the side of justice and equity which demands nothing less than keeping the doors to learning open wide for all who want to enter.

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Education for a Culture of Peace

Ron Miller

Violence is comprised of endless layers of pain, ignorance, self-assurance, and callousness. To overcome it, education needs to cultivate understanding and a culture of peace.

I am continually astounded and dismayed by the persistence of murderous violence in the world. Humanity seems to be trapped in a deepening spiral of hatred, vengeance, and militarism that will ultimately lead to the horrible destruction of life on this planet. For centuries, our greatest teachers, from Jesus to Gandhi, from St. Francis to the Dalai Lama, from the Buddha to Martin Luther King, Jr., have insisted that peace, not violence, is the path to genuine salvation. They have told us that the "Kingdom of Heaven," whatever culturally and historically conditioned images are used to depict it, is reached through reconciliation and love, not domination and conquest. Yet millions upon millions of souls, from oppressed inmates of refugee camps to Ivy-league educated power brokers in our capital, resort to killing and desecration and terror to achieve their purposes. As I read each morning's disheartening headlines, I sadly ask over and over again, *why*?

As a holistic thinker, I know there is no simple explanation. Violence, like all other potentialities, is woven into the fabric of human existence with numerous threads that intersect in complex ways. Certainly there must be some biological impulse, some genetic coding that permits aggression to be satisfying and the slaughter of living beings to be palatable. But this does not mean that we are inherently violent, because significant numbers of people throughout history have refused to indulge in violence, and, with the same genetic "programming" as any other human being, many have led truly saintly lives. Psychology overlays biology: What infants and children experience during their development conditions them to perceive the world as friendly or hostile, safe or ominous, and their maturing personalities will respond accordingly, out of conditioned habit. Cultural patterns—the "webs of meaning" that subconsciously organize perception and understanding—add yet another layer of conditioning. These

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patterns include religious and patriotic dogmas as well as more mundane and subtle assumptions about life's meaning, about what people are alive for. And psychology plus culture gives rise to *ideologies*—self-assured convictions about how the world is and how it ought to be remade. Psychological problems may cause an individual to assault or kill someone nearby, and cultural prejudices cause a great deal of oppression, but it is usually ideology that spurs clans and factions and nations into terrorism and war.

Holistic thinkers also examine the spiritual dimension of human experience, and this understanding is essential to restraining the spiral of violence. On a personal level, spiritual practice enables us to break free of our conditioning—biological, psychological, cultural, and ideological. It does not much matter what form this practice takes, or, again, what historically colored images are used to describe it. Prayer, meditation, ritual, selfless service, fasting, retreat, physical disciplines—all such practices serve to *disidentify* the person from conditioned, habitual ways of being. They nourish a center of personality, a "Self," in Jung's terms, that lies outside, or beyond, or "higher" than the largely unconscious personality that is driven by fears, desires, insecurities, appetites, and fantasies. This realm that lies beyond our limited ego is regarded as sacred; it is, presumably, unpolluted by ideology or our petty desires. Obviously, religious beliefs and practices have often, and very tragically, used the human longing for the sacred to sanction hatred and unspeakable violence, so it becomes vitally necessary to distinguish genuine transcendence or disidentification from spiritual fanaticism. The greatest teachers in all traditions have declared that genuine spirituality results in loving nonviolence, so any ideology that leads to division, hate, and killing, no matter what spiritual language it uses to justify its claims, is still just ideology. It is psychological distortion mixed with cultural prejudice, projected onto the transcendent realm and blinding us to its true radiance.

On a transpersonal level, a spiritual understanding of the Cosmos recognizes that there are vast evolutionary forces at work, far beyond our immediate experience or understanding. Secular modern culture has no place in its worldview for these mysterious formative energies, regarding any spiritual cosmology as superstition. Yet mystics (Rudolf Steiner being a notable modern example) maintain that these energies are real, and in fact shape the course of human destiny. Cultural and intellectual historians refer sometimes to the *zeitgeist* of a certain age, meaning the "spirit of the times" in a metaphorical sense, yet Steiner, for one, holds that there literally is a spiritual intelligence or being with a particular temperament or tendencies, that rules each period of history. He further holds that there are dark forces counterbalancing those of goodness and light, situating the human journey, not on the sunny highway of progress and enlightenment that modern technocrats portray, but on a treacherous path requiring spiritual vigilance and conscious moral choice at every step. Many indigenous cultures, from ancient India to the native peoples of North America, similarly believed that human beings must contend with cosmic forces and deliberately work to strengthen the good and overcome the very real power of evil.

At the very least, even if it is not absolutely, literally accurate, this cosmology challenges the hubris of any ideology or technology with a sense of humility in the face of mystery, and in the face of the Shadow which (again, in Jung's model) lurks behind every self-assured conscious action. Perhaps one reason for the popularity of the *Star Wars* and *Lord of the Rings* mythologies is their recognition of a spiritual negative side that requires resolute moral courage, not simply physical power or some clever gadget or weapon, to overcome, because the negative impulses, the Shadow, live within each one of us. Modernity has banished the negative side to its collective Shadow. "We" (the capitalist West) are good, democratic, and right, while the Other is evil, autocratic, and wrong. It is not hard to find profoundly violent men, such as Saddam Hussein, Yasser Arafat, and Osama bin Laden, to become receptacles for all our projections; we dismiss all negative impulses in ourselves and attribute all evil to our enemies. But spiritual humility, on both a personal and collective level, would compel us to face the negative—the violence, greed, prejudice, and lust for power—that reside in the shadows of our own individual and national souls.

Violence, then, is comprised of layer upon layer of pain, ignorance, self-assurance, and callousness. To overcome violence in the world will require many corresponding layers of understanding and effort. More caring, nourishing ways of education and childrearing are essential elements, but they are not sufficient. Political activism is also essential, but also not enough. Spiritual practice of some sort is crucial—but as I have written before in criticism of "new age" or "new paradigm" holistic thought (Miller, 2000), spirituality detached from cultural analysis and political engagement is not going to effect substantial change. A holistic approach to peace, and to peace education more specifically, must be fluid and multidimensional. Its aim is not "peace" as an abstraction, but a *culture of peace*, which means a "web of meanings" that honors compassion, collaboration, negotiation, and service and dishonors conquest and violence. If most present cultures make violence, hatred, and oppression seem manly, exciting, and effective, a culture of peace would treat them as stupid and self-defeating. (I want to add "as in reality they are," but then this places me outside culture entirely, as some sort of omniscient authority. We must promote peace itself with humility, or we defeat our own purposes.)

Riane Eisler has inspired many readers with her interpretation of cultural patterns as being oriented toward either "dominator" or "partnership" values (Eisler 1987; 2000). The power of her analysis lies in her recognition that a culture is an interconnected set of assumptions, beliefs, and practices, each of which reinforces the others. A society oriented toward "dominator" values, then, will exhibit violence in childrearing (corporal punishment) as well as criminal justice (capital punishment). It will promote intense competition in sports and economics, which will carry over into education. Military leaders, more than peacemakers, will be considered heroes, and military technology will receive a large share of a dominator society's attention and resources. There will be more crime, as well as demeaning attitudes towards women and minorities. Intellectually, such a culture will tend to favor explanations of human nature that emphasize aggression and biological determinism. These are not isolated "problems" that can be solved one by one, but inherent, interconnected elements of a cultural pattern that needs to be addressed on many levels.

To introduce a culture of peace, a culture oriented toward partnership values of caring, social equality, nonviolence, and cooperation, we will need to rethink common assumptions about education, not only the content of the curriculum, but the way in which it is "delivered" (indeed, whether "delivery" is the proper methodology at all), the design of the physical and social environment, the rules of communication and lines of authority within schools, and everyone's expectations concerning the "outcomes" of the learning process. We will need to decide that education should no longer be a primary agent of cultural conditioning, but a liberating process through which conditioning as such—the inculcation of unconscious habits of perception, thought and action—is challenged by the cultivation of critical inquiry and spiritual awareness.

To educate at all is to introduce values into the lives of young people. This cannot be avoided. Whether we design a particular curriculum or try to refrain from direct teaching of any curriculum, our actions represent some set of values. Whether we arrange classrooms like miniature assembly lines or open them up as laboratories for free exploration, we are teaching which human possibilities we value and which we do not. If we educate holistically, with a sense of wonder and respect for the complex mystery of life, then our commitment to peace education should not harden into an ideology, into a subtle form of conditioning itself, but the fact remains that to educate for peace is to take a moral stand in opposition to many of the primary values guiding modern schooling. As Michael Lerner reminds us,

> The alleged neutrality of contemporary education is a sham that covers up the systematic indoctrination of students into the dominant religion of the contemporary world: the slavish subordination of everyone to the idols of the marketplace and its "common sense" that all people should seek to maximize their own advantage without regard to the consequences for others, that all that is real is what can be validated through sense observation, that it's only human nature for people to compete with each

> other and seek "individual excellence"…. (2000, 235)

Throughout his writings, and in his visionary magazine *TIKKUN*, Lerner explains how this secular religion, this ideology of the marketplace, is at the core of a dominator-style culture characterized by harsh competition, inequality, violence, and indifference to much of the suffering that results. In *Spirit Matters*, he describes an education oriented instead to the goal of nurturing individuals who are "loving, capable of showing deep caring for others, alive to the spiritual and ethical dimensions of being, ecologically sensitive, intellectually alive, self-determining, and creative" (Lerner 2000, 234). This fundamental shift of values, from selfish competitiveness to caring sensitivity, lies at the heart of educating for a culture of peace.

On a personal level, spiritual practice enables us to break free of our biological, psychological, cultural, and ideological conditioning.

Are values formed in society or in the actions of individuals? Does social change come about through personal transformation or collaborative action? Educational reformers and radicals alike have often divided sharply over these questions. Progressive educators have debated "child-centered" versus "social reconstructionist" approaches; the radicals of the 1960s sometimes debated hotly whether Summerhill-style freedom or direct engagement with oppression and injustice (such as establishing free schools in the inner cities) were a more authentic form of educational dissent. A holistic perspective observes that in this case, as in virtually all others, the solution is not either/or; it is both/and. To protect young people from psychological violence, and to help them remain free from ideological conditioning, we have much to learn from libertarian educators as well as spiritual teachers who emphasize that violence begins in the heart of each individual. John Holt was an outstanding representative of this position, arguing consistently throughout his career that adults should not impose their own desires and prejudices on the organic drive toward understanding and health that motivates every normal growing child. He insisted that violence and social problems reflect widely shared personal feelings of inadequacy, alienation, and resentment that are caused when these drives are thwarted; he stated unequivocally that

> the root causes of war are not economic conflicts or language barriers or cultural differences but men—the kind of men who must have and will find scapegoats, legitimate targets for the disappointment, envy, fear, rage, and hatred that accumulates in their daily lives. (Holt 1966, 5)

A. S. Neill's influential writings defended a similar position, and Krishnamurti's brilliant writing on education also emphasized that our primary task is to free the minds and hearts of individuals.

Yet while culture and ideology do take root in personal consciousness and can be significantly challenged through personal healing and liberation, they reflect other levels of human reality as well—social and political levels, which we cannot adequately address one individual at a time. Progressive educators in the tradition of social "reconstruction" or social "responsibility" have recognized that culture is a *collective* creation. It is fashioned, not solely by private choices and personal fear and greed, but by the tacit *agreements* shared by large numbers of people and heavily influenced by the power of class, gender, religious, and other shared identities. A culture, or one's perceived membership in some segment of a culture, *reinforces* personal prejudices, giving them a hypnotic power they would not acquire through personal experience alone. Educating for social responsibility involves *naming* and *facing* the unconscious agreements that blind us to injustice and oppression. As we have seen so many times in history, decent people can allow or even perpetrate great evil when they are under the spell of cultural trance. Spiritual practices help to awaken us from unconsciousness, but often (as we see so tragically in many religious movements) even spiritually awakened individuals are blind to the destructive power of cultural and ideological forces in their society.

Educating for a culture of peace means, in a holistic sense, practicing *both* "child-centered" liberatory pedagogy and a socially responsive approach that awakens our liberated students to the realities of suffering, oppression and violence. Free must not mean carefree. Self-directed learning must not mean self-contained. There is, surely, a tension between these two goals or styles of education, a tension which breaks out into fierce resentment sometimes. Yet holism is not whole without holding this tension (Purpel and Miller 1991). Contradiction and paradox are inherent in the cosmos, and we cut ourselves off from wholeness when we seek to short-circuit this tension by elevating one dimension over the other. This, in fact, is precisely the function of ideology—to resolve the tensions and ambiguities of life through an arbitrary and often ruthless suppression of opposing perspectives. Holism is the remedy for ideology.

Ken Wilber has written extensively and eloquently on this subject. He advocates an "integral" worldview, one which recognizes that there are elements of truth in all theoretical perspectives but absolute Truth in none (Wilber 1997). An integral or holistic worldview is essential to peaceful resolution of cultural and ideological conflict, because it acknowledges a domain of transcendence within which opposites and paradoxes surrender their tension and hostility toward one another; in other words, it provides a deeper dimension of Truth that encompasses rather than cancels out diverse perspectives. A culture of peace involves more than grudging compromise or tentative cessation of violence; it is an expanded, generous worldview that tolerates, indeed celebrates, ambiguity and difference, and invites members of a community to seek common ground on higher ground than where they have been standing. Education for a culture of peace extends beyond techniques of negotiation and conflict resolution, beyond multicultural and anti-racist curricula, even beyond spiritual practice: It is an education for a new, expanded worldview, an evolutionary leap in consciousness. Although Wilber does not directly address educational questions in a systematic way, his integral philosophy suggests the outline of a profound shift in our understanding of education. We would no longer be so concerned about giving lessons or delivering instruction, about standardizing knowledge and measuring it incessantly. Education would be a powerful tool for personal and cultural transformation. This is how my colleagues and I have defined holistic education since the 1980s.

A holistic pedagogy is one that challenges ourselves and our students to stretch our understanding and imagination beyond accepted, inherited boundaries—beyond comfortable prejudices and ideologies. We would not tell our students what they should perceive or believe, if we honor the libertarian dimension of holistic education. Yet we would invite our students into an expanded awareness of the world and their moral responsibility toward it—a critical, questioning, self-reflective awareness. This would be the reconstructionist dimension. A culture of peace and compassion honors the cultivation of such awareness; it sees prejudice and ideology and violence as tragic limitations on the magnificent complexity that the cosmos offers to us. Such a culture encourages us to celebrate each other, to learn from each other, to nourish each other's gifts—because our community, and we ourselves individually, can only be enriched by this expansion and transformation of consciousness.

This way of looking at education is radical, but it is not esoteric. It is exactly what Dewey tried to express, in very nonmystical language, in *Democracy and Education* (Dewey 1966). His vision of a democratic culture explicitly recognizes the expansion and reconstruction of human experience that is possible when people come together to shape their common good: Genuine democracy (not the present kind, where elections are a form of marketing or entertainment) allows us to transcend the limitations of our habitual understandings and beliefs as we engage each other in a shared pursuit of community. Holistic educators still have much to learn from Dewey, even as we seek a more spiritually informed understanding of human existence than his overly rational, social-scientific language permits.

What do I mean by a "spiritually informed understanding"? I do not mean religious belief as such, although it is often expressed in this language. I want to return to an image with which I opened this essay, that of a "Kingdom of Heaven"—a sacred realm that transcends all our beliefs, all our partial perspectives, all the cultural and ideological imperatives

that drive so many human beings to commit or condone violence. A spiritual worldview recognizes that the *ultimate* transcendence of violence is a realm of wholeness, absolute inclusiveness, and unconditional love that reveals the limitations of all our temporal strivings. Michael Lerner, for example, suggests that it is the absence of Spirit in modern culture that makes selfishness the "bottom line" in the competitive struggle of contemporary society. When we recognize that our individual selves are not separate from the world and from each other, but are particular expressions of the Unity of All Being and intimately connected to it, we enter a transformational process "that brings about deeper and deeper levels of knowledge, goodness, and radiant beauty" (Lerner 2000, 35). Or, as Martin Luther King, Jr. so passionately taught, we enter the realm of divine love. King insisted that love is the essential fabric of the universe, and that by practicing nonviolence and benevolence rather than hatred and vengeance, humanity could indeed bring about the Kingdom of Heaven on this earth. In his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech in 1964, he proclaimed,

> I believe that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final word in reality. This is why right, temporarily defeated, is stronger than evil triumphant…. I still believe that one day mankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and nonviolent redemptive goodwill proclaimed the rule of the land (King 2001, 107, 108).

Although the call to "bow before the altars of God" sounds like traditional authoritarian, hierarchical and patriarchal religious practice, I suggest that King is simply expressing the spiritual reality that peace and compassion appear when the individual ego, with all its hates, lusts, and fears, finds the humility to acknowledge what is truly sacred and transcendent, that is, larger than its own limited perspective. The theme that runs through all these aspects of holistic education—an expanded worldview, genuine democracy, and spiritual awakening—is the process of opening to deeper and more complex understandings than that which one currently possesses. A culture of peace is a dynamic culture that encourages such opening, one that makes it safe to expand the boundaries of awareness. Only this process of opening will enable us, as individuals and as a society, to disidentify with the ideologies and conditioning that constrain our imagination and our compassion.

Peace is not the mere absence of war. If we are to educate for a culture of peace, we will need to address the entire cluster of biological, psychological, social and spiritual patterns that presently favor a dominator-style culture. We will need to acknowledge the insecurity engendered by modern methods of childrearing and schooling (e.g., see Pearce 1980), the latent violence inherent in our competitive economic system, and the colonization of consciousness by mass media and "virtual" imagery, among many other cultural patterns that serve to narrow or rigidify our understanding of ourselves and our place in the cosmos. If we are to teach peace, we need to learn to practice love, not only within intimate circles of family and friends, but in schools and in society and in the world at large. We need to transform society, reorganize our institutions, expand our values, so that our culture favors caring, compassion, justice, and love. No doubt it is a huge task. But it is our truest calling as human beings.

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Animal Dreams

William Crain

Children have such an affinity to animals that they frequently dream about them. We do violence to a child's development when we insist on learning environments that are indoors, sterile, and out of touch with the natural world.

One morning I was jogging on the beach with my dog, when we started to pass a mother standing with her baby girl in her arms. When the baby saw my dog she beamed with delight and reached out to embrace the animal, as if she had just met a long-lost friend. She lunged toward my dog so vigorously that her mother barely kept her from falling.

Many parents and teachers have observed children's strong attraction to animals, as well as to other aspects of nature such as sand, ponds, rocks, and trees. In the early grades, many teachers have kept gerbils and other small animals in their classrooms to make the settings interesting and comforting to the children. Indeed, the child's affinity to animals is acknowledged by our culture at large. For example, *The Library of Children's Song Classics* (Byrum 1993) begins with a section entitled "Animal Songs." Similarly, cartoons and children's books try to appeal to children by featuring animals as the central characters. Clinical psychologists, too, implicitly recognize the special attraction of animals to children. If an adult sees lots of animals in response to Rorschach's inkblots, psychologists typically infer that the adult has child-like qualities.

Despite such observations, neither the child's interest in animals or in nature generally, has been a major focus of psychological research. If we glance through child psychology textbooks, we find sections on physical development, cognition, language, school achievement, social relationships, and other topics. But there are no sections on the child's experience of the natural world. Most textbook indices don't even include the entry "pets."

I believe this neglect occurs because psychological research, while prizing itself on scientific objectivity, unwittingly reflects our society's dominant goals and values. We want our children to succeed in technologically advanced environments and to interact

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well with other people. There is no widespread commitment to producing a nation of nature-lovers.

Children's Dreams

Still, the child's affinity to nature hasn't been ignored entirely. Little-known research indicates that children's attraction to animals is stronger than most of us would have imagined. Psychologist David Foulkes (l982; 1999) and others (Van de Castle 1983) have found that animals are the single largest topic in young children's dreams.

In 1968, Foulkes began asking children to sleep nine nights a year in his sleep lab at the University of Wyoming. Following the standard method used with adults, Foulkes periodically woke the children when they displayed rapid-eye-movements, which signal dream activity. He then asked them what they were dreaming about. The youngest children in the study were 3- to 5-year-olds. Some of his colleagues worried that the experience would frighten children this young, but Foulkes said it did not. In any case, Foulkes found that the 3- to 5-year olds dreamt about animals an average of 38% of the time—more frequently than they dreamt about people or any other topic (1982, 80; 1999, 28-29).

Foulkes initially found this result hard to believe. He knew young children are interested in animals, but he didn't expect this interest to be so great that animals would take center stage in their dreams. But the children continued to participate in the study over the years, and Foulkes found that animal dreams were nearly as frequent at ages 5 to 7. "These data," he said, "argue against my own expressed reservations" (1999, 80). Among the 7- to 9-year-olds, animal content began to decline, and among the older children and adolescents, between the ages of 11 to 15, it was rare. Their dreams were primarily about the self and other people in various activities.

Some of the young children's animal dreams were adventurous. In one, a horse broke through a pen, freeing the pigs and the other horses. But most of the dreams had a simple quality—a bird singing, frogs in the water, a dog barking (Foulkes 1982, 49).

When considering Foulkes's findings, one must wonder about a geographical bias. The research was carried out in Wyoming, a rural area where children are likely to have more experience with animals than is generally the case. However Robert Van de Castle and others (Van de Castle 1983; Saline 1999) have found similar results with urban and suburban children. In these studies, children didn't participate in sleep lab research, but reported their dreams during the daytime to parents at home or to adults at school. In these situations, investigators have observed the sharpest decline in animal dreams at about age 10, a bit later than Foulkes found.

Explanations

How do we explain a strong interest in animals? Many scholars interpret the interest as symbolic. Psychoanalysts commonly assume that animals represent the instinctual side of our personalities (Van de Castle l983). In his book, *The Naked Ape* (1967), the zoologist Desmond Morris proposed that human attraction to animals goes through seven stages, the first of which is a period when children, who are completely dependent on adults, "react strongly to very big animals, employing them as parent symbols" (p. 237). I won't summarize all the stages, but note that, in Morris's view, the interest in animals wanes in the young adult years and that older people enter a "senile phase" when they become concerned about conservation and endangered species because their own lives are now coming to an end.

In these speculations, an interest in animals is not considered meaningful in its own right. Instead, animals symbolize something else, such as one's parents, or one's own impending death. Foulkes, too, sees the child's interest in animals as symbolic. He believes that young children dream about animals because they lack the cognitive capacity to represent the self. The animal is a stand-in for the true self-image. The animal is a temporary symbol that must serve for the time being, while the child's cognitive powers are still immature.

A Basic Truth

As an alternative, I suggest that we consider the child's interest in animals as revealing a fundamental truth. As the poet Gary Snyder (Turner 1995) says, children know that they are young animals. As children grow up and become socialized in modern societies, they learn to distance themselves from animals. They adopt the culture's view of other species

as very different and less important than humans—as "natural resources" and "stock" for human use and consumption. Aside from pets, most modern adults don't think much about animals at all. They don't think about where their meat comes from, and they don't see themselves as similar and intimately related to other species. Indeed, even biologists have been surprised by recent evidence that humans are genetically almost identical to chimpanzees, gorillas, and even mice (Goodall and Bekoff 2002, 3; Brooks 2002).

Children, in contrast, assume a basic similarity and equality between themselves and other life forms. I often testify in defense of nature at public hearings, and I have come to expect children as young as 7 years old to walk to the microphone to ask the officials to give other species the same consideration the officials give themselves: "You shouldn't let anybody hunt the bears. How would you like it if somebody shot at you?" Or, "You wouldn't want somebody to chop you down, would you? So don't chop down the trees." Identifying with all of nature, children assume that the Golden Rule applies to all life.

Children's admiration of animals often baffles us. A friend and pediatrician, Sandra Cunningham, told me about a 6-year-old girl who, upon meeting Sandra in an urban emergency room, was surprised that a doctor was a woman. Sandra told her that both girls and boys can become doctors, just as both can become nurses. Sandra then tried to inspire the girl with, "You can become anything you want to be!" The girl was excited by this possibility, and asked, "Can I be a rat?"

In an early study of imaginary companions, Ames and Learned (1946) observed that several 2- to 4-year-olds were so impressed by animals that they impersonated them. For example, some children walked around on all fours, barked, ate food from a dish, and urinated in animal fashion by standing on one leg. The impersonations not only included dogs and cats, but a horse, a pig, a mouse, a bear, and a hen.

Children's impersonations of animals frequently distress their parents. As the psychologist Marjorie Taylor (1999, 17) recently observed in her own research,

> One mother told us that when company was expected, she and her husband worried whether their sons would be children or cats during the evening. The cat possibility was undesirable because the boys would meow instead of talk, try to eat directly from a plate rather than using silverware, and rub against the legs of the guests in feline fashion.

A striking aspect of children's animal impersonations is the way that they fail to respond to human language. When adults talk to them, the children just look at them quizzically or make an animal sound. Most developmental psychologists would be surprised to hear that children as young as 2 or 3 years of age can take the role of another so fully. Children seem to have a natural feeling for the roles—for what it is like to be part of the animal world.

Alienation from Nature

Wordsworth (1985), Thoreau (1982), and other Romantic writers said that as children become socialized into well-adjusted modern adults, forsaking their kinship with nature, they suffer a real loss. Is this loss sufficient to contribute to the feelings of loneliness or depression that are so prevalent today? Mental health experts are puzzled by so much sadness in our lives, but few, if any, have even considered alienation from nature as a potential contributor.

The experiences of the Lakota Indians, the most studied of Native American societies, offer a sharp contrast. As in the modern societies, the demands of Lakota social life seem to separate adults from nature, at least to some extent. But in comparison to us, the Lakota more consciously experience the pain of the separation. The feelings are evident in the vision quest, which seeks union with nature.

In this event, the individual first fasts and participates in rituals, and then goes off alone to wait. To receive a vision, the person must cry a great deal to show how desperately the vision is wanted. When the vision comes, it is usually the spirit of an animal or a natural element, such as thunder, which takes the form of a person in order to speak to the individual. The spirit gives a message, which the individual takes back to the tribe. The individual is then protected by the spirit and tries to learn from it and come

into closer relationship to it (Standing Bear 1978, 214; Black Elk and Brown 1953).

The vision quest is called *Hanblecheyapi*, a term that literally means "crying for a vision." This is the term Black Elk and Joseph Epes Brown (1953) used, and they called the person on the quest a "lamenter."

But crying seems strange to many scholars. One scholar (Amiotte 1982) has said the real meaning of the term is "standing and enduring." Others (Wallace Black Elk and Lyon 1990) say the translation should be "praying intensely."

But perhaps "crying" is correct. Just as one can cry over the separation from a loved one, one can cry over the separation from nature. The Lakota seem to feel this way. A person on a vision quest must express true feelings—crying—for the spirit of an animal or natural element to appear. In our modern world, we are so detached from nature that we don't recognize how what a yearning for nature might be like.

Older People: Returning Home

It's a common observation that there is a special connection between children and the elderly. They enjoy each other's company. One reason might be that both feel a strong identification with nature. Children feel a primal kinship with nature, and older people seem to take new pleasures in observing the simple aspects of the natural world.

Older people's feelings for nature emerged in David Gutmann's (1987) creative studies on the personality changes that accompany aging. Gutmann gave adults from various ethnic groups, including Navaho and Mayan Indians, TAT cards—pictures that respondents are asked to tell stories about. For the indigenous peoples, Gutmann designed some special TAT cards depicting desert scenes. He found that whereas the middle age respondents typically told stories about humans actively interacting with the environment (such as planting crops and avoiding dangers), the oldest people focused on the beauty and comforts of the land.

Because Gutmann believed that his pictures depicted austere desert environments and some frightening birds, Gutmann said the oldest respondents actually distorted reality. They frequently perceived the harsh land as beautiful and the threatening birds as pleasing, protective figures. Some saw fences as angels. In old age, Gutmann (1987, 298) concluded, "An illusory comfort has been gained, but at the expense of realistic evaluation."

But Gutmann ignored the fact that his pictures are rather ambiguous. One could make a case that the older people didn't distort reality, but merely saw it differently.

More importantly, Gutmann overlooked a spiritual possibility. The elderly Native Americans might have been expressing their return to Mother Earth as their spiritual home. This interpretation is consistent with Navaho theology (Suzuki and Knudtson 1992, 187), and that of Native Americans generally. For example the Lakota elder Pete Catches said,

> As I get older, I burrow more and more into hills. The Great Spirit made them for us, for me. I want to blend with them, shrink into them, and finally disappear in them. (Lame Deer and Erdoes 1972, 140)

To what extent do older people in modern American society also take a renewed interest in the beauty and comforts of the natural world? Gutmann didn't create TAT cards that would elicit such responses. He did note that in the U.S. older people generally take new pleasures in the use of their senses, and that they increasingly participate in bird watching. But the extent of their reinvestment in nature needs more research.

In the view of some, such as the poet William Wordsworth (1807/1985), the child's attunement to nature also has a spiritual component. The child has not yet become detached from the spiritual sense of oneness with all being. Along these lines, older people who feel a deepening connection to nature are completing the circle, returning to the sacred source of existence.

Conclusion

I have summarized dream research that highlights the strength of the child's tie to the natural world. Children think so much about animals that they even commonly dream about them. This research reinforces other findings on the child's connection to nature (Crain 2000; 2003). In this essay I also have pointed to preliminary evidence that older people regain the child's sense of belonging to the natural world.

However, most of the data on children's dreams was collected between the mid-1960s and mid-1980s. Are young children's ties to animals still as strong? One small study (Saline 1999), offers tentative evidence in the affirmative, but I wonder how long this will be the case. Children increasingly grow up in sterile, indoor environments. They spend more time in school, often at computer terminals, and they also increasingly spend their leisure time indoors, playing video games and watching television. They rarely wander about outdoors, looking for worms and insects, watching birds and butterflies, studying the habits of fish and frogs in a pond, or inspecting the wild flowers and animal burrows in a vacant lot. Although they watch animal shows on television, this experience is second-hand; children do not get a personal sense of animals as living beings. Many children, to be sure, have pets, but pets provide only a limited experience of animal life. So, although young children have a spontaneous affinity to nature, do they have sufficient experience with nature to develop their feelings for it fully?

The issue is important because, as I have indicated elsewhere (Crain 2000; 2003), rich contact with nature promotes important capacities. Natural settings foster children's powers of patient observation and inspire their creativity (including much of their poetry and drawing). And as children explore nature, they develop a sense of belonging to something larger than themselves. Feeling rooted in the natural order, they are better able to withstand life's inevitable separations and setbacks.

Giving children opportunities to explore nature is not easy. As academic pressures mount and schools frantically prepare pupils for high-stakes tests, there is little time for children to leisurely investigate natural settings. And natural settings themselves are rapidly disappearing. Real estate developments and road construction constantly destroy the trees, vegetation, and animal habitats in our areas. Rarely do we see change in the reverse direction—the removal of a bit of pavement to make way for a garden or a nature area. We must become active in our schools and communities to lobby on behalf of natural settings and time for children to explore them.

Ultimately, children's experiences with nature may prove essential for the future of the planet. As the worldwide environmental crisis worsens, our society's general detachment from nature is becoming a critical problem. As the poet Gary Lawless (1994) worries,

> When the animals come to us,
> asking for our help,
> will we know what they are saying?

People are most eager to develop a kinship with animals and nature as children. But if their childhood contact with nature is sparse, they might never acquire the deep, sympathetic understanding of nature that will motivate them to save it.

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I See Children on the Streets

Georgiana Calimeris

I see children on the streets
The city is full of innocent eyes
They want money
They want life
They want smiles

I feel punches in my body
When I hear of children getting killed
In unfair wars
No war has justice
An innocent dies
Every day
In the streets
In the cold
In the fields

Children are supposed to be happy
Children should be at home playing
Children should bring smiles and bring hope

Love should be the answer
But in times like these
It is easier to judge

In this moment, I pray
For those who are gone
For those who want to be free
For those who ask and hope
For the wars to be over

Georgiana Calimeris is a 28-year-old Brazilian journalist who is trying to make her voice heard through her poems and fairy tales.

The Diary of Anne Frank
Before and After September 11

Bart Chaney

The Diary of Anne Frank still evokes powerful tensions and stereotypes when it is assigned to students of Middle Eastern descent.

During a break, one of my students took me aside. Our text for the month was *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank, and he had a question about it. It was a question that would make me consult my basic principles as a teacher, one that would return to me in the weeks following the September 11 attacks, when certain feelings of "Us versus Them" crept into all aspects of life in the US, not the least of which an intermediate Intensive English Program (IEP) reading class.

This was the question: Why did the Germans want to kill the Jews?

This may not be exactly the way it was worded. We expect an international student, in the US on a student visa, in a program to improve his proficiency in English to be clumsy in his use of the language. But in addition to grammatical accuracy, the question lacked a certain sensitivity. It needed a qualification or two. Not *all* Germans wanted to kill Jews, for example. Topics of this nature—because they involve questions of moral judgment, questions of race—are delicate, to say the least, and require subtleties of expression if they are not to lead to misunderstandings, hurt feelings, fist fights. I decided to ignore these issues, not wanting to respond by saying, essentially, "Your question is wrong." This was a student, struggling to speak in a second language, and as his teacher, I wanted to encourage the effort. It was an honest question that deserved a clear, direct, and honest answer.

But what answer? In class we had read and discussed at some length a passage on "Hitler's Plan of Aryanization" which I had hoped would have sufficiently answered such a question. That it, presumably, had not, suggested to me that the student was asking about motivation on a deeper level. Why

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would a person have such a monstrous "plan" and why would others go along with it? A complete answer would require references to the history of anti-Semitism in Europe and Russia, the German economic depression in the years following World War I, the appeal of the demagogue in desperate times, and in general, a consideration of superstition, prejudice, inhumanity ... evil. The list goes on. Not an expert on these matters, I felt incapable of delivering this information with accuracy, not to mention couching it, at the same time, in "teacher talk" so that someone with limited vocabulary and oral comprehension skills might partially understand.

And even if I *were* capable, would there be, in the end, a satisfying answer? I am not aware that there has ever been a completely satisfying answer to this question.

So what did I do? I shrugged my shoulders, frowned. I tried to convey that the answer to this question was complicated, beyond me—beyond most of us, in fact. I was aware that many of my students were not well versed in European history, World War II, and the Holocaust, and I had tried to give them the bare bones necessary to understand the context of the book, but venturing further seemed outside my jurisdiction.

My next realization was that I'd made a mistake. The question was not as innocent as I had first assumed. It was more in the line of a set-up. This student had asked the question primarily for the chance to deliver his own answer, which, after waiting patiently for me to finish my motions of ignorance, he did. I wish I could remember what he said word for word. It was typically mangled, in the manner of a second-language speaker. But I quickly caught the drift. Why had the Germans wanted to kill the Jews? It had to do with the nature of the Jews themselves. It was a version of "blaming the victim." And then came the last few words, the only ones I remember verbatim: "As we know, the Jews are in control of the United States Government."

Much went through my mind in an instant. First, I had heard that there were people who believed this—I had picked it up from random readings about the KKK, past and present, and the neo-Nazi movement—but I had never heard it, nor had ever expected to hear it expressed first-hand. So there was an element of surprise. There was also a rhetorical matter. His "as we know" was a phrase that I knew him to employ habitually, as a kind of crutch, and as such did not necessarily have a lot of meaning. It is wrong for a teacher to use a student's weaknesses with the language against him, but in my distaste over his remarks, I may have done so by focusing on this phrase in my response.

"Do we? Do we *know* that? I don't *know* that. And I don't believe it." I raised my hands in a gesture that conveyed I did not wish to discuss the matter further. The gesture was amicable but clear, and as we parted, he gave me a smile, also amicable. But it was a smile that said, *You are behaving exactly the way I expected you to*. It was a smile that something akin to pity. It was the smile of the young missionaries in their white shirts and dark ties, when you, politely but firmly, dismiss them from your doorstep.

Here I will reveal what a reader may have been wondering from the start. Another delicate topic: Where was this student from? He was from the Middle East. His name was Ashraf.

For several years, I had been using long works as texts in this reading class, usually airport novels along the lines of John Grisham and the pulp fiction classic, "The Godfather" by Mario Puzo. I chose these books not for their edifying content but because they are easy to read and generally compelling. The problem is, they tend to be male-oriented, violent, and often have something to do with the Mafia. I felt I needed to choose at least one text that would appeal to female students. Amy Tan was too difficult, and a romance novel was, for me, out of the question. Another teacher recommended using that American high school reading list staple, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank.

Though of course I was familiar with the story, I had never actually read the *Diary* until I read it in consideration of using it for class. Doing so made it clear to me why this book was considered a classic. It is a heart-breaking, inspiring document. Reading it in tandem with watching the 1995 documentary "Anne Frank: Remembered," which uses, incidentally, *Diary* excerpts from the more contemporary, American English translation first published that

same year, is a devastating experience. This is no airport novel. Every human being should read this book.

And yet, each time I've used the *Diary* over the years, I've started it with some reluctance. I attribute this to a kind of fear. In terms of story, the *Diary* is repetitive, claustrophobic in setting, and not what you'd call a page-turner. I was afraid it would not hold my students' interest. I also feared the weightiness of the content. I prefer a light, breezy class, where there is humor rather than pathos, comedy rather than tragedy. At the outset, it felt easier for me to deal with the cartoonish sex and violence of the Corleone family, for example, than the actual horror of history.

But I would push past my hesitations, and using the *Diary* in class would invariably turn out to be a success. Students appreciated learning the details of important historical events—this was information many felt they *should* know. They appreciated reading a non-fiction memoir, rather than a made-up story. They related to Anne even as they chuckled over the more trying aspects of her personality. I did not dwell on the tragic aspects of the ending. Instead, I focused on the positives: the heroism of "the helpers" and the enduring influence of the *Diary* itself. I left it to the students to research the details about the manner of Anne's horrible death in the final days of the war in Bergen-Belsen, if they so desired. As we would finish the last few pages at the end of the month, I would once again be reminded that I sometimes did not give my students credit for the ability to process difficult, painful information. I did not always give them the credit for the ability to find reality compelling. Middle- and upper-class students in their early twenties, mostly, whose lack of language proficiency made them express themselves like children, I did not always credit them with, in short, being adults.

Though I tended to forget this at the beginning, the typical student response to the *Diary* was mature, compassionate, and emotional. What I had not yet experienced was a political reaction. I have said that I was surprised by Ashraf's question and self-supplied answer. But I should not have been so surprised. It had come in the midst of a more general political response in the first few days of that particular month in the late Spring of 2001.

Logistics do not allow me to choose the text I am going to use before I know the demographics of my class. If I'd had this choice, I might not have chosen to use the *Diary* that month. Our program had lately been receiving more Middle Eastern students, as well as a few Islamic Africans. For the first time since

The typical student response to the* Diary *was mature, compassionate, and emotional. What I had not yet experienced was a political reaction.

I'd been using the *Diary*, a significant portion of my class was Muslim. There was even a Palestinian. This group would sit together at the end of our long, rectangular table, their numbers perhaps giving them the courage to voice their opinions about the *Diary* and the topics surrounding it. I'm not sure if their classmates understood where these opinions were coming from, but with some consideration, I thought I did.

The *Diary* was, for them, not a book about the past, but about the present. Most Americans tend to see Anne Frank, foremost, as a victim, but my Muslim contingent seemed to see her first as a Jew. Similarly, we tend to see World War II and the Holocaust as a historical event that is safely behind us, an event that culminated in victory. My Muslim students tended to see, however, the Holocaust and its aftermath as having a lasting, deleterious effect on the politics of their homelands. As such, they were skeptical about the veracity of the *Diary* as a document, perceiving it and other documents like it, perhaps as propaganda supporting the Israeli state. They viewed the Holocaust itself as a key element in the argument for the existence of Israel—this existence being a kind of compensation for the ill treatment the Jews of Europe had received. In their eyes, Israel was an arrangement forced upon the Arab Muslims by the West.

Largely ignorant of the history surrounding the founding of Israel, or even of why the U.S. historically supported Israel in its present conflict, I found

their viewpoints revealing, interesting—and not necessarily irrelevant to our topic. Unfortunately, they did not jive well with my lesson plans. After a couple of days of this—and Ashraf's break-time question—it became clear to me that the group at the end of the table would not or could not consider the German political discrimination of Jews in Holland and elsewhere during World War II *except* in the light of what they perceived as the Israeli political discrimination against the Palestinians in the present time. It seemed one could not be spoken of without the other. They were always polite about it, never aggressive or shrill. But for me it was turning into in issue of class control.

Class time is valuable, and time given to one topic of discussion or activity means time taken from another. For the *Diary* to be effective in building reading skills, which was my primary purpose in using it, I needed the time a teacher needs to make any text effective: illuminating context, building vocabulary, checking comprehension. This class was my responsibility, and this responsibility extended to all the students. My lesson plans were reasonably flexible, but they did not include stretches of time devoted to a very one-sided discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, especially when there were a significant number in the class who were having a hard enough time grasping, in English, issues more directly related to the text.

On the other hand, should I disallow these students from expressing themselves in class? This goes against the grain of some of my most cherished principles as a teacher. Real communication should be encouraged and nurtured in class; it is the stuff from which true language acquisition derives. In order for this to happen, a lesson-plan, especially one that includes discussion, should not be overly restricted; instead it should allow students to take the conversation in new and unforeseen directions. This brings the unpredictability that can make a class lively. Besides, isn't freedom of expression an American value that should be exhibited in class?

The next day, when once again the subject came up, I made the short announcement that I had prepared. We would not spend class time discussing the political situation in the Middle East. I asked all the students to try to see Anne as a human being in wartime, dealing with wartime's oppressions, just as the peoples in all countries have had to deal with the oppressions of war at one time or another. At the end of our month together, as always, there would be a day for individual presentations. The purpose of these presentations was to give students the opportunity to express personal reactions to the book. This would be the appropriate time to bring up the Israeli-Palestinian issue, as it was certainly a valid personal reaction. I felt this to be a fair compromise, and, though the group at the end of the table, knowing the words were meant for them, shifted in their seats a bit, I sensed an acknowledgment that the request was acceptable. Feeling the matter was settled, I put it behind me and set my mind to other things.

From time to time, though, I worried about what that last presentation day might turn into, if they took me up on my suggestion. Another important principle for me is that when discussing a controversial topic, a teacher should try to keep his own views to himself. This is difficult, of course. But by virtue of the authority inherent in the teacher's position, offering his opinions encourages those whose own opinions are not solid to accept the teacher's at face value and discourages those with opposing opinions from airing them at all. But what will you do if students in your class start talking about an "International Jewish Cartel" controlling Washington? Do you continue to hold your tongue? And then, when presentation day came, and the topic was not chosen, I wondered if I had censored them by my earlier restriction. Surely, my body language had conveyed information that my words had been carefully chosen to conceal. If so, I thought, I had tried but failed.

English as a Second Language teaching, because it involves day-to-day involvement with people from other countries, cultures and faiths, calls us to be tolerant of, if not open to, other ideas, beliefs, ways of seeing, ways of doing. It calls us not to dismiss particular views and attitudes simply because they are foreign to us. It calls for, in short, a kind of working relativism. To think that "we are right and they are wrong" is an attitude that would color our daily interactions, and infect our relations with condescension. So we resist that kind of thinking. There are times when I have come up against, in my students, value systems, cultural in nature, for which I felt dis-

approval, but never before had I come up against beliefs that I so immediately and viscerally rejected as I had in the exchange with Ashraf. Never before had I experienced so clearly a sense of "us and them."

And this was, remember, the spring *before* September 11.

Another student, a Mexican who was studying to be a priest, took me aside during the break to ask another question of the *Diary*. His question was this: "Were the Franks Jews or were they German?"

What an outstanding question. The Frank family had been in Germany for several centuries and had long considered themselves Germans. Otto Frank, Anne's beloved father, had served as an officer for Germany in the First World War. In the years leading to World War II, they were German citizens who, because they were Jews, were being systematically stripped of their rights. So they were Germans, and they were Jews. How to explain this vital point, the key to understanding everything? I decided to use the Socratic method.

"Are there Jews in Mexico?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Where were they born?"

"Mexico."

"Are they Mexican?"

Here a hesitation. "No. They're Jews."

"But where are they *from*?" I asked.

Here a shrug. "Israel?"

"But I thought you said they were born in Mexico."

"They were."

"Then aren't they Mexican?" I asked.

"No, they're Jews."

"But if they were born in Mexico, aren't they Mexican?"

"Maybe their ancestors were from another country."

"Like some of your ancestors were from Spain?"

"Yes."

"Well, where were *their* ancestors from?"

He shrugged again. "Israel?"

The problem with the Socratic method, as I see it, is that Socrates' students seem a lot more cooperative in their answers than mine ever are. I decided to forgo the Socratic method.

"The Franks were both Germans and Jews."

It was a straightforward answer, however lacking in subtlety. My student nodded, though I did not see the spark of understanding in his eyes, and both of us walked away from the encounter a little frustrated. This was one of those difficult answers, those complicated answers.

What I faced with this student, it seemed to me, was a wall of ignorance—an ignorance of culture, of history, of diversity within society—so vast that I could not breach it. It occurred to me that what I had faced in Ashraf was exactly the opposite—a wall of knowing, a wall of certainty and belief—again of a vastness I could not breach.

The number of Middle Eastern students in our program decreased drastically in the month that followed September 11. Many of the ones we'd had disappeared; perhaps they returned to their countries or maybe they were—wisely?—simply staying out of sight for a while. In October, I assigned the *Diary* again. There was one Islamic student in the class, an African named Saied. Sensitized by my experience from the previous spring, I watched him closely, hoping to accommodate his particular reactions to the book, political or otherwise.

Saied, I noticed, tended to view Anne more harshly than the Japanese students, the Taiwanese, the Latin Americans. One of the common conflicts depicted in the *Diary* regards that between the relatively liberal treatment Anne receives from her parents and the more conservative approach advised by the Van Pels, the other family who shares the hiding place. Saied clearly sided with the Van Pels in this debate. Anne's outbursts, her precociousness and disobedience offended his view of the necessity for order and respect in the relationship between parent and child. Saied came from a society far less secular than that of the Franks—far less modern, it seems, though fifty years have passed since the Franks fled Germany and hid in Amsterdam. But with the past spring on my mind, I couldn't help wondering how his reaction may have been also colored by politics. Would he have been more compassionate with Anne

if she had been Muslim, rather than Jewish, or male, rather than female?

Another response seemed more obviously political. There is one segment in the *Diary* where Peter Van Pels, the boy in whom Anne, for a time, finds a confidante, speaks with bitterness of the phrase "the Chosen People." We can understand his feelings: the dark irony of the phrase in the light of their present circumstance. Saied disregarded the irony and drew, in his comment, the class's attention to what he saw as the arrogance of the phrase. To assume such a status over others, he suggested, invited hatred and discrimination. On one level, this was an interesting comment. It had a kind of logic to it, though I could not say that I had ever felt any indignation toward the Jews for appropriating the status of being "chosen" by God. On another level, it was simply another version of blaming the victim. They are despised because they are too proud. If Saied felt indignation over this—and granted, merely mentioning the possibility did not mean that he *did*—did that not betray a political stance on present matters?

I liked Saied. In fact, he was one of my favorite students: mature, thoughtful, modest. But in the atmosphere of the New York-Washington attacks, I suspected his politics. We were being reminded, over and over, that the Taliban and al-Qaeda had distorted the teachings of Islam and that most Muslims found the actions of the terrorists as appalling as we did. But something deeper in me—something less mitigated by reason and good sense, something supported by my own walls of ignorance—could not help but wonder whether he harbored certain sympathies with their cause. Some might call this the paranoia of wartime. But mainstream commentators have suggested that to think such a thing has a basis in the reality of how the Muslim world feels about the U.S. and its continuing support of Israel. Giving voice to these suspicions and confronting Saied with them would be a way to stand up for my country—to do my bit, so to speak. I was tempted, again and again.

An example: The holidays were looming, we were talking about them, and I had assigned students to write about a holiday in their country. Saied's first paragraph contained a discussion of holidays in general, and how they were not practiced in his country in the sense that they were in the West. (I could not help but wonder whether this was a slight dig at Western decadence—another manifestation of my mood at the time.) He did, however, tell about a religious observance in his country. To explain its origin, he had to retell the story of God commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, only to reverse the command at the last minute. The purpose of the holiday was to honor and commend Abraham's example of obedience to his God. Reading this, I once again interpreted it in the light of current events and was once again tempted to confront Saied with the possibility of his ideological sympathy with the terrorists. I raised my pen and prepared to compose something like the following:

> This story—which appears in the Bible as well as, I assume, the Koran—has long been problematic in Western thought. It is troublesome because it seems to teach that the murder of the innocent (Isaac) is acceptable if commanded by God. It seems to say that God's commands (often interpreted subjectively) supersede the common morality. Is this not what the September 11 terrorists saw themselves as doing—mass murder in the name of a higher obedience? Do you think this was right?

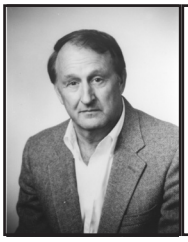
I put my pen down without writing. It would have been wrong to respond in this way; I saw that in an instant. There are surely many reasons why, but once again, a pedagogical principle had guided me. I was his teacher, and the teacher should serve the student's learning, not advance his own personal, emotional agenda. When there is some question as to when and whether these two intermingle—and they do, more often perhaps than we think—one should err on the side of restraint.

But I wondered, with some curiosity, about my motivations. What had I been trying to accomplish? I wanted to make Saied face and answer for the crimes of the terrorists that had hurt so many of my countrymen—and in this, had hurt me. I wanted to do this under the cover of class work. It would have been a set-up, an ambush, quite similar—both in origin and in execution—to the one Ashraf had arranged for me.

The Double Binds in Using Dewey's Epistemology to Address Eco-Justice Issues

C. A. Bowers

Dewey's epistemology is so deeply rooted in the cultural assumptions that underlie the Industrial Revolution that it cannot be of value in addressing the ecological crisis and issues of eco-justice.



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Our future is threatened by massive environmental assaults, including global warming and the introduction of approximately 80,000 synthetic chemicals into land, waters, and air. The loss of biological and cultural diversity are also signs that our prospects for the future are limited. Contributing significantly to our current environmental problems are the forms of knowledge that Western educational institutions have accorded high status.

Briefly, high-status knowledge is based on the assumption that the individual is the basic social unit, a human-centered (anthropocentric) approach to life, the belief that change is linear and inherently progressive, and the view that science as the most legitimate and authoritative source of knowledge. High-status knowledge is largely encoded in print and other systems of abstract representation—which lead to valorizing decontextualized ways of thinking. High-status knowledge is also characterized by the increasing integration of science, technology, and corporate values (Bowers 1997).

The double bind in high-status knowledge is that, in the name of progress, it contributes to the consumer/technology-dependent lifestyle now being globalized. Indeed, no culture or area of daily life is immune from the efforts to create new markets for technologies and products—from new factories and high-tech farming to McDonald's restaurants. The spread of the Western model of high-status knowledge is undermining traditional, self-sufficient cultures that have kept market forces in check through their patterns of intergenerational responsibility and systems of mutual aid. Omitted from the curriculum of Western educational institutions, these diverse

patterns of community life are accorded low-status—even though these patterns have generally been far better for the natural environment.

As educators, it is important for us to face the fact that one of our most enlightened and revered thinkers, John Dewey, established an epistemology that contributes to the high-status knowledge that has become so problematic.

Dewey criticized thinking that is merely abstract and detached. He valued thinking that is instrumental, experimental, and productive. Genuine intelligence, in his view, continually produces new knowledge and understandings. As he said in *The Quest for Certainty*,

> the constructive office of thought is empirical—that is, experimental. "Thought" is not a property of something termed intellect or reason apart from nature. It is a mode of directed overt action. Ideas are anticipatory plans and designs which take effect in concrete reconstructions of antecedent conditions of existence…. Being connected with operations to be performed, they are tested by the consequences of these operations. (Dewey 1960)

In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916, 166-167) explains the goal of education as the "reconstruction or reorganization of experience which adds to the meaning of experience, and which increases ability to direct the course of subsequent experience." The participatory nature of a genuine educational experience was given special emphasis in his 1919 lecture at the Imperial University of Japan. As he put it,

> full education comes only when there is a responsible share on the part of each person, in proportion to capacity, in shaping the aims and policies of the social group to which he belongs. (Dewey 1957, 209)

Let me say here that I consider several aspects of Dewey's philosophy to be of considerable value. These include his understanding that intelligence is a social construct rather than an attribute of an autonomous individual, and the central role he gives to participatory decision making. His ideas are highly useful when taking a management approach to local environmental problems, such as dealing with the contamination of the local water supply and preserving wetlands. It is therefore understandable that many contemporary environmentalists consider Dewey's epistemology to be a valuable tool. But on a more profound level, it is exacerbating the ecological crisis and hindering the achievement of eco-justice. In particular, Dewey's epistemology is undermining the right of minority cultures to renew their intergenerational traditions rather than becoming integrated into the today's consumer/technological dependent monoculture. His epistemology seems to solve practical problems, but it is stamping out diverse cultures and cultural perspectives that value and sustain the natural world.

In order to recognize more easily the cultural assumptions taken for granted by Dewey and most of his current followers, including Richard Rorty, it is first necessary to contrast them with those of traditional, self-sufficient cultures, such as the indigenous cultures of North America, Asia, and Africa. Even though there are profound differences in their guiding mythopoetic narratives, their ecologically sustainable pathways nevertheless involve a common set of patterns. These include educational and political practices that pass down intergenerationally based skills, knowledge, ceremonies, and networks of mutual assistance. In many of these cultures, the development of personal skill is generally more valued than the search for new technologies. Other shared patterns include reliance on mentoring as a means of developing personal talents and carrying forward past levels of high achievement, the recognition of elder knowledge as a source of wisdom about sustainable relationships between people and with the natural environment, and a deeply held sense of responsibility for the lives of future generations. Their respective languages often encode knowledge, accumulated over generations of living in one place, of the limits and possibilities of their bioregion,including the medicinal characteristics of local plants. Furthermore, their lack of an industrial model of production does not require the elimination of cultural differences in order to create larger, efficient, and more profitable systems of production and distribution. As the essays in the book *The Spirit of Regeneration* (Apffel-Marglin 1998) demonstrate, their approaches to the development of organic science,

which broadened the genetic basis of agriculture in many regions of the world, did not lead to the scale of toxic contamination of their own environment as well as that of neighboring cultures that we are experiencing today.

The above vocabulary—culture, cultural diversity, intergenerational knowledge, mentors, elders, mythopoetic narratives, traditions of non-commodified skills, and ceremonies—contrasts sharply with the cultural assumptions that Dewey took for granted. This vocabulary also helps put in focus that Dewey's approach to education and participatory decision making does not lead to strengthening the foundations of cultural diversity and the traditions of how to live less consumer dependent lives. While Dewey claims that the method of experimental inquiry must be grounded in the network of interactions that constitute experience, which might lead some interpreters to view him as anticipating Gregory Bateson's understanding of the ecological nature of intelligence, there is an assumption about the nature of change that connects his epistemology to one of the most basic assumptions underlying the Industrial Revolution that is putting us all at risk. The assumption is that change is linear, continual, and progressive in nature. In *Reconstruction in Philosophy* (1957, 116), Dewey writes that "change becomes significant of new possibilities and ends to be attained; it becomes prophetic of a better future." He goes on to claim that "change is associated with progress rather than with lapse and fall." The educational and democratic challenge is to use the method of intelligence to turn it in the "direction of our desires."

This view of change, which Dewey accords ontological status rather than recognizing its culturally specific nature, raises a series of questions about the other core assumptions underlying Dewey's epistemology. These include the anthropocentric bias that leads to an instrumental understanding of nature, and a view of science that ignores its cultural embededness and potential for harm as well as good. Both anthropocentrism and science gave conceptual direction and moral legitimacy to the Industrial Revolution, and continue to influence thinking about globalization today. Both assumptions are also contributing factors in Dewey's misunderstanding of the nature of culture—and, more importantly, his failure to recognize that there are as many cultural epistemologies as there are cultural languages. As we all know from Dewey's tireless reiterations, there is only one legitimate method of intelligence. While he viewed it as the basis of participatory decision-making, its universalization undermines the epistemologies of other cultures. In effect, Dewey's epistemology, when translated into the practice of community decision making, requires participants grounded in a different cultural epistemology to "reconstruct" their own basic assumptions in order to participate in the group process. This would require rejecting the traditions of intergenerational knowledge—mentors, elders, narratives, sacred texts as a source of moral authority, and so forth—that might inhibit determining the merit of ideas (plans of action) on the basis of their immediate consequences. In addition to his failure to recognize the legitimacy of other cultural ways of knowing, he also failed to recognize the different approaches to encoding and renewing knowledge within his own culture that are essential to renewing the patterns of moral reciprocity and mutual support in communities. In short, the universalizing of Dewey's epistemology would complement the dominant epistemology that enabled the Industrial Revolution to undermine the intergenerational knowledge and values essential to relatively self-sufficient communities. If this claim about adopting Dewey's epistemology appears too extreme, I invite readers to consider how the deep cultural assumptions underlying Dewey's ideas can be reconciled with the assumptions of the Balinese or the Western Apache of the American Southwest. Lansing (1991) and Basso (1996) provide excellent accounts of epistemologies of these cultures and the practices that follow from them. Or the comparison might be made between Dewey and the different approaches to knowledge in Muslim, Hindu, and Chinese cultures. While the argument will be made that Dewey's ideas were taken seriously by intellectuals in non-Western cultures, I would counter by asking whether they had already taken for granted the Western assumptions about progress and modernization.

The Double Bind

In the space remaining I will focus more directly on how Dewey's epistemology creates a double bind

for his current followers in addressing eco-justice issues—how his epistemology promotes progress but ignores the value of ecologically sustaining cultures. I will focus on the way Dewey misunderstood three aspects of other cultures: their languages, traditions, and mythopoetic narratives. I recognize that language, traditions, and mythopoetic narratives have also been developed in ways that have supported oppressive social systems and environmentally destructive practices. Dewey was well aware of these possibilities. The problem with his epistemology is that it prevented him from recognizing what can be learned from cultures that developed languaging processes, traditions, and mythopoetic narratives that respect nature and promote community life.

Language

The ontological status Dewey accords to change deeply influenced his view of language as transactional and instrumental in nature. Language, according to him, should not be taken to represent a fixed, antecedent set of attributes and relationships. That is, language should not be viewed as encoding past ways of understanding that might contribute to mental habits that limit the reconstruction of experience through collective experimental inquiry. In *Knowing and the Known* (1949), which he co-authored with Arthur Bentley and which represents the further development of his view of language, we find an argument for emptying language of any intergenerational content. As Dewey and Bentley (p. 49)put it,

> the naming of the observation and naming adopted is to promote further observation and naming which in turn will advance and improve. This condition excludes all namings that are asserted to give, or that claim to be, finished reports on "reality."

Supposedly, Dewey's version of ever-changing language would free it from cultural contexts and traditions and thereby make it objective and accurate for describing the immediacy of experience.

Dewey should not be criticized for overlooking the metaphorically layered nature of language, which has been more fully explained in the recent writings of George Lakoff (1987), Mark Johnson (1987), and Richard Brown (1978). But he can be faulted for ignoring the writings of Edward Sapir who, in 1927, published his seminal essay on how cultural ways of knowing are encoded and carried forward in the language/thought connection. In the essay, "Linguistics as a Science," Sapir (1970, 69-70) wrote:

> The fact of the matter is that the "real world" is to a large extent unconsciously built up in the language habits of the group…. We see and hear and otherwise experience very largely as we do because the habits of our [language] community predispose certain choices of interpretation. …from this standpoint we may think of language as the *symbolic guide to culture.*

Benjamin Lee Whorf, who was a student of Sapir, also began publishing articles based on his fieldwork with Southwest indigenous cultures. His linguistic studies led him to argue that there is a relationship between the patterns of language and the patterns of thought, and that these patterns are culturally specific. And note that some of Whorf's examples of language, such as the Eskimos' numerous names for different kinds of snow, illustrate the way cultures pass down traditional environmental knowledge.

While Dewey was too invested in a view of language that complemented his theory of inquiry, his followers should be held accountable for ignoring the writings on the metaphorical nature of language that now supports the Sapir-Whorf view of language. Richard Rorty, as well as theorists who want to recover Dewey's ideas as the basis of a more environmentally conscious approach to education, have ignored the literature that explains how the root metaphors of a cultural group frame the process of thinking (Bowers 1993, 147-162). The root metaphors of patriarchy, anthropocentrism, and mechanism can be seen influencing Western thought and cultural patterns over centuries. The root metaphor of mechanism, for example, can be seen as the basis of current thought in fields ranging from architecture to brain research. As a metacognitive schema, it can be traced back to Johannes Kepler and Isaac Newton. Rorty and others in the Dewey tradition have been insufficiently aware of our own cultural root metaphors and their influence on environmental interactions.

The real issue, then, is not that of how to go about emptying the language of historically and culturally specific metaphorical content, as both Dewey and Paulo Freire suggest. Rather, it is to assess which root metaphors contribute to cultural patterns of thought, values, and uses of technology that limit ecological damage. As we are rooted in Western traditions of thought, we cannot adopt, like a commodity off the shelf, the root metaphors (mythopoetic narratives) of the Hopi or other indigenous cultures. But we can begin to organize thought and values, and design technologies that are based on the root metaphor that represents life processes as an ecology. This, in turn, can lead to recognizing different ways of knowing as cultural ecologies that have developed as intergenerational responses to the characteristics of the natural systems that constitute their bioregion.

Tradition

The cultural assumption (root metaphor) that represents change as linear contributed to Dewey's understanding of cultures as evolving from a primitive, pre-scientific state of existence to one where the scientific method of inquiry becomes the basis of exercising control over the contingencies of daily existence. It is important to note that few liberal proponents of Dewey's ideas acknowledge his Social Darwinian view of culture that led him to reject non-scientifically based cultures as backward and primitive. In *Democracy and Education* (1916, 296), for example, he refers to cultures that do not interpret natural phenomena through the lenses of Western science as "savages."

Other limitations in Dewey's understanding of tradition can be seen in how he views the nature of habits. In numerous places in his writings, he refers to habits as representing a view of the world that is fixed, and thus not requiring the exercise of intelligence in tracing relationships, forming and testing a hypothesis (plan of action), and then moving on to the next problematic situation. Although he acknowledges that the use of the method of intelligence may become a habit, his general proclivity is to represent habits as separate from and in opposition to the method of intelligence. "Habits," he writes in *Democracy and Education* (1916, 58), "reduce themselves to routine ways of acting or degenerate into ways of action to which we are enslaved just in the degree in which intelligence is disconnected from them." And in *Art as Experience* (Boydston 1989), he restates his view of the fundamental differences between habits and intelligence when he contrasts the inertia of habit with the imaginative.

Dewey's view of human evolution, as well as his view of habits, is critically important to understanding why today's follower of Dewey is likely to respond to the suggestion that we can learn from non-industrial by saying that we cannot go back to an earlier stage of existence. Not only does this remark, which I continually encounter when discussing the characteristics of more ecologically centered cultures, reflect a Social Darwinist way of thinking, it also reflects a bias that prevents considering the patterns, both in our own culture as well in others, that hold the possibility of countering the current trend toward meeting more of daily needs through consumerism.

The problem with Dewey, as well as with followers such as Richard Rorty and Michael Eldridge (1998), is that they do not understand the complex nature of tradition. Nor did Dewey recognize that morally coherent cultures, democratic decision making, and sustainable human/Nature relationships have developed independently of his method of experimental inquiry. Rupert Ross (1996) is especially good on this point.

According to Edward Shils (1980), every aspect of culture that is re-enacted over four cohorts or generations is a tradition. Thus, traditions include a culture's system of settling disputes and determining guilt, patterns of thinking and encoding knowledge, social and mechanical technologies, the side of the road that cars move on, forms of music, spellings of words, writing from left to right on a sheet of paper, privileging print over the spoken word, patterns of metacommunication, and so forth. Shils points out that some traditions were improperly constituted in the first place, while other change too slowly. But he also suggests caution because one of the characteristics of a living tradition is that it cannot be recovered after is has been displaced; thus, his recommendation that we be aware of which traditions are being threatened.

We see examples of threatened traditions in our everyday lives. Television has interfered with the tradition of family conversation around the dinner table, and privacy is threatened by the introduction of computers. The traditions of face-to-face accountability that will be lost through the more widespread adoption of virtual classrooms are only now being recognized—which may be too late to reverse the trend toward the further commodification of the educational process (which is itself a well-established tradition).

Dewey's largely anti-tradition tradition way of thinking prevented him from adopting a more balanced and intelligent way of thinking about traditions. Instead of emphasizing change and the role of experimental inquiry in fostering further changes, he should have asked the more fundamental questions: Which traditions represent hard won achievements and are essential to morally coherent and self-reliant communities? Which traditions privilege certain groups over others and degrade the quality of life? Which traditions undermine the prospects of future generations? Dewey's orientation toward the present and future prevented him from recognizing that not all forms of intergenerational knowledge are limiting, the source of injustice, and undermine community. If we consider cultures where the market has a more balanced role in the life of the community, we find that intergenerational knowledge—which may take the form of mentoring, elder wisdom, face-to-face learning of skills that contribute to self-sufficiency rather than consumer products, narratives that encode the group's understanding of relationships and moral character—plays a vitally important role.

To summarize, the critical questions should not be around the problem of how to more widely substitute the method of intelligence for all traditions; rather the questions should reflect a more balanced understanding of what has been handed down from the past. We should even be open to the possibility that the attenuated traditions of community interdependence, not based on the scientific method of inquiry, may represent part of the answer of how to live less environmentally destructive lives. In short, Dewey's epistemology is too centered on "doing," with too little attention given to the long-term consequences of what the continual process of "reconstruction" is undoing.

Mythopoetic Narratives

All cultures are based on narratives, even cultures that claim to be secular and free of prescientific ways of thinking. Indeed, mythopoetic narrative—religion in Clifford Geertz's (1973) sense of the term—are the basis of a culture's moral framework. While Dewey acknowledged that experience might have a religious dimension to it, his epistemology did not allow for the recognition of mythopoetic narratives—except as the source of mystification and backwardness. For Dewey, these narratives would simply impede science and progress. But the Balinese narrative of creation, for example, is the basis of a system of temple ceremonies that have regulated the allocation of water to rice paddies that kept the society in sustainable balance with natural resources for hundreds of years. The mythopoetic narrative of the Quechua of the Andes, to cite another example, represents all forms of life as interdependent and nurturing. This narrative has led to agricultural practices that have produced an incredible diversity of edible plants—in sharp contrast to the rapid reduction of biodiversity produced by modern industrial and high-tech agribusinesses.

One of the consequences of arguing that science should supplant the mythopoetic narratives of the world's cultures is that the justification for a world monoculture would then be placed in the hands of scientists who, for the most part, do not understand the ecological significance of maintaining cultural diversity. As recent futuristic predictions of scientists indicate, they cannot escape the influence of culture on their own thought patterns and values. While not all mythopoetic narratives have led to ecologically sustainable cultures, or met our standards of moral behavior and socially just communities, a case can be made that scientists should be held accountable to moral standards that are grounded in symbolic moral systems that have been refined over centuries of collective experience.

Examples come readily to mind that raise serious doubts about Dewey's argument that the scientific mode of inquiry should be used to determine the guiding moral values of the community. Computing

scientists and science-oriented thinkers—such as Hans Moravec (1988), Kevin Kelly (1994), and Raymond Kurzweil (1999)—are filling the current void within their own subculture of a guiding mythopoetic narrative by claiming that we are entering the "post-biological" stage of the evolutionary process. They are also claiming that the process of natural selection is at work in the merging of humans and machines into a "global superorganism," as Gregory Stock (1993) puts it.

Other chilling examples of science and technology operating independently of the moral constraints traditionally provided by mythopoetic narratives can be found in the field of biotechnology—which increasingly derives its guiding values from corporations in quest of new markets. For example, Lee Silver, a molecular biologist at Princeton University, claims in *Remaking Eden* (1997) that the next scientific advance will be to use genetic engineering to segregate society into two classes. The "GenRich" will be products of synthetic genes, represent 10 percent of the population, and be responsible for the economy and the creation and management of the symbolic functions of the culture. The "Naturals" will represent the class of people whose genetic make-up has not been scientifically engineered; their task will be perform the service and labor functions in society. Silver further predicts that over time the "GenRich would evolve into a separate species." A number of scientists and bio-ethicists have given their support to this prediction of the next achievement of science.

Dewey would reject these recent developments on the grounds that they do not represent the outcome of democratic decision making. My concern is that his epistemology, if it is the only basis of decision making, would be in conflict with the mythopoetic narratives that provide a conceptual and moral framework for challenging the hubris of modern scientists. The same root metaphors that underlie Dewey's epistemology are also the same root metaphors that underlie the predictions that we are entering the post-biological phase of natural selection and that genetic engineering holds the promise of a new species of GenRich humans. The fundamental difference between how these root metaphors work themselves out at the level of theory and practice is that Dewey connected them with a vision of a democratic polity, while the scientists are turning natural selection into an ideology that de-politicizes the technological changes emerging from their research and theorizing. While the latter represent themselves in the supposedly non-political role of carrying out Nature's design process, it must be recognized that Dewey's vision of a democracy based on experimental inquiry would further reinforce the evolution meta-narrative that elite scientists are using to justify their efforts to bring the cultures of the world under the control of scientific research and corporate values.

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Brief Reports: Innovations in Education

Experiential Teaching About Diversity

James D. Allen

As an educational psychologist, I try to help pre-service teachers develop a better understanding of their attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors regarding the diverse backgrounds of their future students. This effort is clearly important for my students, who are largely white and middle class and have had relatively little contact with people from different backgrounds. But cultural awareness and open-mindedness are importantly generally, for there is a common tendency to view "others" with suspicion and prejudice.

Learning theory suggests that changes in attitudes and thinking are promoted by engaging in new behavior. One learning activity in which I engage students is the following

"You will need to have a new experience. It should involve learning about a group of people (or individual) who differ from you along one or more of the following dimensions culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, nationality, social/economic class; intellectual or physical ability. Choose an experience that you would not normally have. The purpose is to learn something about someone that you might not have learned without this experience."

The students submit a two-page summary paper that includes a description of their experience, their reactions, and thoughts on how the experience might relate to cultural, humanistic, or diversity theory.

The students' experiences have included volunteer work in a soup kitchen, attending gay/straight discussion groups, interviews with people of different religious beliefs, the study of Zen calligraphy, the acceptance of friendships with those of a different sexual orientation and racial/ethnic backgrounds, and a re-examination of attitudes toward friends who are teenage mothers. The students often reported that the experiences "woke me up," "opened my eyes," brought home "my closed-mindedness," and taught "the importance of having respect" for those with different religious beliefs and heritage.

I asked students to post their summaries on a web-based discussion board so they could share them with others. Unfortunately, very few students responded or commented on each other's experience. Overall, however, I believe the experience, while only a beginning effort in cultural awareness, was quite helpful. The students now know themselves better and are more open to the diversity of the students they will teach.

James D. Allen teaches at the College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY. For a detailed report, including descriptive summaries written by students, see Allen, J. D. 2000. Teaching about multicultural and diversity issues from a humanistic perspective. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA, April 24-28. Available at ERIC Document Reproduction Service, ED 443 791. Or contact the author at The College of Saint Rose, 432 Western Ave., Albany, NY 12203-1490; (518) 454- 5273; <allenj@mail.strose.edu>.

Subtle Energies in the Classroom

Marti Anderson

Some classes run into stubborn resistance, while others flow along. I am interested in the possibility that more is at play than human dynamics as we ordinarily think of them. There might be "subtle energies" that extend beyond us as separate individuals and constitute the entire field or atmosphere of a classroom.

The term "subtle energies" is often attributed to

Stephan Schwartz, who used it at an Esalen conference in the late 1970s. These energies, which we often speak of as "vibes," seem mysterious and unscientific. But quantum physics, as described by William Tiller in *Science and Human Transformation: Subtle Energies, Intentionality, and Consciousness* (1997), sheds light on how our own waves and particles influence one another even when they are not physically proximate. In the 1930s and 1940s, the psychologist Kurt Lewin also might have pointed to a framework for studying subtle energies when he suggested that researchers consider field forces rather than isolated individuals. Lewin suggested that fields surrounding people involve an interplay of energy that influences the outcome of a situation. Subtle energies also might underlie what Carl Rogers called "unconditional positive regard," our loving respect for another that is typically conveyed non-verbally.

I advise teachers to explore how their own energy systems might affect their teaching. I suggest that teachers consider how every action, thought, or decision, in and out of the classroom, might transmit some type of energy and affect the total classroom field. I ask them to try techniques such as meditation as ways of improving the unarticulated atmosphere of the classroom.

When I meditate daily, I have increased tolerance and greater capacity for connection and compassion. I am able to see, hear, and understand my students with more clarity and understanding. Meditation techniques are well described by Thich Nhat Hanh in *Peace Is Every Step* (1991).

Another technique is visualization, in which I try to shift the energy of a classroom. I might envelop the classroom or individuals in a certain color of light (such as blue to instill calm or red to promote energy and love), or privately invite the best from my learners or myself. On this topic I recommend Valerie Hunt's *Infinite Mind* and her *Mind Mastery Meditations*, published by Malibu Publishing in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

Some find HeartMath, as described by Doc Childre and Howard Martin in their book, *The HeartMath Solution* (Harper 1999) productive. It works by refocusing energy toward and emanating from the heart. When I am feeling frustrated by some dynamic in the classroom or am losing focus or inspiration, I focus on the energy of my heart and ask for its wisdom to guide me. I have found that this method often alters the atmosphere of the class.

If teachers begin to pay attention to the subtle dynamics that may be explained as subtle energies, students may have more positive and enriching educational experiences.

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Book Reviews

Free Schools, Free People

by Ron Miller
Published by SUNY Press (Albany, NY 2002)

Reviewed by William Ayers

The triumph of a fierce and relentless market fundamentalism is everywhere apparent, on the street of course, but also penetrating our homes, families, and places of worship. Corporate interests are redefining everything from health care to criminal justice, from waste management to elections, from safety to the distribution of water. In this bizarrely misshapen world, hierarchy rules; competition of every kind is always good; profit is an undisputed virtue; efficiency and standardization are givens; advertising is a fine art; and individual consumption is the pinnacle of participation. The current iteration of the school wars mirrors all this—the marketeers are in full eruption, leading the retreat from a robust, diverse, and well-funded public educational system in the hands of the many toward a system of private schools for the benefit of a few. Edison is only one egregious example: Steeped in the rhetoric of freedom and the market, these proudly for-profit McSchools produce nothing and sell nothing, relying instead on a neat shell game whose chief function is to transfer public monies to private hands under the banner of liberation.

In less than full-blown mode the skirmishes are widespread, and so are the markers: vast resources directed to the simplistic task of sorting youngsters into camps of winners and losers; tests that function as an autopsy rather than a diagnostic; intolerant school cultures that reward obedience and conformity while punishing initiative and courage; curriculum that is fragmented, alienating, and irrelevant; layers of supervision and regulation that reduce the role of the teacher to that of a functionary, and constitute a dagger in the intellectual and ethical heart of teaching.

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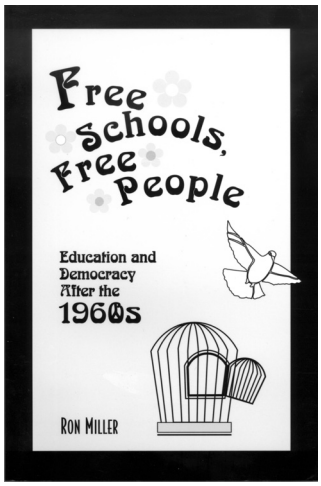
To question the tenets of the marketeers, to wonder if our schools, for example, or our children are being well-served by any of this is to be banished from the shiny stadium where the game is being played, where the shouting is deafening, and where the bullies rule the mob. It is to be a shabby street vendor approaching from a dim side street.



Thank goodness for Ron Miller, who remembers that no worthwhile social change movement was ever initiated from the center—from inside the stadium—but rather that each ignited at the margins, developed force as it gathered energy from the growing numbers of participants, and only attacked the headquarters in due time. Thank goodness for his willingness to eschew the superficial and the gaudy in favor of the substantive and the principled, and thank goodness that when it comes to upholding the great humanizing mission of education and the possibilities of creating schools of hope and courage for youngsters, Ron Miller is both fearless and tireless. In *Free Schools, Free People* Ron Miller shows us how it's done.

Free Schools, Free People has a host of virtues, but for me two stand out. First is Miller's location of the free school movement of the 1960s in the larger circles of meaning without which it is incomprehensible. The Civil Rights Movement created the context—notions of freedom, liberation, social justice, and peace became more than abstractions, became in fact embodied and trembling and real, concrete things to enact and to live. This set the moral agenda for a generation and became part of the landscape, part of the air people breathed. Participatory democracy was similarly something to live and breathe and experience in its dailyness, as was the cultural upheaval that followed. In all of this people thought of themselves as breaking through a range of imposed

barriers to their full humanity, of dreaming beyond borders and then transgressing the boundaries of the given. Disinclined to petition power or to beg for an end to injustice, many acted as if they lived in the world they desired—we ought to be able to sit at this lunch counter and so we are—schools ought to be child-centered sites of liberation, and so we'll build them—and in that action helped to create the world of their imaginations. A large part of the border crossing involved a radical shift in consciousness, a rejection of both the conservative mainstream and the liberal reformers in favor of more fundamental structural and personal transformation.

The second virtue I want to highlight is Miller's resurrection of the work of John Holt, and the situating of that work at the heart of the free school movement. Holt was both a mensch and a deep thinker, a profoundly moral person whose self-directed vocation was to speak truth to power, to give comfort to the despised and the oppressed, to stand up for enlightenment and liberation in a world in desperate need of repair. Holt's pathway was twisty, of course, because his mind was restless, questing, changing, seeking. What Holt balanced so well is what is most difficult in this work—a deep condemnation of the structures and the systems of oppression and exploitation, and an unshakable belief in the infinite power of individuals to come together to transform themselves and change the world.

Today talk of freedom is pervasive in every realm, and everywhere—free trade and the free world, free markets and free exchange—but it feels abstract, a given that is both ubiquitous and distant, assumed but not available for active or concrete participation. Personal freedom—our self-proclaimed and celebrated rights and choices, our assumed autonomy and insistent independence—is similarly saturating but strangely off: free to drive anywhere, we find ourselves stuck in traffic; free to speak our minds, we don't have much to say; free to choose, we feel oddly entangled; free to vote for the candidate of our choice, we can't find anything distinctive about either. Most of us, of course, are also entirely dependant on others for a living—we have no voice and no vote in what will be produced or how. Most of us experience the flattening and pacifying effects of a mass consumer society—the sense of being manipulated, lied to, shaped and used by powerful forces. We hear all around us market fundamentalists promoting the idea that the purest forms of freedom and choice and democratic living can be easily reduced to a question of consumption. Many Americans behave as if freedom requires neither thought nor effort—we lucky few were somehow simply born free; it's our inherited state. We don't vote in large numbers, nor do we create or actively participate in public spaces.

Ron Miller's sparkling history of free schools remind us that for all human beings, including us, there is the condition of being; in Hannah Arendt's phrase, "free and fated, fated and free." We are not entirely determined, but neither do we enjoy absolute choice. No one chooses their parents or their historical moment; no one chooses a nation or tribe or religion to be born into. We are thrust into a world not of our choosing. On the other hand, each of us chooses who we will be against that hard background of facts. In some situations we might accede, in others, refuse. Like everyone we are situated; we are free. When freedom is abstractly and easily proclaimed—whether in school or in society—we do best to proceed as skeptics.

Schools serve societies, of course, in a range of direct and indirect ways. While they are established to recreate the norms and values of the larger society, schools are also sites of contention, also reflecting, for example, long-term struggles and conflicts between democratic impulses and oppressive relationships. The struggles of the sixties—for civil rights, against war—quite naturally found a home in schools and universities. To justify or recommend a society's schools, one must be able to somehow warrant the society that those schools serve. The "failure" of Black schools in the old South Africa was after all no failure at all. It fit at least some of the overarching needs and goals of South African society. However, South Africa's schools were also a key source of the liberation movement, the place where liberating ideas were learned and sometimes even practiced. The sustained struggle of South African militants arose from the schools, and schools were both site and seedbed for the liberation struggle.

A similar argument can be made here at home—the failure of some schools and some children in Chicago, say, is not due to a failure of the system. That is,

if one suspends for a moment the rhetoric of democratic participation, fairness, justice, and freedom, and acknowledges (even tentatively) that our society, too, is one of privilege and oppression, inequality, class divisions, and racial and gender stratifications, then one might view the schools as a whole as doing an adequate job both of sorting youngsters for various roles in society and convincing them that they, and they alone, deserve their various privileges and failures. Sorting students may be the single, brutal accomplishment of U.S. schools, even if it runs counter to the ideal of education as a process that opens possibilities, provides opportunities to challenge and change fate, and empowers people to control their own lives. Nowhere is this contradiction more visible than in the experience of poor and black children and youth in American schools. We can't really speak of freedom and schools in America without remembering the Freedom Schools and the Citizenship Schools that emerged as parent and adjunct of the great Civil Rights Movement. Ron Miller highlights Freedom Schools as progenitor and inspiration for the free school movement. Freedom Schools and Citizenship Schools grew up all over the South wherever the Civil Rights Movement established itself as a serious force, and the schools quickly became the grassroots base of the Southern-wide opposition to segregation. As the movement spread, the schools became in many places a spontaneous forum for action, and the character of each school was determined by local needs and the specific people who organized it. Usually organized to teach basic literacy so that disenfranchised blacks could register and vote, the schools were also places of broader social and political empowerment.

Learning to read in the old South was a subversive activity, an activity that many thought could change the fundamental structure of the Jim Crow system. Many in the South considered black illiteracy a pillar of white supremacy. The Citizenship Schools, which paralleled the heroic efforts to educate ex-slaves during the radical period of Black Reconstruction immediately following the Civil War, challenged white supremacy by teaching basic literacy, encouraging people to vote, and providing alternatives and a sense of efficacy. The first Citizenship School was disguised as a grocery store "to fool white people." Reading represented power; for black people it was the power to control and to change their destiny.

This kind of education opposes fear, ignorance, and helplessness by strengthening knowledge and ability. It enables people to question, to wonder, and to look critically. It requires teachers who are thoughtful, caring, and connected deeply to those they teach. This enabling education can be both the process by which people discover and develop various capacities as they locate themselves historically, and the vehicle for moving forward and breaking through the immutable facts, tradition, and objects of life as we find them. Its singular value is that it is education for freedom.

Education for freedom is always more a possibility than an accomplishment, more an achievement of people in action than a finished condition. It requires a continual identification of what is to be done, a constant process of unfolding and moving forward. The process of education, of discovery, of freedom, is never neat, logical, smooth, or obvious in advance. It is more often messy, rough, unpredictable, and inconsistent. It can be halting and it can be slow, but it can also surprise with the suddenness and power of change.

Education of course lives an excruciating paradox precisely because of its association with and location in schools. Education is about opening doors, opening minds, opening possibilities. School is too often on a mission of sorting and punishing, grading and ranking and certifying. Education is unconditional—it asks nothing in return. School demands obedience and conformity as a precondition to attendance. Education is surprising and unruly and disorderly and free, while the first and fundamental law of school is to follow orders. Education frees the mind, while schooling bureaucratizes the brain. An educator unleashed the unpredictable, while too many schoolteachers start with an unhealthy obsession with classroom management and linear lesson plans.

Working in schools—where the fundamental truths and demands and possibilities of teaching at its best are obscured and diminished and opaque, and where the powerful ethical core of our efforts is systematically defaced and erased—requires a re-engagement with the larger purposes of teaching. When the drumbeat of our daily lives is all about

controlling the crowd, managing and moving the mob, conveying disembodied bits of information to inert things propped at desks before us, the need to fight for ourselves and our students becomes an imperative. Central to that fight is the understanding that there is no basis for education in a democracy except for faith in freedom and the enduring capacity for growth in ordinary people. Ron Miller describes one concerted, sustained attempt to address the conflict between school and education. The free school movement was in a sense opening a space of harmony and resolution.

The complexity of the teacher's task is based on its idiosyncratic and improvisational character—as inexact as a person's mind or a human heart, as unique and inventive as a friendship or a love affair, as explosive and unpredictable as a revolution. The teacher's work is about background, environment, setting, surround, position, situation, connection. And, importantly, teaching is at its center about relationship—with the person, with the world.

Seeing the student, seeing the world—this is the beginning: To assume a deep capacity in students, an intelligence (sometimes obscure, sometimes buried) as well as a wide range of hopes, dreams and aspirations; to acknowledge, as well, obstacles to understand and overcome, deficiencies to repair, injustices to correct. With this as a base, the teacher creates an environment for learning that has multiple entry points for learning and multiple pathways to success. That environment must be abundant with opportunities for the practice of freedom; a place to display, foster, embody, expect, demand, nurture, allow, model, and enact action and inquiry toward seeing the world, identifying the obstacles, and taking action. A classroom organized in this way follows a particular rhythm: questions focus on issues or problems (What do we need or want know? Why is it important? How will we find out?), and on action (Given what we know now, what are we going to do?).

Teaching for freedom goes beyond presenting what already is; it is teaching toward what ought to be. It is more than moral structures and guidelines; it includes an exposure to and understanding of material realities—advantages and disadvantages, privileges and oppressions—as well. Teaching of this kind might stir people to come together as vivid, thoughtful, and yes, outraged. Students, then, might find themselves dissatisfied with what had only yesterday seemed the natural order of things. At this point, when consciousness links to conduct and upheaval is in the air, teaching becomes a call to freedom.

The fundamental message of the teacher, after all, is this: You can change your life. Whoever you are, wherever you've been, whatever you've done, the teacher invites you to a second chance, another round, perhaps a different conclusion. The teacher posits possibility, openness, and alternative; the teacher points to what could be, but is not yet. The teacher beckons you to change your path, and so the teacher's basic rule is to reach.

To teach for freedom adds a complicating element to that fundamental message, making it more layered, more dense, more excruciatingly difficult to enact, and at the same time sturdier, more engaging, more powerful and joyful much of the time. Teaching for freedom demands a dialectical stance; one eye firmly fixed on the students, (Who are they? What are their hopes, dreams, and aspirations? Their passions and commitments? What skills, abilities, and capacities does each one bring to the classroom?) and the other eye looking unblinkingly at the concentric circles of context—historical flow, cultural surround, economic reality. Teaching as the practice of freedom is teaching that arouses students, engages them in a quest to identify obstacles to their full humanity and the life chances of others, and then to drive, to move against those obstacles. And so the fundamental message of the teachers becomes: You must change the world.

Free Schools, Free People is based on a worldview that resists the fundamentalist marketeers and the technocists in favor of humanity. It is a book that honors the existential and the ecological in human life, the spiritual and the material in balance. It is a book to pack into your rucksack next to the vitamin E and the other essentials for the coming struggle to change the world.

Our Common Illiteracy: Education as if the Earth and People Mattered

by Rolf Jucker
Published by Peter Lang, 2002

Reviewed by C. A. Bowers

For Rolf Jucker, educating for a sustainable future is the major challenge facing all of us—regardless of our cultural group. Whether we need to take on this challenge, from his well-informed perspective, should not be the focus of debate. Rather, the discussion should focus on how Western educational institutions contribute to the widespread ignorance about how to live more sustainable lives. Jucker's book, *Our Common Illiteracy: Education as if the Earth and People Mattered*, makes an especially important contribution to this discussion.

Jucker's recommendations for educational reform are based on a broad-based analysis of how the high status knowledge promoted in Western universities contributes to the ongoing globalization of capitalism, technological dependency, and a consumer-driven lifestyle. Indeed, his book provides a comprehensive and clearly articulated basis for understanding how Western educational institutions contribute to the industrialization of everyday life—and by extension, to the ecological crisis. He describes the cultural forces that are pressing non-Western cultures to adopt the digital phase of the industrial system of production and consumption. For citizens and, especially, educators concerned with how educational institutions are complicit in deepening the ecological crisis, the book is essential reading.

As indicated in the title of his book, Junker is interested in both understanding the roots of the problem and in remedying them. Jucker weaves the insights of educational critics such as David Orr, Ivan Illich, and Edmund O'Sullivan into both his own critique and well-thought-out recommendations for reform. For the reader who is not familiar with these educational critics, Jucker's skillful integration of their key ideas into his own analysis and recommendations provides an important introduction to an emerging discourse that goes well beyond the current reduction of environmental education to environmental management. It also provides a basis for recognizing Jucker's own distinctive contribution to this emerging discourse.

His chapter on "Educating for the Future" addresses the roots of resistance to adopting reforms that contribute to ecological literacy—or what I would prefer to call eco-justice. The chapter also includes a list of practice steps for initiating change, along with a discussion of the consequences that are likely to follow if the state of denial persists in our universities and public schools. Of special importance is Jucker's recommendation that sustainable solutions to the various manifestations of the ecological crisis should be based on "transdisciplinary knowledge," rather than on specialized disciplines that marginalize how systems (both cultural and natural) are nested in ever more larger and complex systems. Jucker also makes a special case for the role that the study of the humanities should play in educating for a sustainable future.

Jucker's concern with action rather than entering into the seemingly endless debate what what is meant by education for sustainability led him to conclude his book with a list of 28 practical strategies for reforming educational practices and curricula. The strategies range from having university graduates sign a pledge to consider the ecological impact of their future careers (now a practice at several universities), exposing professors who use their courses to promote ecologically destructive and reactionary ideas, presenting students with examples of ecologically entered cities and cultures, to making sustainability the central focus of all courses. While the list of practical strategies cannot by itself overcome the conceptual resistance and existential indifference that leads most faculty to think within the pre-ecological categories that were the basis of their own graduate school experiences, it nevertheless provides an overview of the many approaches that can be taken to educational reform. And they are reforms that can be undertaken without the aid of governmental grants or the achievement of consensus within the department faculty that there is an ecological crisis that has important educational implications.

C. A. Bowers is an adjunct professor of Environmental Studies at the University of Oregon in Eugene.

Our Common Illiteracy should be considered as essential reading for anyone concerned with how public schools and universities reinforce a way of thinking and individual lifestyle that is ecologically unsustainable. It is a book that provides a basis for understanding how to help ensure that future generations are not left a legacy of environmental destruction that diminishes their prospects of living in morally coherent communities. For example, Jucker's book leads to asking what needs to be conserved that enables individuals and cultural groups to live less consumer dependent lives. Similarly, it leads to considering how the modern ideology of development is undermining the ability to conserve linguistic diversity, which is critical to conserving biodivesity. And *Our Common Illiteracy* provides the conceptual framework for giving serious consideration to the forms of intergenerational knowledge and place-based experiences essential to democratizing technologies that, when left to the decisions of experts and corporate planners, further undermine the self-sufficiency of individuals and cultures. In short, Jucker's analysis and recommendations moves our understanding of the educational reforms that must be undertaken to a new level.

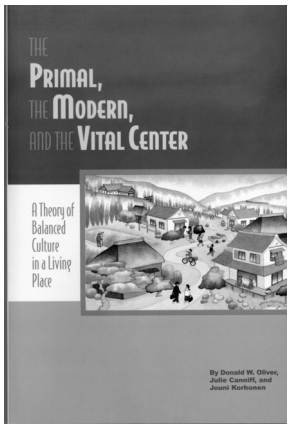
The Primal, the Modern, and the Vital Center: A Theory of Balanced Culture in a Living Place

by Donald Oliver, Julie Canniff, and Jouni Korhonen

Published by the Foundation for Educational Renewal, 2002

Reviewed by Kathleen Kesson

On the cover of Oliver, Canniff, and Korhonen's new book is a stylized watercolor painting of a small village. The architecture is vaguely Asian, the landscape blue/green and serene, and there are humans interspersed with the natural and the built environment, engaged in the ordinary activities of walking to school or work, practicing contemplation, gardening. The scene captures the book's sensibilities in a way that only images can, evoking in me a longing for two of the many rich themes to be found between these covers: "balanced culture" and a "living place." We are treated, in these pages, to a gestalt-like vision of human possibilities, a map, if you will, of how modern society might evolve toward a more authentic, meaningful, and sustainable culture. *The Primal, the Modern, and the Vital Center* is the capstone endeavor of a long and fruitful scholarly life, and may well be recognized in the future as one of the pivotal texts in the history of holistic education and cultural renewal.



With apologies to Donald's two co-authors, Julie and Jouni, whom I know contributed immeasurably to the completed book, I write this review not as a scholarly piece, but as a loving retrospective for Donald, whom I admired greatly, and whose death this past summer, on June 28, left a gaping hole in so many of our lives. My reflections on Donald and his work will necessarily be partial; he was a giant of an intellectual and a remarkable human spirit who touched many lives, and as with any complex personality, we all knew him differently. I want to talk a bit about the genesis and development of this important book, because in these days of commodification it is important to remember that *ideas*, though encapsulated in objects called *books*, have a living history, and if worthwhile, they animate the lives of sentient beings. And ideas, although they may be attached to a particular person, are communal entities. They emerge, interact, shift, and transform until they find some reified expression, in a book or manuscript or other communicative form. Donald invited many of us along on the journey that finds expression in this text, and I am sure that all of our lives have been changed as a consequence.

I hardly know where to begin as I sit at my desk in Brooklyn, far from the organic community pictured

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on the cover of the book. I have a tattered yellow folder at my side, which is crammed with multiple early drafts of this book, letters, newsletters, and drafts of writing we did together. In my recent move from Vermont, I tossed most of my accumulated paper away, but did not have the heart to dispose of these fragments, signifying as they do such an important influence on my life and thought. If Donald is witnessing us mortals from his current existence in the "Void" (which he resolutely believed in), he is likely shocked to find me here in the heart of urban America. Almost all of our contact occurred in New England forests and villages, apart from a few encounters at conferences or at his Harvard offices. Donald, however, was not nostalgic for some "ideal form" of community, and I believe he would be quick to acknowledge with appreciation the embeddedness in tradition of the many ethnic groups in my current neighborhood, to note the importance of kinship in immigrant America, and to celebrate the small shops and enterprises that make up much of New York City. For you see, much as his critics might like to pin him down, to "name" him as coming from this Romantic, that Traditional, this Critical, or some other perspective, there is a quality about Donald's search for meaning and truth that eludes categorization, just as this book eludes easy classification. He was a generalist in an era of specialists, a humanist in an era of technocrats, and perhaps above all, he had a great faith in ordinary people to manage their lives without dependence on experts, including professional teachers. To really travel with him on his conceptual journey, we need to suspend our prejudgments about "what is education," bracket our preconceptions about human evolution, and open our minds to a radically divergent future from that indicated by current trends and trajectories.

I first met Donald in the 1980s, when I was new to academia. As a social studies methods instructor then, I knew of his early work in that field to engage students in the discussion of controversial issues, as well as his important work on education and community with Fred Newmann. But it was his book *Education, Modernity and Fractured Meaning* (1989, with Kathleen Gershman) that most attracted me, and I believe it is this book, along with *The Primal, the Modern, and the Vital Center*, that will secure Donald a preeminent place in educational history. The philosophical interests that he develops in both of these texts are primarily an examination of the deep structure of human *experiencing,* and a theory of culture capable of supporting the emergence of a sustainable way of living for the billions of people who currently inhabit the planet. Donald's exploration of Whitehead's theory in relationship to education provides a thoughtful philosophical framework for anyone who is seriously interested in the cosmological and the spiritual dimensions of experience, but who rejects the often superficial assumptions and assertions of "new age" thinking about these issues. His "theory of organic experience" (see page 88 in *The Primal, the Modern, and the Vital Center*) appeals to the speculative and imaginative capacities in those of us who have not succumbed to the deadening technocratic vision of most educational theory, encompassing as it does notions of the Tao, the Void, quantum physics' parallel universes, the development of scientific theory, the encoding of meaningful human experience in rituals, and eschatology. Are you intrigued yet? Then you must read this book.

Donald was not an armchair philosopher, though he loved to sit in armchairs and philosophize. He was down to earth, literally—perennially involved in plans to create a land-based community that would be inhabited by like-minded process philosophers and other "cultural creatives," who, in addition to their intellectual pursuits, also liked to garden, raise animals, nurture children, weave, dance, and make music. Dismayed by the mind- and soul-deadening effects of the corporatization of our lives (he included most of academia in this criticism), he oriented us toward the revitalization of genuine communities, in which people might work cooperatively together for the common good and create human-scale institutions. To explore just what that might mean, we met in innumerable locations with countless variations of people over more than a decade. We tromped through knee-deep snow in Vermont to visit with dowsers and bio-regionalists. We invented rituals and ceremonies in farmhouses in Western Massachusetts to explore how modern people might begin to reconnect with our aboriginal roots. We did Sufi dancing in the Manor House at Goddard College. And we sang songs from musical

comedies in his Cambridge parlor, accompanied on the piano by his wife, Polly, who not only put up with a multitude of Donald's friends, students, and colleagues over the years, but welcomed all into the family fold. Though we never did literally build that community, I think that many of us worked out our ideas in the context of these collective experiences, which we probably would not have had, had not Donald brought us together. "We believe," he says (and I like to think that the "we" in this case, is *real*, not an academic convention), "that one begins to reconsider and alter the errors of our modern way when we refrain from blocking out the primal sounds of the wind and the animals and the voices of friends and let their affordances transform our unconscious cultural patterns so that they can give voice to the subtle messages of story, of art, of music, of sport and ritual" (p. 324). Unlike many academics, Donald *lived* his ideas, lived them abundantly and passionately, and was fully present and intellectually engaged whether in the woods, in a farmhouse, or in a lecture hall.

Donald spent his professional life working to make schools more humane places, where young people might find intellectual engagement, creative opportunities, friendship, community, and moral purpose. Towards the end of his life, like John Holt, he began to despair of the possibilities for creating more humane educational institutions, isolated as they are from the rest of human activity. Though a steadfast supporter of public schools and their democratic potential, he was fascinated and open-minded when listening to my experiences home schooling my four children. He was scathing in his critique of the educational "technocrats"—those who seek to engineer society and who profit from promoting technical, limiting curricula, learning "packages," and accountability schemes. He perceived clearly the alienation inherent in our institutions: daycare centers, old age homes, corporations, hospitals, and schools. In this, his last book, he asks us to radically rethink how we organize our collective lives, and begin to create human scale institutions that foster human development and communal, intergenerational bonds. His guiding metaphor is the "village," but to anticipate those critics who might accuse him of romanticizing village life, his vision is a truly postmodern one, accounting for both the need for a deep sense of ecology, or place, *and* a cosmopolitan perspective, the result of the globalization of our consciousness.

In the last chapter of his book (appropriately enough, given that the book was released just days after his death, entitled "Letting Go"), Donald paraphrases Emerson in his admonition to "be careful of the tribute paid in the dark shadows in the recesses of our hearts—for what we are worshipping we are becoming" (p. 325). He is convincing in his argument that we must find our way out of the commodified system we have erringly built, and find our way into the "complex organic experience" of living places. And we must "let go," he says, "of that limited view of experience in which we associate what is 'really real' with only the vivid materialistic 'things' that can be publicly measured, counted, and controlled" (p. 321). Better, he says, "to experience brief moments of becoming one with nature, one with one's neighbor, and one with the silence of the All and know that we will never be alone. Never" (p. 325). These are the words that close the book, the last words written by this great soul.

Significant ideas do not end with their publication—they find life in the world, and we can do the greatest honor to Donald's lifetime dedication to these ideas by working to bringing them to life in our own lives—by living, exploring, creating, and singing into existence what he liked to call called the "Vital Center." Given the current world situation, characterized by a pervasive and invasive market, by greed, militarism, and the newest version of global imperialism, finding our way to "balanced culture" seems a daunting proposition. But if the materialist Empire should crumble, and history tells us that it is not merely possible, but inevitable that it will, we must have conceptual resources adequate to the task of cultural and educational renewal. I believe that we have, in this text, a guidebook for traveling that unknown and uncharted terrain that might lead us back to the Vital Center.