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The Free Spirit

As this year's Winter Olympics were about to begin, the United States' top male Alpine skier provoked outrage. During a "60 Minutes" interview, Bode Miller said it isn't easy "to ski when you're wasted," implying that he had occasionally competed in World Cup races while still feeling the effects of a night of drinking. Furious phone calls poured into the United States Ski and Snowboard Association. Donors and corporate sponsors threatened to withdraw their support. Media pundits issued moralistic condemnations. A few days latter, Miller apologized.

The apology was out of character for Miller, who has been widely recognized as a free spirit. Raised by hippie parents in rural New Hampshire, Miller had repeatedly challenged conventions and authority. He had always spoken his mind. But the criticism was intense, and Miller apologized. What's more, he never seemed to regain his confidence during the Olympic Games. I think the incident reveals just how powerful the pressures to conform can be.

Miller grew up in a house in the woods with no phone or indoor plumbing. He was homeschooled until the fourth grade. In his 2005 autobiography, *Bode*: *Go Fast, Be Good, Have Fun*, he often speaks of schools as oppressive. "One day," he recalls,

> I walked to Cannon Mountain in my ski boots, just because I could. Took me all morning, but I didn't care. My friends were all tied up in school, that medium-security prison with the chain-link fence and the monkey bars. (p. 58)

Miller loved skiing — especially the speed — and invented a totally unconventional style. Most world class skiers strive for perfect form. Miller says he can lay down a nice tight line, too, and he doesn't "dispute the beauty of pure control" (p. 142).

But he's different.

> "I am drawn to the untamed side — the full-out, ski-snapping velocity that knocks the wind from my lungs.… When every joint in my body shimmies, when things jet by so fast I can't tell what they are anymore. (p. 142)

To achieve maximum speed, Miller invented the technique of putting his weight on the back of his skis and then letting them go straight down the fall line — and doing whatever it takes to keep his balance. His approach never sat well with coaches and fans.

> People thought I looked rawboned and scraggy coming down the hill, and it was offensive to them. So I'm skiing and swinging my arms like I have a tarantula on my back, throwing my hips like I'm a coochie dancer. That's what it looks like, but in reality I'm focused on keeping my skis in the snow and carving clean. I never think about how I look. I reduce it all to skis and speed; I send all my energy there. (p. 116)

Turning a bit philosophical, Miller said, "Control skiers tame the mountain; fast skiers give it its reins" (2005, 123).

Miller's pure speed approach has always meant numerous falls and DNFs ("Did Not Finish") in the results column. Coaches have urged him to slow down enough win, but Miller has refused. "I do it all, or not at all." (p. 128).

Miller, who developed his style as a youth and young adult, benefited from the development of the K24 ski, a "shaped" or recreational ski that was shorter, wider, and easier to turn. When he tried it out, it was a "eureka" moment for him. "For the first time in my life the ski reacted the way I expected it to." (p. 115). He no longer had to sit back on the ski to make it bend, although he still usually does.

Some teammates consider Miller a true pioneer. His enthusiasm for the new, "shaped" ski was followed by that of others. More importantly, his attempt to go straight for the fall line may revolutionize skiing. And now it even seems acceptable to fall once in a while.

But Miller was upset by the "60 Minutes" affair, and he arrived at the 2006 Olympic Games in a trou-

bled mood. At the Games, he finished respectably for an American, but he won no medals, and the criticism intensified. In response, his behavior became desperate. After losing the slalom, "He thrust his hands in the air, stuck out his tongue, and waggled in mock celebration. Then he skied off the course, avoiding the cameras and throngs of people at the bottom of the hill. When Associated Press reporter Jim Litke found him later, he declared, "Man, I rocked." A bit later, Miller defended his Olympic performance by saying, "I got to party and socialize at an Olympic level" (Jenkins 2006).

The media was offended. Miller just didn't seem to care about the Olympics — about winning and projecting a good image. *Washington Post* columnist Sally Jenkins (2006) called him "the goat of the games." A *San Francisco Chronicle* headline labeled him "the biggest bust in Olympic history" (Knapp 2006). Sports commentators reacted to his DNFs as if they were a disgrace — a contempt for the sport. They didn't bother to learn that DNFs had always been a consequence of Miller's full-throttle approach. Even NBC's usually bland Bob Costas joined the attack, saying Miller might finally have gotten what he wanted: "to be unceremoniously forgotten." ("Bode Miller" 2006). A few people, to be sure, tried to defend Miller. Members of the U.S. ski team, in particular, spoke up for him. But the attacks were widespread.

Shifting Values?

I wonder if the intense attacks on Miller illustrate a shift in American values. Hasn't our country traditionally harbored a degree of affection for the maverick and rebel? What about the songs about the independent spirit who takes to the open road? How about Frank Sinatra's song about doing things "My way"? Hasn't America winked sympathetically at the kid who demonstrates a bit of Huckleberry Finn, who squirmed under the constraints of school and refused to be "sivilized?" I wonder if the attacks on Miller signal a loss our distinctly American admiration for the free spirit.

To an extent, the moralistic attacks on Bode Miller may simply reflect the post-9/11 political climate. Whenever a nation is threatened, there's a rise in patriotism and an intolerance of those outside the mainstream. There's a kind of new McCarthyism afoot, with growing surveillance and right-wing politicians monitoring college professors. Dissent is seen as unpatriotic.

Ordinarily, one might predict that this intolerance won't last. One might predict, that is, that Americans will soon come to their senses and reaffirm individuality, independence, and dissent. Unfortunately, today's authoritarian mood is supported by changes in the way we educate our young people.

Repressive Education

As recently as 1993, David Berliner saw our education system as producing a "uniquely American" youngster who seemed admirably free. "According to many visitors to the U.S.," Berliner observed, "we have some of the most creative and spontaneous children the world has ever seen." The price for this was relatively easy schooling. Children needed the leisure to pursue their own interests. Compared to many other industrial nations, U.S students didn't generally reach high levels of academic achievement until the college years, when they attended universities that are still the envy of the world. Our approach didn't pay off in high elementary and secondary school test scores but in creativity, as reflected by our consistently #1 ranking in Nobel Prizes, original research, and inventions.

I believe Berliner was basically correct, but at the time of his article (1993) a change was already underway. By the early 1980s, education policy makers had lost faith in any distinctly American view of a relaxed childhood. They were already looking to Japan as a model of academic rigor. In 1983, the enormously influential report, *A Nation at Risk*, denounced idleness. It called on young people to develop self-discipline and serious work habits for the sake of the nation's economic future.

Since then, government bodies have increasingly put teeth into these new expectations with laws and punitive measures. If schools don't achieve adequate test scores, states will reduce their funding or take them over. If children don't score well on the tests, they will be held back in their present grade. As schools struggle to produce higher test scores, curriculums have narrowed. Free play, the arts, and creative projects, which foster individual expression, are pushed aside. The time is needed for the all-consuming test prep drills — time to drill students to

produce the answers that the adult authorities say are correct. After school, parents overschedule children's time with more adult-directed lessons and activities. Free outdoor play, for example, has given way to organized athletic leagues in which the child's behavior is controlled by adult coaches.

When it comes to misbehavior, most state governments have established "zero tolerance" policies that require mandatory student suspensions or expulsions not only for possession of weapons, drugs, or alcohol, but for misbehavior of almost any sort, including childish pranks (Rogers 2006). Even teachers have been harnessed in. Scripted instruction has become the norm, especially in the large cities. Teachers are no longer permitted to exercise their own pedagogical judgment; they must teach prescribed lessons at prescribed times. To ensure they are following the script, school districts increasingly send out "literacy police" to inspect their work. U.S. education is becoming, in short, that befitting a totalitarian regime.

When I have discussed this topic with colleagues and friends, they usually agree that intolerance and regimentation have intensified, but they aren't too worried. The major reason for their sanguine attitude, I believe, is that they don't realize just how powerful the pressures to conform have always been. They don't realize that, despite our country's avowed beliefs, the capacity for independent thought and action has always been fragile. It has always required nurturance and protection. Now, with educational repression gaining power, the free spirit could be crushed altogether.

Classic Experiments on Conformity

Two classic experiments in social psychology, conducted in the 1950s and 1960s, revealed just how difficult it has always been for people to stand up for what they believe. Indeed, even the psychologists who studied conformity were startled by the results.

One experiment was conducted by Solomon Asch (1952). In the experimental situation, groups of seven to nine college students were asked to look at a vertical line on a card and then say which of three lines on another card matched it. The answers were obvious, and when the students wrote down their answers privately, they made virtually no errors. But in the experimental condition, things were different. All but one participant was secretly in cahoots with the experimenter. On each trial, the naïve participant, seated next to last, heard the others announce the same wrong answer before it was his or her turn. A total of 31 students were put in this difficult situation; each was forced to decide whether to report what he or she saw or to go along with the group. One-third of the announced judgments departed from the obvious answer and conformed to the bogus consensus.

Many of the students feared their senses were deceiving them. One said, "From what I saw I thought I was right, but apparently I must be wrong. I began to doubt that my vision was right" (p. 464). Another said he doubted "so many people could be wrong and I alone right" (p. 464). Only one-fifth of the students consistently said what he saw, and even they felt the pressure to conform. As one reported,

> Despite everything there was a lurking fear that in some way I did not understand I might be wrong, and a fear of exposing myself as inferior in some way. It is more pleasant if one is really in agreement. (pp. 467-468).

A second set of experiments were conducted by Asch's former student, Stanley Milgram (1965). Milgram set up a simulated shock generator marked with voltage levels from 15 to 450 volts. Next to the numbers were signs that ranged from "Slight Shock" to "Danger: Severe Shock." An experimenter, who wore a grey technician's coat and held a clipboard, asked each participant (all adult men) to help him with a learning experiment. The experiment was actually feigned, but each helper believed it was real. The helper's task was to administer a shock to a (pretend) learner whenever the learner made an error. The experimenter told the helper to increase the level of shock whenever the learner made errors.

In the pilot studies, in which the helper couldn't hear the learner, Milgram was surprised that virtually all helpers, "once commanded, went blithely to the end," administering shocks at the highest level (pp. 246-247). So Milgram revised the experiment. This time the learner cried out in distress from behind a wall — his feigned pain increasing as the voltage rose. Even so, only 35% of the naïve helpers quit the experiment at some point. The rest, 65%, contin-

ued to follow the experimenter's directions and administered the highest level of shock.

The helpers did protest verbally. For example, before administering 180 volts one man said,

> He can't stand it! I'm not going to kill that man in there! You hear him hollering? He's hollering. He can't stand it. What if something happens to him? (p. 253)

But under the experimenter's directive, the man administered the shock.

Later, the man protested: "You mean I've got to keep going up with the scale? No sir. I'm not going to kill that man! I'm not going to give him 450 volts!" (p. 254)

But the experimenter said, "The experiment requires that you go on," and this man, like most of the others, did administer the strongest shock.

In a side study, Milgram asked 40 psychiatrists to individually predict, based on their knowledge of human nature, the point at which most of the helpers would withdraw from the experiment. They predicted that almost no one would continue to the highest shock level. Clearly they were wrong. Nearly two-thirds continued to obey the authority figure, the experimenter, to the end. After studying nearly 1000 adults, Milgram concluded that "with numbing regularity, good people were seen to knuckle under to the demands of authority" and perform cruel acts (p. 261).

The Asch and Milgram findings were replicated in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s. Similar results also have been obtained in other countries (Fiske 2004, 511 and 519-520). The findings indicate that conformity and compliance are very powerful forces in human life.

In hindsight, the Asch and Milgram findings make sense. After all, humans are an intensely social species. Over the long course of human evolution, our species' survival undoubtedly depended on the ability to plan and cooperate in groups. Our species' great achievement, the capacity to use symbols, is largely based on language, which unites people within groups. So the need to belong to groups is probably wired into our nature.

Obedience to authority, too, seems intrinsic to human adaptation. Compared to other species, humans are less subject to fixed instincts and more subject to social learning, and young humans learn as much as they do because they undergo a prolonged period of dependency on adults. As a result, humans acquire a strong tendency to rely on authority for guidance — a tendency that is difficult to shake in adulthood.

Conclusion

Thus, nonconformity and dissent have never been easy. In any era, I imagine, even the Bode Millers of the world have had difficulty with the social pressures against them. But today, in the wake of 9/11, our society is tightening its grip on everyone. Dissent is unpatriotic; tolerance is in short supply.

But what makes this repressive climate especially serious, I've suggested, is the increasing regimentation of the educational process. I realize that our educational system has followed a factory model for decades. But it generally permitted leisure and a wide range of activities. The degree of standardization and regulation we've seen in recent years is extraordinary. Today's young people are rarely allowed to express their individuality through play and the arts or to think for themselves. Day after day, year after year, they are drilled to take tests and give the answers that adult authorities say are correct. Even their leisure is highly structured. They are being socialized, it would seem, to become mindless cogs in a vast economic machine. They will grow into adults who have little sense of what individuality, creativity, and free thought actually mean.

In these circumstances, the few schools that still foster the free spirit are invaluable. We must do all we can to promote and expand them.

—William Crain, *Editor*

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Reflecting on Spirituality in Education

Ron Miller

A spiritual approach to education involves suspending our conceptual mindsets and standing in wonder and awe of life as it unfolds before us.

Early in my career, I attempted to define the place of spirituality in holistic education:

> A basic premise of holistic education is the belief that our lives have a meaning and purpose greater than the mechanistic laws described by science, and greater than the "consensus consciousness" of any one culture. This transcendent purpose is a creative, self-guiding energy which we ought not attempt to suppress. No ideology, no social order devised by wealth- or power-seeking factions should be allowed to corrupt the delicate, miraculous unfolding of this creative energy…. Ultimately, a spiritual worldview is a *reverence for life*, an attitude of wonder and awe in the face of the transcendent Source of our being (Miller 1990, 154).

Sixteen years later, having watched a holistic education movement and literature take shape, with the publication of numerous books and articles concerned with spirituality in education, I am revisiting this definition to consider whether I still believe it to be sound and sensible. And, turning fifty years old this month, it seems a good time to reflect on my own experience of spirituality and what I now think it means.

Actually, I do not think I would change the definition I gave in 1990. More than ever, I am convinced that the primary issue at stake here is the choice between recognizing "a creative, self-guiding energy" and holding to some self-interested, self-assured ideology or culturally conditioned belief system. Although I have not yet had any profound enlightenment experience of my own, I suspect that the Zen masters and other sages have it right when they tell us that the Source, the Ultimate, transcends all be-

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liefs. Human beings get into the most trouble when we mistake our concepts, our mind-generated images of reality, for the "transcendent purpose" of the cosmos. Spirituality is the attitude, and the practice, of suspending our imagined reality in order to stand in wonder and awe at that which unfolds and emerges beyond our conceptual grasp.

It is easy to contrast this attitude with the smug epistemology of materialism. Modern culture is conditioned by a worldview that denies the possibility of transcendent realities. Living organisms are compared to machines, and the mind is viewed as a sophisticated computer. To consider this an inadequate, one-dimensional worldview is not to condemn the entire scientific method, which has yielded vitally important understanding and knowledge of the world, but to challenge the overreaching claims of scientism, which leads to a narrowly reductionist, mechanistic image of reality. Since holism is, most fundamentally, an effort to overcome the limitations of reductionism, it poses a radical critique of an overly materialistic science, and holistic thinkers of the last century, from Rudolf Steiner to Fritjof Capra, have eloquently done so. Clearly a "spiritual" perspective offers something different from a materialist one.

I have wrestled more with a more subtle distinction — that between spirituality, as I have defined it, and religious belief and ritual. The holistic literature frequently points out that its emphasis on spirituality does not necessarily imply an endorsement of any specific religious tradition or practice; hence, holistic education does not threaten the important principle of separating church and state. But historically, at least in the West, religious traditions have been the primary means for discovering and expressing spiritual experience. The imagery, language, and practices of religion are so deeply engrained in our culture that it is radical, and difficult, to express spiritual realities without them. In its suspicion of religious institutions, the secular culture does not easily grasp a non-religious spirituality. Hence, efforts to establish state-supported Waldorf schools in California have met fierce resistance from humanists who are convinced that religion is being introduced into public education. Similarly, in one of the early issues of this journal, I engaged in a debate with a progressive educator who remained highly suspicious of my talk about spirituality; he was sure that I meant to bring angels, demons and similar otherworldly beings into educational theory. If not, he demanded, why use the term "spirituality" at all?

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In my definition above, there is no reference to God or any identifiable sorts of beings (such as angels) or realms (such as heaven, hell, or the etheric plane). There is no reference to ritual, dogma, sacred scripture, holidays, or special places for worship. In fact, there is no reference to worship or prayer. There is no attempt to found a sect, or to identify leaders or priests. Indeed, rather than seeking to distinguish one group of human beings as being especially spiritual or having exclusive access to truth, the definition calls for an attitude of reverence toward *life*, which includes all of humanity as well as nonhuman organisms inhabiting the earth. Is this still "spirituality"?

I think so. In my own searching, I have come across several teachers who insist that the path to wholeness, to a glimpse of the ultimate meaning and purpose of the universe, is a wordless, nameless, doctrine-less *presence*. Among the teachers who have most inspired me are Krishnamurti (e.g., 1975), Eckhart Tolle (1999), and Toni Packer (2002). Each of them warns of the limitations of conceptual and ritualistic systems; because the transcendent Source is infinitely creative and eternally new, our mental and cultural forms cannot fully embrace it, but can instead serve to limit our experience of it. For these teachers, spiritual practice is the cultivation of a compassionate, receptive awareness that remains fluid and open to the world, without trying to fix our experiences in a conceptual mold. As soon as a religious ideology, even under the name "holism," takes shape, we too easily lose the essence of spirituality and may promote a diminished version, a preconceived package rather than a flowing openness to the restless wholeness of the cosmos.

Many of the influential writers in holistic education suggest this as well. Parker Palmer's (1993) description of compassionate knowing, and Rachael Kessler's (2000) notion of the "teaching presence," have, for me, always embodied the essence of a spiritual approach to education. The classical figures in modern holistic education, Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, similarly insisted that the primary task of an educator is to become fully conscious and present to the miraculously unfolding lives of the young people before them. It is the cultivation of a receptive, compassionate awareness, an attitude of wonder, awe and reverence for life, that defines a holistic educator. The form that one's teaching practice then takes is not, or should not be, fully predictable, because a pedagogy that flows from receptive awareness will respond to the totality of the situation at hand. The teaching moment involves each child's personality and aspirations, and his or her mood at a given time, as well as the social climate of the classroom, school and community, as well as the current realities of the world at large. Holistic pedagogy should flow freely and spontaneously, not be bound by the expectations of any ideology.

Are developmental patterns so universal, so consistent across culture, class, history and personality that they trump the teacher's "receptive awareness" or attitude of open-ended wonder?

Why then, I have always wondered, do the classical holistic approaches — Montessori and Waldorf education — take such established forms? Why are they recognizable methods that have remained virtually intact since early in the twentieth century? Their practitioners argue that these approaches address universal, archetypal elements of human development. Since every child goes through developmental "sensitive periods" (in Montessori's terminology) or exhibits universal "soul forces" (according to Steiner) at more or less consistent ages, then pedagogy can and should be designed accordingly. Well, there is much truth in these descriptions; they include inherent developmental patterns that conventional schooling largely ignores, which is why modern educational systems are so alienating, so destructive of genuine learning. There is no question that many young people experience Montessori and Waldorf classrooms as nourishing, often inspiring places for growth and learning.

Still, I have spent much of my career, from my own Montessori training in 1980-1982 to my sons' experiences in a Waldorf school in recent years, wrestling with questions about structure, control, and freedom. I have always wondered about a few crucial questions: Are developmental patterns so universal, so consistent across culture, class, history and personality that they trump the teacher's "receptive awareness" or attitude of open-ended wonder, which holistic education essentially represents? Is each individual child's progression through identifiable periods of life so regular and predictable that one set of pedagogical practices can fully meet every child exactly where he or she is alive at a given moment? I doubt it. I have been too much impressed by the freedom of learners in progressive education, democratic schools, and unschooling to be completely satisfied with the authoritative role granted to adults in the classical holistic models. Young people who have been allowed genuine educational freedom do not flounder, as orthodox Montessori and Waldorf educators imply; much more often, they sparkle. By the time they are teens, most of them turn out to be vibrant, confident, curious, engaged, self-directing and unusually focused and mature, even without having teachers carefully orchestrate every nuance of their learning experiences at every minor step of developmental emergence.

I think we can accept that young people's physical, intellectual, and emotional growth unfolds according to fairly regular stages, without being compelled to provide a highly structured, highly directive pedagogy. Here is where my understanding of spirituality, and my concern about its confusion with religious ideology, is relevant. If we *trust* that there is some spiritual dimension, some creative energy at work in the cosmos whose limitless imagination is

far greater than anything we or our culture can devise, then we can trust young people to unfold themselves from within, with more or less support from us, as long as we don't clutter their paths. When some spiritual vision, like any other ideology, becomes hardened into a belief system, we feel the need to guide, direct, mold, shape and control children's learning accordingly.

Sometimes this guidance is nourishing, if it expresses genuine care and love. But I would argue that it is the care and love that nourish human development, not the pedagogical ideology. In another of the early issues of this journal, I brought two Waldorf and two Montessori educators together for a dialogue, and one of them, Diana Cohn, made an observation that has resonated with me ever since: "The methods are very different," she observed, "but the bottom line is that you have these very interested adults working with the children, and they feel that. *They feel enlivened by the fact that there are these caring adults in their lives*" (Cohn et al. 1990; emphasis added). The spiritual teachers and holistic educators who emphasize the importance of compassionate presence would fully understand and support this statement.

It so happens that the classical holistic models, Montessori and Waldorf, attract caring adults who passionately hold a reverence for life. But I want to suggest that an overly controlling pedagogy, like an overly protective and intrusive parent, even if motivated by love and having the child's best interests at heart, may ultimately make it more difficult for a child to discover his or her own destiny. "The secret of Education lies in respecting the pupil," wrote Emerson (1965) in his brilliant essay on education. "It is not for you to choose what he shall know, what he shall do. It is chosen and foreordained, and he only holds the key to his own secret." Holistic educators all agree that the child's destiny should not be foreordained by the Secretary of Education, or the CEO of IBM, or whatever elite bureaucrat happens to dictate public educational policy. But should it be foreordained by Montessori's observations of children in Rome in 1907, or Steiner's elaborate (and rather strange) cosmological system? If we truly believe, like Emerson in "Self-Reliance" (1965), that "the relations of the soul to the divine spirit are so pure, that it is profane to seek to interpose helps," then why on earth would we construct fixed pedagogical theories and systems?

I have always viewed holistic education — or holism more broadly — as an effort toward synthesis and integration. Ken Wilber's sophisticated writing on "integral" philosophy emphasizes that deeply meaningful knowledge about the cosmos must be far more comprehensive than any limited, partial vision. While the visions of Montessori, Steiner, and other pioneers of holistic education provide grand vistas compared to the reductionism of modern culture, they too are limited in their own ways, compared to the vast possibilities of the cosmic imagination (Miller 2000). As the holistic education movement matures and evolves, I expect to see less emphasis on particular teaching methods, less reverence for individual visionaries, and a greater effort to cultivate among all educators the kind of pedagogical presence that invites direct experiences of spirituality.

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Clean Little Secrets

Avoiding the Language of Energy Work

Nancy Meltzoff

Addressing the intuitive in the classroom has come under attack as a religious practice.

Although research indicates that the "interdependence of emotional, cognitive, physical, and intuitive functions allows learners to be effective" (Clark 2005), most early childhood teachers are reluctant to delve deeply into the intuitive. The reasons vary from lack of knowledge about intuitive energy work to fear of offending parents who believe energy work to be a form of religion, and therefore inappropriate in a public school setting. As a result, teachers who believe in the positive impact of intuitive energy techniques must find ways to incorporate them without using controversial language.

For instance, the popular *Brain Gym* (Dennison and Dennison 1989) program draws on energy work by using breathing exercises, visualization, and positive thinking. But it only uses the language of physical education and the brain; it avoids any discussion of energy fields or spirituality. As educators, we may say we're teaching the whole child, but we may not talk about certain aspects of that child.

Similarly, the book *Sensorcises* (Glazener 2004), helps teachers find ways to "develop strong neural pathways through movement," and strengthen the brain-body connection, but it, again, avoids the language of healing. Students can "pretend you are breathing through your heart" in *Sensorcises*' Heart Smart activity (p. 36), but there is no indication that they are tapping into the realm of breath work, which has been utilized by yogis and healers for centuries.

In fact, even the practice of yoga has often been sterilized for use with young children. In DeBrunhoff's (2002) illustrated book for young children, *Babar's Yoga for Elephants*, we do hear accurate and direct use of language such as "meditation, yoga, Salutation to the Sun," but all the yoga students are elephants and monkeys. Although there is

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a stereotypical bare-chested yoga teacher named "Sri Mahesh," there are no other pictures of humans — of *any* ethnicity — practicing yoga.

"Energy work" is a broad term, which may involve various components, including, but not limited to, movement, breath, color, sound, and intention. One example is Therapeutic Touch. Through touch, says practitioner Bev Forster (2005), one person can channel "universal energy or healing energy to another person."

> This is not the healer's energy, [Foster adds] but the universal energy that is available to all. Therapeutic Touch is based on the assumption that human beings are open, complex, and pandimensional energy systems, and energy is always flowing into and out of the system.

Since this system is permeable, healing is a natural potential for human beings. It is, as Forster describes, "an intrinsic movement towards order that occurs in every organism and can be facilitated by practitioners."

However, this kind of language is threatening to many people. An article in the *Deseret Morning News* (2005) described one such conflict in Raleigh, North Carolina, where an activist group is claiming that "stress reduction classes at a Raleigh elementary school promote 'New Age' beliefs, providing school-sponsored religious activity barred by the Constitution." While the teacher claims she "merely enhances students' learning practices," the opposition said that "children were asked to do breathing exercises, chant and use their 'life forces,'" which the opposition considers to be spiritual and religious and "opposite to [their] faith."

Stories like this demonstrate why teachers feel the need to cloak energy work in the language of physical education or to minimize its potential by speaking of it only in terms of academic preparation. In the following pages, I will provide examples of teachers who have effectively used energy work with children but have often called it something else. Their stories and comments are based on my interviews with them.

Converts to the Covert

Elaine

Elaine (a pseudonym) has used energy work with her students off and on for the past twenty years, in kindergarten through fifth grade. These days, she calls it "teaching children to gain control of their minds by controlling their thoughts." She encourages them to recognize the power of self-control.

Elaine, a long-time practitioner of meditation, explained, "When I first began teaching kindergarten, my goal was to teach children that their thoughts had an impact on other people." Elaine was teaching in a small rural school in Oregon. In her class, she had several abused children who would often come in crying, or who would crouch in the corner. She explained to the rest of the class that their thoughts could have a big impact on the children who were hurting. When a child was depressed or came in crying, she placed the depressed child on her lap and said, "We can send this child love with our thoughts and I want you to watch what happens."

> We would all take a deep breath in and fill our hearts with love. When we exhaled, we would exhale love. As we did this, I asked them to visualize their breath turning into pink light, because I associated that color with love. We would visualize wrapping this pink light around this child. After about four breaths, we could see a difference in the child's mood. I did this about once a week, as necessary. Children began to request it. They'd say, "Can I get the pink light?" They got to sit on my lap with my arms around them, which was of course a big part of it.

Elaine wasn't aware of any problems until one boy, Joe, stopped coming to school. Another parent came in, and told Elaine, "Have you heard what Joe's mother is doing? She called every kindergarten parent and said you are shining a pink light on the kids to heal them." Elaine responded by calling Joe's mother who reported the following story:

"Joe woke up one morning and he was in a really bad mood and didn't want to get out of bed. I asked him if he wanted to pray and he said, 'No, I'll be fine as soon as I get the pink light at school.'" Joe's mother was very upset upon hearing this, for she perceived this to be a religious activity. So she decided to pull Joe out of public school and send him to a private school instead. At the end of their conversation, Elaine asked for the name of the family's minis-

ter. She explained that she did not want to offend the church in any way.

Elaine spoke with her principal, explained the situation, and suggested that the principal invite the minister to come to school, since she didn't want a misunderstanding spread around the school or the town. The minister did come to the school, and all three spoke together. Elaine asked the minister to determine if she was offending the church. He said that he did feel that her actions were in opposition to the church. Elaine decided to stop using the "pink light" and pondered it over the summer. At the first parents' night the following year, two parents asked if she was going to use the pink light exercise, and she responded that she wasn't sure. She did not, however, use the exercise again. She didn't use it that entire school year.

Teachers feel the need to cloak energy work in the language of physical education or to minimize its potential by speaking of it only in terms of academic preparation.

The following school year, the original incident resurfaced. An educational assistant told Elaine, "In the sermon on Sunday, our minister said that one of our local school teachers is practicing witchcraft in the classroom." The principal called the minister and arranged for him and Elaine to visit the church together, concluding that the minister was using hearsay to spread fear in his congregation. Eventually, Elaine left the district.

Since then, she has become a convert to the covert. Whenever she uses any activity like this in a public school setting, she is careful to use language that can not be perceived in any way as spiritual. She calls one activity "emptying out." For this activity, she has the children sit with their spines erect, breathe deeply, and visualize a chalkboard. As any thoughts enter, they can write their thoughts on the blackboard and then erase them, over and over, until their minds are clear. Elaine explains to the children, "We are learning to be still and to gain control of our bodies and our minds so we can learn to focus." Still, she said, references to meditation always come up from the children. "Sometimes the kids will do this [cross their legs] and say "OM." She responds, "We're not meditating — this is nothing like meditation."

She explained:

> I am careful to emphasize we are not meditating, due to the bad experience I had in kindergarten. I am very careful with my words. I tell them we are learning to still our bodies and minds in order to focus on one thing at a time. I don't use any religious overtones whatsoever. I emphasize that the purpose of straightening the spine is to feed the brain and the body with as much oxygen as possible. The spine has connections to every part of the body; therefore an erect spine enhances blood flow. To parents, I say that the purpose is for more focused attention, thus better grades. I also use the exercise for classroom management. For instance, I do it before a math lesson or a lesson I know will be difficult. We especially do it after recess, when kids are wild.
>
> I tell students that everything you see and hear is stored in your brain, just like information is stored in a computer. The input will affect your thoughts and your concentration. If you don't learn to still the mind, the brain is overwhelmed with images and thoughts. Learning to be still is something you have to practice. The activity may last anywhere from 10 to 45 minutes, depending upon the age of the children.

Lily

Teacher Lily Jones and her assistant, Kim (pseudonyms), are also cautious, even though they work in a kindergarten in a private school in the San Francisco area. Lily studied energy work that her teacher, Occa Holthuis (2003), calls "Lux Mani." Kim has studied various types of energy work. But the two women keep many of their practices to themselves.

For instance, each morning before the children come to school, Lily uses a "prayer" to prepare the classroom. First, she grounds herself by visualizing a

double pyramid enclosing her body. The top point of the upper pyramid connects to the universe, while the point of the lower, inverted pyramid connects with the earth. She also visualizes lines within the pyramid that run through the column of her body from top to bottom, and crisscrosses through the center of her body. This keeps her centered, grounded, and connected with the energy of both the earth and the universe.

Next, Lily begins working with light and angels. Holthuis (2003) taught her students to work with different colors, called the "healing rays of light." Lily calls upon this knowledge as she visualizes an angel and white light around each child. She believes that this practice keeps the children safe and creates a sense of calm even before the children arrive. She explained,

> I ask for the blaze of the violet flame to fill my classroom, to cleanse all energies in it, and to remain as long as needed. The violet flame has the energetic effect of transformation, discovering unknown abilities, and is often used for cleansing in the type of energy work I was taught.

Lily also asks for a pink bubble of light to surround and protect each student.

For Lily, angels are guides and guardians. She asks for the children's guardian angels to be present throughout the day, to help them feel more secure and stable, and to help them make good decisions. Lily also calls for the guardian angels for Kim and herself to be present. "Calling in angels for myself keeps me grounded and reminds me that I can always call on angels if I need guidance."

However, all her work with light and angels must remain private. It's much safer, she feels, to talk about Brain Gym, which she also finds effective. The Brain Gym exercises ground and calm the children. "I like doing Brain Gym in the morning," said Lily. "We usually do about three different Cross-over activities and then one of the Brain Buttons, and we usually end with the Hook-up. I try to keep things varied so the kids don't get bored with it." Since Brain Gym uses the language of exercise, rather than of healing and energy work. "I think it's more accepted," said Lily,

> It's not scary for parents to hear that. I am fearful about using the language of angels and light with parents because you don't know how they'll react. I don't even know how much my boss knows about what I'm doing. I think she'd be open to it, but also wary.

Kathy, Lin, and Dorothy

Kathy Arquette, Lin Bauer, and Dorothy Gray have developed a program to bring the benefits of energy work to many arenas, including classrooms (e.g., Gray et al. 2004). Kathy's background is in health and physical education; Lin's background is in special education; and Dorothy was an elementary school teacher for 32 years. All three have done extensive research into the ways that sound and auditory stimulation affect the brain — and children's behavior in the classroom.

Kathy describes how careful she must be with the language she uses when working with teachers and parents. She finds that a mini-workshop works best for introducing these concepts to teachers, because if they try the techniques, they quickly see results in the classroom. "All you need is one or two teachers to believe in the energy work," Kathy said. Still, she is careful. "[I am] incognito — if you mention meditation to parents, red flags go up."

Kathy told a story of using auditory stimulation with her volleyball team when she was coaching.

> We hummed before each game — that was a grounding and uniting activity so we were all on the same energy level, the same vibrational level. This team activity helped us get in harmony with each other. I had one parent who said he didn't want his daughter doing it because it was too close to a religious experience. We have to be very careful.

She noted that breathing activities are easy to incorporate into the normal routine. However, the way she spoke about it in the public school was, "Lung capacity is going to be increased … we are working on getting oxygen in and carbon dioxide out." Kathy feels that if we want to introduce the concept of energy work in our schools, we need to start with the parents of young children.

> We need to familiarize the parents in early childhood, in grades one, two and three, get them comfortable with actions and studies and terminology so by the time they're in middle school we're not fighting it. Of course, we've got to get the teachers and the administrators on board first.

Lin's background is as a special education teacher. She has taught all ages and currently has a K-12 classroom for children coming out of institutional settings. Recently, she took a leave of absence and gave workshops on using sound and music in education. Lin brings energy work into the classroom setting by focusing on scientifically based topics related to using the whole brain, as well as through movement. She says, "I did meditation for years but we called it 'relaxation activities.' The activities help them access their whole brain and then they express themselves through art or music or movement or writing or discussion."

Lin describes herself as a sound healer. For instance, with young children, she said,

> I would ask them to find a place where they are comfortable. Often it's lying down or sitting. The lights are either off or low. Then sometimes I use guided imagery with music — have them go some place they like to be, like in nature, or sometimes I play music and kind of see what happens for them.

The music she plays relates to what experience she is trying to create for them.

> I use music from a variety of cultures that I know creates a certain experience, or accesses certain brain states. When the activity is finished there is a quiet time. Sometimes they go to sleep. Then there's an opportunity for some kind of art so they can bring that into this place and time.

This type of activity affects their entire being on every level, Lin maintains. The children are able to function better in the world. "They stay healthier physically. They are more solid in who they are. They don't have to worry about being right or wrong — it is a non-judgmental experience." She found that incorporating activities such as this helps the students when it is time to take standardized tests.

> When it's time to take a state test, they are more okay with it. We prepare by humming or playing music. The atmosphere is relaxing. Why create unnecessary stress? No one does well under stress. If you are stressed, your sensory organs shut down, and you don't think well. We want to do the opposite.

Teachers who utilize these techniques must be aware of developmental stages of the brain. For instance, Lin says, "If there are kids under eight, I can't play music at the same time they are doing math or reading or testing — they can't tune it out. They can't NOT attend to the music. The brain hasn't developed the ability to put it into the background."

She also described how she uses full-spectrum light to impact the behavior of her students. Full-spectrum lights, in contrast to florescent lights, keep children calmer and more energetic. Natural sunlight is even better, and Lin and her colleagues recommend that we use lights that resemble sunlight as much as possible. Dorothy reports that her elementary school students loved her choice of light so much that whenever she was absent, her students always told the substitutes, "Turn off the overhead lights and use the lamps!"

Kathy and Lin are both authorized providers of Rhythmic Entrainment Institute's Custom Auditory Interventions programs <www.reiinstitute.com>. These are custom made CD's to address autism and autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHA and many other learning challenges. Lin is also an authorized provider of The Listening Program through Advanced Brain Technologies (ABT) <www.advancedbrain.com>. These auditory stimulation programs can only be accessed through authorized providers. ABT also has a program called Brain Builders that is available for classroom use on the internet. It improves auditory and visual processing through activities done on the computer. This program can be accessed by anyone (www.brainbuilders.com). Both Lin and Kathy use music from a variety of cultures, and received their training and certification through the Open Ear Center in Bainbridge Island, WA <www.openearcenter.com>.

Lin said, "I'm about creating an environment through breathing, relating, movement, art, and music — those are all widely accepted. You just have to not put the wrong label in front of it. It makes sense. We don't want to offend anyone's culture. Some terms are more offensive to some people." Lin tries to use the terms "inner voice" or "inner self" when referring to inner knowing, soul, or spirit.

> I have had very few parent complaints. If it's a problem for the parent, it's a problem for the kid, and I'm not about that. I work to listen to where the parents are coming from and hear their complaints. They really do want the best for their kids. I'm listening to their words and also their whole being, listening compassionately.

Dorothy has developed a DVD called "The Brain Friendly Classroom," in which she shares her techniques and the research supporting them <www.creativebrainworks.com>. The DVD also shows her third grade class demonstrating how well it all works in the classroom. She includes basic brain anatomy; music; a vibroacoustic music Learning Chair; humming; movement such as Brain Gym, yoga, T'ai Chi, dancing; full spectrum lighting; water; Feng Shui; and aromatherapy. But she carefully avoids the use of the term "meditation."

For elementary students, Dorothy sets aside time for "imaginary stories." Students sit on the floor with their eyes closed as stories are read to them. All the stories are written without endings so children use their own imaginations to create the endings. Each of the stories begins with the children going into their very own secret garden where all sorts of exciting, safe adventures take place. The children love their secret gardens so much that they report that they go there in their minds when they are scared or bored at home. Children with ADD or ADHD have difficulty sitting still and keeping their eyes closed, but with practice they are able to do the activity. The imaginary story time is a very popular activity among the children. This activity teaches students to quiet and focus their minds and also stimulates their imaginations, thus reaping benefits similar to those gained through meditation. She is passionate about bringing highly effective healing and calming techniques into the classroom without using language that might initiate resistance.

Concluding Comments

Thus, we can see that teachers can utilize energy work effectively in the classroom. An attitude of respect and good intentions — combined with flexible and cautious use of language, and awareness of the impact in the community — helps clear the path. Still, it is not an easy road for these practitioners, and we have to wonder whether they could do more if they could be more direct and open about their goals and methods. For the moment, we must admire their persistence. As Dorothy said

> I so admire teachers out there who are following their gut instinct that this is the right way to go for kids, because it is. It transforms children's lives. It's going to take pioneering spirits like this to make changes in education that are long overdue.

Due to the need for "going incognito," when using energy work with young children, it can be called a "clean little secret." Actually, however, it is no secret to those who have worked with energy states for ages. It is based upon thousands of years of practice by yogis and other practitioners and, more recently, supported by biofeedback and quantum physics.

Yogis maintain that the state a person is in after birth is close to the state of samadhi (bliss). This is characterized by being "in the present" or "the now," By nature, we have an empty mind. This is in contrast to the "monkey mind," which is characterized by thoughts bouncing all around the mind, being "lost" in thought about the past, worrying about the future, and other such mind-states that take us away from the present moment. Meditation practitioners practice to "quiet the monkey mind," and to experience awareness without thought.

If teachers utilize these techniques with students, are they moving their own energy to the student? "It's not a matter of using your own energy," explains Bev Forster, "as that would be too draining. It's more staying connected to universal energy and being a conduit of that energy." Forster explains that it is called entrainment when energies move in sync with one another, just like two swinging pen-

dulums tend to do. "When it's used in energy work, the practitioner consciously creates the calm place, and as she creates that environment, another person can entrain to the practitioner's energy field." If someone is anxious, on the other hand, others can move to that energy field, which can be described as having a lower vibration. So, when a practitioner helps another person come to a quiet place, s/he is helping to bring the client's vibration more into harmony (Forster 2005).

A very important component of our work with young children is the creation of a loving presence. Then the child's own energy field can be moved towards greater peace, calm and quiet. Forster explains that "the healer is facilitating the energy field of another to come into wholeness, peacefulness, and calmness." She thus facilitates actual physical, emotional, and spiritual changes in the mind/body energy field of the child. Thus we might say that the teacher utilizing energy work is assisting the children as they work on themselves.

The Western world is incorporating more and more energy techniques from ancient Eastern traditions and studying them scientifically. People of all ages can experience the benefits of meditation and other energetic practices which create healthy learning environments. I look forward to the time when teachers can openly utilize — and talk about — these powerful activities for balancing the mind, body, and spirit.

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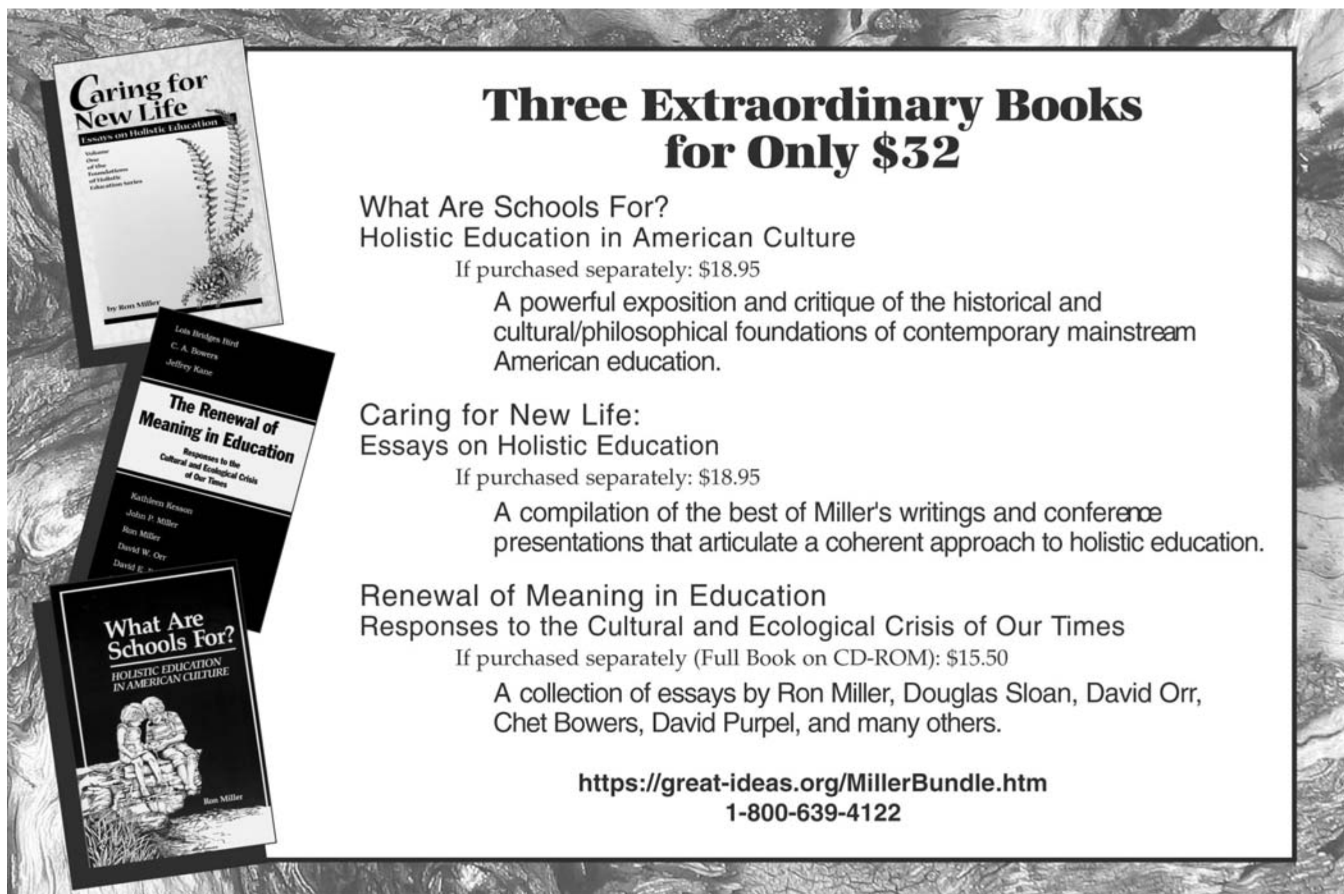

Critical Theories of Race, Class and Gender in Urban Education

Marvin Lynn, Grace Benigno, A. Dee Williams,
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Critical theories drawn from sociology examine urban schools within their larger social, economic, and political contexts.

After conducting a preliminary content analysis of recent articles published in leading journals that focus on urban education issues, we found that theory was rarely engaged in any significant way. In particular, theories that address the relationship between urban schools and the larger social structure have been noticeably absent. For example, over the past few years, many of the articles focus almost exclusively on urban classroom practice or school change efforts without fully examining the context in which teaching and school change occurs. Articles address such topics as immigration, teacher attitudes and beliefs, professional development, parental involvement, and high-stakes testing in isolation from any broader social analysis. We argue that this neglect presents a serious epistemological problem for urban educators in search of ways to improve their schools. In this article, we hope to show that critical theory provides a lens for interpreting what happens in classrooms and provides conceptual and epistemological grounding for changing the direction of research in urban education.

Deficit Theories

Before critical theory was a major contender in the sea of educational and sociological theories utilized to understand schooling processes, cultural deficit theories dominated the urban education landscape (Weiner 1993). Much of the theorizing about the

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plight of urban schools came from public officials who were given federal mandates to "fix" ailing urban schools in the 1960s. The 1965 Moynihan Report (Hallinan 2001), for example, boldly put forth the notion that families had the greatest impact on the achievement of students in urban schools. Moynihan's research claimed that black families in inner city communities, in particular, had a negative effect on the learning process. This manifested itself through higher than average dropout rates and other social/psychological problems experienced by students in urban schools. About the same time, another national study (Hallinan 2001), under the guise of investigating the "equality of educational opportunity" in urban schools, also argued that family background was the strongest predictor of school success or failure for urban minority students. Moreover, Coleman and his colleagues suggested, among other things, that an increase in education spending would prove fruitless as long as there were daunting economic disparities between the urban poor and the suburban middleclass.

This research gave rise to the development of theories that supported the idea that urban school students, their families, and their communities were primarily responsible for the academic failure of urban youth. Expounding on this notion, Oscar Lewis (1968), who became a key proponent of the notion we identify as the cultural deficit framework, suggested that success or failure in urban schools depended largely on one's personal attitudes and behaviors. According to Lewis, schooling for most urban and poor minority students was a series of reactions to and against forms of social disenfranchisement. This formed the basis of an oppositional disposition which was "both an adaptation and a reaction of the poor to their marginal position in a class-stratified, highly individuated, capitalistic society" (Lewis 1968, 188).

More recently, anthropologists have continued this tradition by focusing much attention on the relationship between the home and school (Ogbu 1992). Ogbu asserts that students in urban schools tend to develop an oppositional social identity, which begets negative attitudes and behaviors that are inconsistent with school norms. Fordham (1996) suggests that urban school students do not succeed in school because for them, success in school is equated with "acting white." Critical theories of education challenged the deficit-based theory that emphasized individual actions and lessened the role of social structures.

Critical Theory

Beverly Gordon (1995, 190) defines critical theory in clear and succinct terms:

> Critical theory seeks to understand the origins and operation of repressive social structures. Critical theory is the critique of domination. It seeks to focus on a world becoming less free, to cast doubt on claims of technological scientific rationality, and then to imply that present configurations do not have to be as they are.

Not only do critical theorists attempt to discover why oppressive structures exist and offer criticisms of their effects; they also explore the ways in which we can transform our society. In this sense, critical theory is not simply a critique of social structures; it is an analysis of power relations. In other words, critical theorists ask such questions as "What constitutes power? "Who holds it?" and "In what ways it is utilized to benefit those already in power?" While critical theory is often described as an area of study that emanated from Western Europe (McLaren 1998; Popkewitz 1998), Gordon (1995) argues that African Americans established a strong critical theoretical tradition in the United States long before critical European philosophy and thought were popular in the United States. She further states that African American thinkers like W. E. B. DuBois, Ida B. Wells, Anna Julia Cooper, and Carter G. Woodson led principled scholarly struggles against the systematic dehumanization of African Americans. As a result, they theorized about the nature of the conditions for people who were racially and culturally subjugated. Analyses of class and gender, as well as race and culture, become part of the framework we call critical theory. To be specific, we argue that critical frameworks include but are not limited to

- Marxism/NeoMarxism, which is an approach to examining the impact of capitalism on cultural, social, and political structures including schools;

- Critical race theory (CRT), which is an analytical approach to studying race and racism in the law, society and schools; and
- Critical feminist theory and black feminist theory, which, unlike traditional Feminism (Weedon 1997), offers a critique of gender domination and articulates a pedagogical approach to transforming gender relations.

A critical theory that incorporates analyses of race, class, and gender oppression can be an important tool for framing, analyzing, and calling attention to unjust conditions in urban schools.

Marxist Theories

Marxist theorists examine the ways in which urban public schools are connected to larger economic forces in society. For example, social reproduction theory is the study of how society maintains its economic structure (Morrow and Torres 1995). It views schools as training mechanisms through which society reproduces itself. Dance (2002) suggests that social reproduction theory falls into two general philosophical types: the economic determinist (Bowles and Gintis 1976) and the cultural autonomous (Giroux 1983; Willis 1977).

The economic determinist perspective claims that capitalist structures dictate how schools function as social stratifiers (Bowles and Gintis 1976, 56). Schools simply

> reproduce reserve armies of skilled [manual] labor, legitimating the technocratic-meritocratic perspective, reinforcing the fragmentation of workers into stratified groups and helping youth become accustoming youth to the social relationships of dominance and subordinancy in the economic system.

This theoretical framework can be used to understand how and why schools in urban areas strike a remarkable resemblance to both penal institutions and factories.

The cultural autonomist perspective takes a slightly different approach. For example, Paul Willis's 1977 study of "counter-school culture" among working class boys found that students exert a remarkable degree of control over their learning. Similarly, MacLeod (1987, 19) believes that students' "insight into the nature of capitalism has the potential to catalyze class solidarity and collective action." This study illustrates the possibilities of hope that Freire (2002) refers to when he talks about the ability of critical reflection to empower students.

Critical Race Theory

Critical Race Theory (CRT) brings race and racism to the forefront. Delgado (1995) described the history of CRT as a legal discourse that identifies race as the central factor in which the inequities of society can be explained. CRT also focuses on the intersections of race, class, and gender. For example, CRT scholars are interested in how race and gender intersect to form a unique set of experiences for black women who are doubly oppressed (Crenshaw 1995). Education scholars have turned to critical race theory because it provides a new, more analytical approach to understanding the persistence of racism in schools and society.

CRT explores multiple facets of education including policy and practice, educational leadershi, curriculum and instruction, and student perspectives. In addition, Ladson-Billings (1998) applies a CRT framework to understand the purposes, procedures, and effects of the teacher education programs. Solorzano and Bernal (2001) also utilize CRT to explain that some forms of resistance to school can have transformative underpinnings. Lynn (1999) utilizes CRT as an approach to analyzing and typifying the work of critical African American teachers. In general, CRT integrates multiple perspectives on law, society, schooling and inequality in order to frame an analysis that sheds light on the racial dimensions on schooling and schooling practices. We believe that, like other critical theories, this approach can shed much light on the role that urban schools play in helping to maintain current race relations in society. For example, CRT forces us to ask questions such as:

- How do urban schools — most of which are deeply embedded within poor communities of color — promote a racial caste system in the United States that is determined by race and class?

- In what ways is current policy and practice in urban schools governed by a racial code of ethics that frames urban schools as culturally dysfunctional in ways that are commonly associated with communities of color?

Critical Feminist Theory

Critical feminist theory focuses on how gender inequality is advanced in urban public schools in the United States. Weedon (1997) argues that there are different interpretations of patriarchy within feminism, and that these varying interpretations result in different forms of feminist politics. Liberal feminism, for example, recognizes the effects of patriarchy and strives for full equality for women. Socialist feminists see gender domination as intimately tied to all forms of oppression. They argue that authentic liberation can only occur with the radical reconstruction of societal social structures. Weis (1988) contends that educational research, with its conservative tradition, has had to answer to feminists' calls for equity in pedagogy and school curricula.

Black feminist and Womanist theorists offer a critique of social inequality that is multidimensional in focus because it stresses the importance of understanding the relationship between interlocking forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and elitism. Womanist theory has been described as the perspective of women of African origin who are "committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, male and female" (Walker 1983, xi). The black feminist position embraces a position that is grounded in history and the struggles of black women (Collins 1991). The black feminist and "Womanist paradigm[s] in education compel us to think more deeply about how critical analyses of schooling can be connected to a wider discourse on the role that the educational system plays in" maintaining current racial, class and gender configurations in the United States (Lynn 1999, 609). For example, in what ways do urban schools promote a white middle class masculinist norm that furthers patriarchy? In addition, feminist and black feminist traditions might also forces us to explore the extent to which the "de-skilling" of teachers' work and the subsequent "proleterianization" (Giroux 1988) of teaching might constitute another form of patriarchy where white men — who still control urban schools — exert external control over how teaching is defined and ultimately framed in the urban context.

These frameworks, extending from sociology, offer an alternative approach to understanding race, class and gender in urban education in that they challenge atheoretical, apolitical, heavily positivist, and supposedly value-neutral research and theory, which suggests that schools are not bound by ideology (McLaren 1998). To that end, a critical theory of urban education can examine class-, race-, and gender-based power relations through what appear to be normal, everyday practices in urban schools. Even more important, a critical theory can provide us with the tools to not only examine inequalities and their root causes, but also to work toward the development of "projects" aimed at transforming existing inequalities. This "*new* sociology of education" or "critical theory of education" (McLaren 1998, 163) provides a number of different opportunities for scholars to study longstanding problems in urban education with the fervent hope of moving toward some resolution. In the next section, we provide a more detailed description of the literature in urban education that utilizes critical theory in its variegated forms to expose existing inequalities or highlight the ways in which individuals and/or institutions work to promote a more just society.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) explores multiple facets of education including policy and practice, educational leadershi, curriculum and instruction, and student perspectives.

Critical Research on Urban Teaching and School Reform

Critical theory helps illuminate the ways in which the current "crisis" in education extends from social, political, and economic factors that are largely beyond the control of schools. At the same time, critical researchers acknowledge that the failure of urban

schools also depends, in part, on what happens in classrooms. In other words, these scholars not only situate classrooms within the broader social and political context of a system of structured inequalities; they also explore the role of teaching in either the promotion or the transformation of race, class, and gender inequalities. As such, teaching in urban schools is a key area of concentration for critical urban education scholars.

A significant amount of research is critical of the way in which poor and minority students are treated in the schools. Anyon (1995; 1997) and Rist (1970), for example, argue that a pervasive sense of despair exists, which stems from the ways in which the children are taught. Anyon found that teachers in poor and working class schools in New Jersey with majority African American populations tended to teach in ways that prepared students for factory life. Children were systematically mistreated and were not encouraged to engage in any kind of critical or reflective thinking. This was in sharp contrast to what was happening in suburban middle and upper middle class schools where students were treated respectfully by teachers and encouraged to work cooperatively to solve problems (Anyon 1995).

In a classic study of an urban kindergarten classroom, Ray Rist's study yielded similar findings. He found that the poorest children in the class were often relegated to the margins of classroom life. This contributed to a poor sense of self-efficacy in the students that translated into academic failure. In that sense, negative teacher "expectations" contributed to overall negative outcomes for students (Rist 1970, 71-72). This constitutes the self-fulfilling prophecy about which the author speaks. Because urban schools are most often understaffed and under-resourced, these conditions are widespread in urban contexts (Darling-Hammond 2004).

Haberman (1996) uses the phrase "pedagogy of poverty" to refer to teaching methods that devalue children's life experience. Freire (2002) refers to this phenomenon as "banking education." In both instances, teaching is merely the practice of disseminating information. The culture, race, class, ethnicity, and gender identities of students are systematically devalued. School becomes an oppressive and dehumanizing experience for non-dominant students. Leisytna (1999, 9) maintains that the pervasiveness of these pedagogies of despair are "culturally homogenizing … [and] fundamentally anti-multicultural and anti-democratic." In response, critical theorists have put forth a liberating pedagogy that is not only more sensitive to the needs of disempowered students, but also challenges teachers to empower themselves and students. We refer to this group of theoretically rich studies of urban teaching as critical urban pedagogies of hope.

Critical urban pedagogies of hope include, but are not limited to, critical Marxist pedagogy, often simply referred to as critical pedagogy (Giroux 1981; 1988; McLaren 1995), critical feminist/womanist pedagogy (Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2002; Weiler 1988), and critical race pedagogy (Lynn 1999, Gay 2000; Ladson-Billings 1994). We will explain briefly how we define each of these approaches.

Describing the first approach, Peter McLaren (1995, 231) says,

> Critical pedagogy is a way to bring into the arena of schooling practices insurgent, resistant, and insurrectional modes of interpretation which set out to imperil the familiar, to contest the legitimating norms of mainstream social life, and to render problematic the common discursive frames and regimes within which "proper" behavior comportment … are premised.

Furthermore, McLaren suggests that teachers must reject the commonly accepted modes of instruction and instead critically reflect on their teaching and embrace a philosophy that consciously works towards creating a classroom climate that encourages social and cultural criticism.

In the same vein, Aronowitz and Giroux (1993, 231) summarize critical pedagogy in the urban classroom as a method of creating "transformative intellectuals" through active intervention and struggle. They argue that in order for teachers to truly enact a critical pedagogy, they must validate students' prior experiences, engage them in a critical evaluation of these experiences, and encourage the implementation of an "emancipatory curriculum."

Kanpol (1988; 1993) studies the work of critical educators and finds that while their classroom practices are consistent with the major aspects of critical

pedagogy, they also "resist" structures in urban schools that fail to enhance the lives of their students. In this sense, critical pedagogues are critical of social injustice, reflective about their own work and lives, and encourage critical thought and democratic social action in students. These ideas have served as a well-spring for a host of other ways of describing teaching methods that embody democratic principles.

Stemming from the work of critical pedagogues, critical feminists have articulated a vision for classroom practice that empowers women and girls in urban classrooms (Weiler 1988). Critical feminist pedagogues fully embrace the tenets of critical pedagogy; however, they view gender as the key way in which society is stratified (Weiler 1988). Jackson (1997) argues that feminist pedagogy desires a social transformation for both students and teachers and works to break down pre-existing hierarchical structures in society through an expansion of teaching and learning that empowers students to rebel against sexism in urban schools. Black feminist or Womanist pedagogy embraces similar themes. The key difference here is the emphasis on the work of black women (Beauboeuf-Lafontant 2002). As such, there is a discussion of the intersection and inextricable link between race and gender. In this work, black women's commitment to "lifting up" the race through the practice of a caring pedagogy is highlighted (Henry 1998). This work is very closely related to research that utilizes race as lens to explore urban pedagogy.

Critical race pedagogy, unlike critical feminist pedagogy and critical pedagogy, focuses specifically on race and racism in urban classrooms, students' identification with their own culture, and the interactions between race, class, and gender (Lynn 1999). In other words, critical race pedagogy is a form of critical pedagogy that focuses on the ways in which race and racism shape what happens in the classroom. It emphasizes how teachers can act to resist and break down racist structures (Kanpol 1993). It also focuses on how teachers help students develop not only a racial consciousness but become full participants in the struggle to end racism on multiple fronts (Lynn 1999). This approach is also closely related to the method referred to as culturally relevant or responsive teaching. Culturally relevant teaching, with roots in both the culturally centered and Marxist approaches, requires teachers to empower students to become "creative thinkers, decision makers, transformers of their current life situations" (Ball 2000). Urban schoolteachers who work in a culturally relevant tradition believe that they should discover students' cultural background and adapt teaching to allow for full participation and the meaningful construction of knowledge (Ladson-Billings 1994). In Lipman's (1996) case study of three African American urban schoolteachers, she argues that culturally relevant pedagogy is "the kind of teaching that uses the student's culture to help them achieve success" (1996, 50). The inclusion of student voice also becomes a key way in which culture becomes active in the classroom. Not only do teachers allow students to utilize their own language in the classroom; they make use of students' particular ways of knowing in order to build curriculum (Ball 2000; Darder 1993; Lipman 1996).

In short, critical pedagogy, feminist pedagogy and critical race- and culture-relevant pedagogy help to advance teaching that recognizes the existence of inequalities in the classroom and in the larger social world. These pedagogies also help to us envision how to change society for the better.

Several critical analyses of school reform consider how historical factors contribute to current conditions. Anyon (1997), in *Ghetto Schooling: A Political Economy of Urban Educational Reform*, situates the present condition of Marcy School, a K-8 school located in the central section of Newark, New Jersey, against the backdrop of economic and political trends dating as early as the mid 1800s. These events, she argues, contributed to the increasingly significant social and educational inequalities that characterize current student experiences in inner city New Jersey. For Anyon (1997, 167), "urban educational and social reform are symbiotic." In that sense, school restructuring cannot occur unless political and economic systems are transformed. In that regard, a comprehensive approach is required to enact change in urban centers. Elements of this approach include collaboration with other community-based organizations and services; re-examination of state control of failing school systems; support for leadership development within schools; providing professional development focusing on the improvement of

teaching and learning; developing teacher education and school/community programs that address the special needs of students in poor urban schools; and acquiring adequate funding to support school reform efforts.

Lipman (2002) takes a critical view of reform efforts in Chicago and contends that we must not only examine the success or failure of urban school reform efforts to raise test scores, we must also explore the extent to which reforms may "exacerbate existing race and class inequalities and create new ones" (p. 379). She argues, for example, that the current reform policies in Chicago Public Schools are based on a strict "highly regulatory regime centered on high stakes tests, standards and remediation" (Lipman 2002, 381). She further argues that the intense media coverage on the status of overall test scores in the beleaguered school district has detracted from a deeper examination of the ideological underpinnings, as well as the political and economic implications of these policies for poor students and their families. As such, there has been little discussion about the ways in which reforms based on a remediation model perpetuate social inequality by locking poor students into consistent and perpetual patterns of underachievement. She concludes that concrete proposals that combine the urgency of urban school reform with "goals of rich literacy, cultural and social relevance and critical approaches to knowledge" are required if schools are going to change (Lipman 2002, 411).

In a similar manner, Deschenes, Cuban, and Tyack (2001) argue that the standards reform movement can be successful if efforts focus on re-examining and restructuring the institution of schools. Changing the existing structure of schools may lead to a more effective student-school match for all students. They offer three policy implications to consider, given the current standards reform movement: fitting the school and the school system to the student, examining broad social inequalities, and undertaking comprehensive change.

Orr, Stone, and Stumbo (2002) argue that reform strategies in Baltimore City Public Schools must consider the role of poverty. They contend that "specialization" or the formulaic approaches applied in Baltimore have been largely unsuccessful because of their failure to consider the context of education in one of the poorest cities in the country. Little attention is given to the magnitude of poverty in the city and its effects on school performance. They argue that the failure to study urban schools within the context of social and economic conditions leads to the development of remedies that are not likely to have a significant impact on students and their families. In order to make strides in school improvement, the authors promote a holistic approach to community development with the goal of transforming low-income neighborhoods into places where change is possible.

Conclusion

We have argued that before we can come to an adequate understanding of urban education, we must first begin making sense of the social context in which urban schools are embedded. We have attempted to discuss in some detail the literature that we believe incorporates these critical perspectives of urban education.

As we have illustrated, much critical research in urban education examines the pedagogical practices of urban schoolteachers (Ball 2000; Ladson-Billings 1994; Lipman 1996; Weisman 2001). This literature suggests that teachers do not have to act as agents of an oppressive system, but can humanize students through their culturally responsive and politically imbued teaching methods (Ladson-Billings 1994). Teachers can engage in transformative teaching to prepare their students for an ever-changing society, helping students realize that they have choices, can make a difference, and are in control of their lives. Teachers can enhance the lives of their students through relevant teaching that openly addresses issues of race, culture, and gender. This research moves us from a place of despair to a place where we can begin to have conversations about how effective teaching will develop creative, critical thinkers who will help enliven this country's democratic mission. Related to this important research is a growing literature that examines student perspectives on urban schools and teachers (Ayers and Ford 1996; Dance 2002; Valenzuela 1999). In general, critical pedagogy attempts to intertwine gender, race, and culture in order to describe a method of teaching for social justice and equality.

Cities and urban areas in the United States continue to offer some hope of the possibility of freedom from economic despair to thousands of thousands of new immigrants from Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Asia. In addition, urban schools continue to be places where American-born minorities such as African Americans and Latinos/Latinas are educated. An apolitical, atheoretical "business-as-usual" approach to studying urban education, where there is little or no discussion of class, race, and gender inequalities in schools and society, will ultimately fail to meet to needs of any of these populations. For this reason, it is crucial that we begin and continue conversations around a critical theory of urban education.

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Role Reversal Day

Student Empowerment and Teacher Learning at an Holistic School

Raji Swaminathan

Turning the tables on traditional structures can yield surprising insights for both students and teachers.

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Holistic educators and critical education theorists both advocate for student voice and empowerment. Education for empowerment means an ethical imperative to "cross borders" (Freire 1973; Giroux 1992), to move from traditional hierarchical relations of domination and subjugation to a zone where the possibility of transformation exists. Holistic educators often draw upon the visual arts, dance, and drama to help learners see themselves as embodied forms of intelligence in action rather than as disembodied centers of disinterested reason. They seek to recognize love and imagination along with logic and rationality. In holistic education, embodied epistemology is frequently addressed through ceremony, drama, and ritual in which attention is focused upon the present moment, a moment Whitehead (1929) calls "holy ground." Such a vision of holistic education includes learning to live in community (Miller 2005; Miller 2000).

In this article I will illustrate the potential of special events in schools that engage the imagination through an account of a "Role Reversal Day" at a holistic school. I believe that such events can serve as "third spaces" which have transformative potential for teaching and learning. In this article, I use the term 'third space' after Ray Oldenburg's (2001) term "third place," which he characterizes as being an inclusive place where status distinctions are temporarily suspended, conversation is the main activity, and the mood playful. Third spaces are valuable for their "liminal" quality, a term used by Victor Turner (1969) to mean fluid, in suspension, or "betwixt and between," where new human connectedness can occur. In third spaces, existing structures are temporarily overturned. People are freer of role restric-

tions, habitual relationships, and conditioning. Opportunities for a new sense of community arise.

Data

The data for this article are drawn from my experiences as a staff member at Brockwood Park School in England. During my years at the school, as well as my subsequent recent visits to the school, I kept journals on my everyday activities, classes, meetings, rituals, and other details of school life. One event that caught my special attention was Role Reversal Day, a day in which students and teachers switched roles. In this essay I will draw from my notes to describe the event and its meaning for the participants. First, however, I would like to provide some information about the school itself.

The School

Brockwood Park School in Hampshire, England, shares several characteristics with other "alternative" schools that set themselves apart from the mainstream. The school emphasizes building community across cultural, linguistic, and racial diversity. Basing its curriculum on student needs, it tries to promote all-round development and offers several curricula and Board examinations. Like other schools of its kind, it emphasizes co-operation, discourages competition, promotes the process of learning, works at dialogue, and discards punitive measures. It differs from other "free" schools like Sudbury Valley in Massachusetts or Summerhill in England in that lessons at Brockwood Park are not optional. Students have a full timetable of classes, although they are able to choose many of the particular courses they take. They are encouraged to think about what kind of education they want, and their suggestions for the curriculum are seriously considered.

The students represent a cross section of cultures, nationalities, and economic backgrounds. The staff at the school is drawn from different countries. During my research, a total of 70 students and 20 staff members were involved with Role Reversal Day. The staff members included not only teachers, but the kitchen and garden staff, as well as three teacher-administrators.

The teacher-student relationship is central to the project and mission of the school. Students enjoy living at the school, and the school ethos is intolerant of violence in any form. The distinctive characteristic of the school that sets it apart from other alternative schools was is that it was founded by the philosopher and educator J. Krishnamurti and is one among a dozen such schools around the world. I will briefly describe two pillars of Krishnamurti's educational ideas that are pertinent to this essay: Awakening Intelligence and Methodless Instruction.

Awakening Intelligence

The teacher-student relationship at a Krishnamurti school is at the heart of the purpose of the school. Rather than a sole focus on academic excellence, the purpose of education at a Krishnamurti school is to help both students and teachers to be "intelligent." What Krishnamurti (1975) meant by this is best described in his own words:

> I mean by that word — to be very sensitive — not to your own desires, to your own demands, but to be sensitive to the world, to what is going on in the world. Surely education is not merely to give you knowledge, but also to give you the capacity to look at the world…. The function of education is to find out how to live differently … in a totally different, intelligent way, knowing you have to earn a livelihood, knowing all the responsibilities….

Besides an awakening of critical consciousness of outer events, he demanded we be aware of how we look, understand, and live in the world. For such an awakening, he asked, "Is the educator getting educated as well as the student?" In Krishnamurti's vision, school is a place where teachers and students engage in learning together. They investigate such questions as: How do I find out what I really want to do? How do I learn to live a conflict-free life? How do I figure out what is a right decision? These queries are front and center of the everyday inquiry of teachers. A teacher at a Krishnamurti school can claim knowledge in the area of academics but cannot claim to be an authority on the complex questions of right living or the best ways to create community. In these areas, teachers and students must inquire together, learning from each other. The relationship Krishnamurti outlined for students and teachers therefore goes beyond academic learning and provides a chan-

nel through which both teacher and student examine their conditioning, habitual responses, and psychological barriers to learning. It serves as a venue for understanding oneself and, through that, to understand the world around one.

Methodless Instruction

A second aspect of Krishnamurti education is the lack of a method or system for teachers and students to follow. As Peterson (2000) points out, the lack of a prescriptive method causes teachers occasional stress, but they also feel free to modify, innovate, and often borrow from educators such as Montessori and Steiner. Discussion and dialogue become the constants in Krishnamurti schools. Teaching and learning are viewed as an ongoing challenge, not a repetitive or mechanical act. Teachers are continuously engaged in learning from one another and from professional development programs. At the heart of all the discussions is this question: How can we nurture the spirit of children and adults, and push towards possibilities of a different way of life that is both responsible and free.

Taken together, these two aspects of Krishnamurti's educational ideas — the importance of the student-teacher relationship and the lack of a prescriptive method — create a climate at the school where students and teachers seek new ways of communicating and learning from each other. Teachers often look for new projects and activities. There is a cycle of self-renewal. It is within this context that Role Reversal Day was introduced at one all-school meeting.

Role Reversal Day

The idea of Role Reversal Day, in which the students would become the teachers and vice versa, was initially broached at a staff meeting and then discussed with students as a possible all-school event. Teachers and students broke into smaller groups for an in-depth discussion and were excited over the possibilities the event presented. Groups reported that it would benefit students and teachers in several ways. For example, the event would

- break the monotony of regular school life
- be an opportunity to share authority
- encourage new perspectives on teachers and students
- be a time to learn from students
- empower students
- bring about a closer relationship and a feeling of community between teachers and students.

At the end of the all school meeting, students requested and received extended time to continue their discussion and begin planning for the event.

A central issue was the degree of authority that could be invested in the students. There was considerable discussion and debate. It was decided that the cooking for the day would be supervised by a group of "mature" students. In addition, students would decide the content of classes and decide on new rules for the day. At the same time, some rules were not open to change during the day, including the no-smoking and no-drugs rule.

A special budget was set aside, which three students were elected to manage. Administrator roles would be decided on by students. It was agreed that this was an opportunity for teachers to learn from students and for students to figure out what it was like to be a teacher or staff member.

There was one point of disagreement and that had to do with the choice of classes. Some staff members requested that their natural abilities and interests be taken into account when being assigned to classes. To this, students replied that since Role Reversal Day was a challenge to existing roles, teachers must be willing to change and move beyond their existing natural inclinations and preferences. They warned the teachers that very probably they would find themselves in classes in which the students would be the experts and the teachers would know little or nothing. Staff members made half-hearted attempts to argue their case, but they soon gave up as the meeting rapidly dissolved into good natured ribbing.

Student Organization

The details of the day began to get worked out behind "student only" meetings. Although teachers embraced the idea of Role Reversal Day (RRD), they still had some reservations regarding the experiment. On the days leading up to the event, some staff

members were mildly disturbed at the younger students' sporadic comments about punishments they were going to mete out to selected teachers. This was especially noteworthy since the system of reward and punishment were questioned at the school and largely rejected by Krishnamurti's philosophy.

The day dawned bright and sunny, to the relief of students who had planned outdoor activities in addition to indoor classes. It was soon clear that RRD was going to be different from the regular school days. Students appeared eager to make changes and use the opportunity to poke gentle fun at the usual events of school. Ordinarily, the first event of the school day was a quiet meeting, which was serious and solemn. On RRD, the venue for the meeting was changed from the usual circular hall to the sitting room. A rapid beat of music dispelled the quiet and students led everyone through a vigorous set of exercises. The fifteen minutes ended with applause and laughter, and a general air of camaraderie continued over breakfast.

Community Jobs

At the end of breakfast, it was time to clean up the school grounds and the common areas of the school building: the sitting room, dining area, library, classrooms, and toilets. This task usually lasted a half hour, with students and staff-coordinators appointed to particular tasks for the entire term. On Role Reversal day, the students drew up new lists, and everyone was shuffled around to tasks in new teams. Students led all the teams — a role usually played by staff. The thirty minutes were well organized, with students giving directions to teachers. Some teachers played up and pretended to goof off by dancing to the strains of rock music that accompanied that morning's work. Some staff members found themselves on teams with students with whom they had had a past conflict. Jose, for example led the team with his advisor, Daniel in it. Daniel and his advisee had had a conflict only the week before over Jose's non-attendance of morning meetings. Daniel had observed that Jose was reluctant to take on responsibility. Working together with Jose on RRD brought Daniel and his advisee to a closer understanding. Daniel was pleasantly surprised to see a different side of Jose and saw RRD as a way to build trust between them. In his words,

> I saw Jose not only taking on responsibility but handling himself really well as a leader. He was kind, enthusiastic, helpful with younger students — you name it. He took charge of the zone really well. (Laughing) I had to clean the boys' toilets — which I think was his way of putting me in my place. [All jobs within a zone were usually done on a rotation basis.] But we came away from the morning as friends once more.

Classes

The courses offered by the students ranged from Wildlife Appreciation, Introduction to Russian, fire dancing, bicycle repairing and maintenance, marbling and making kites to beginning filmmaking and creative writing. All classes were immensely popular with staff who wondered whether they would have a way of sampling more than a few. Each class was held for two hours and was taught by a team of collaborating younger and older students. A 17-year-old male student who taught Wildlife Appreciation, for example, taught along with a 15-year-old female and a 13-year-old male. In that class, the participants quickly donned outerwear and ventured into the fields surrounding the school. The aim was to take a patch of land and identify the different grasses, mosses, flowers, and insects. With that in hand, the groups went on to compute and compare the biodiversity as found in the area surrounding the school with desired levels of biodiversity computed by the local chapter of the British Environmental Society. Teachers learned to look and learn from the students whose knowledge of the grasses, mosses, weeds and flowers that grew around the school grounds far surpassed their own. Smell, taste, and touch were all explored in identification and observation.

The evening was spent playing games like Treasure Hunt, football, and cricket, and the day ended with an impromptu talent show in which staff and students participated. Overall the day had been punctuated with laughter, camaraderie, and a sense of closeness between teachers and students. The next day a school meeting was held to discuss the experiment. The eve-

ning included a staff meeting devoted to the same subject, and a midweek meeting also was used to gather students' ideas and input. Amidst the students' and teachers' reflections, several themes emerged, which I will discuss in the sections that follow.

Student Reflections

According to Sarah Lawrence Lightfoot (2000), by empowering students we show them respect. Empowerment implies an intent not merely to share limited institutional power but to enable students to recognize, create, and channel their own power (Quicke 1999). This type of empowerment is referred to as "empowerment by enablement" (Sears and Marshall 1990). Students emerged from their experience of role-reversal more confident in their own abilities. Students felt that being really left in charge was an invaluable experience. "There was no one looking over our shoulders to say, 'We are watching'." They felt respected and trusted. The newer students at the school voiced their surprise and delight at the experiment. One of them said, "In my old school teachers would never agree to be taught by students." Other students mentioned feeling that "teachers really seemed to enjoy being with us. I got to know some teachers whom I didn't know well before." This break from the general busyness of the regular school day allowed teachers and students to interact and discuss issues and have informal chats for which there was usually "no time."

"Being on This Side of the Room is Different"

As teachers for a day, students learned about collaboration and co-operative learning through team teaching. They also learned to re-examine their own knowledge and teach it to a group. The teaching process brought both reward and pressures for students. Some students pointed out that "we had to prepare much more than we thought," while others became aware that a teacher's vantage point was different from that of a student. In their words, "being on this side of the room was different." This difference included feeling responsible for the class and the learning of a group. Some students pointed out that it was difficult to teach different levels of abilities in the same class, a point with which teachers could empathize. Students were proud when a class went according to plan and was received enthusiastically by teachers. They were touched and surprised when teachers handed in their work.

The experience left many students with an increased awareness of ways of learning. In addition, they also got a glimpse of a teacher's perspective of unmotivated students. In one class, the teachers walked in yawning and demanded of the students conducting the class, "Are we going to see a movie today? We want to see a movie today!" The students who taught this particular session reflected on what had occurred. Lucy said: "I felt startled at first. I thought: How mean; they want to ruin our class. I'm not going to let them. Then suddenly it occurred to me they are trying to behave like typical students."

This class was team-taught by Matt, who said he didn't mind that teachers tried to act up in his class. "It was sort of fun. I wanted to send them all to Mary (the student who played a teacher-administrator for the day), but then we would have no one to teach, and we'd done all this preparation and stuff." Laughter greeted this account. Students learned that co-operation was essential in teaching and learning and in all aspects of everyday life.

Peer Negotiation

Senior students revealed that organizing the day required a good deal of negotiating among themselves. Some of the younger students perceived the day in terms of a complete carnival and had wanted to make teachers suffer in ritualistic ways, but students who had been at the school for more than a year wanted to model for teachers and the school how they thought it ought to be run. They successfully resolved this tension by promoting a more "carnival" atmosphere while reminding younger students that this was an opportunity to tell teachers how they wanted the school to be run.

The students also discussed how to work out discipline problems. What if a teacher did not respond to students? What if a teacher goofed off? The younger students were first all in favor of punishing the teachers, but in the end students adopted the procedure already in place at the school. They relied on dialogue and discussions with the advisor or tutor. If the matter remained unresolved, it would be taken to a staff meeting or to the appropriate student/staff-led group. In

addition, peer mediation groups could intervene. Such negotiations helped students learn from each other and about the crucial aspects of organization.

Overall, students felt exhilarated by the day and wanted a repeat the next year and for a longer time. Many of them complained that it was difficult to "get into the role" for such a short time and that they would have liked to remain as teachers for three days to a week.

Teachers' Reflections

Teachers found that they had gained a great deal from the RRD in terms of understanding students better and critically considering their own teaching and learning.

Seeing Students Differently

Teachers acquired new knowledge from students. One teacher, Lisa, said: "I knew nothing about bicycles other than riding them. I now know about repairing tubes, fixing brakes, and cleaning off the rust and maintaining a bike." Teachers not only mentioned the content of their learning but emphasized that what was really valuable about the day was seeing the students in different roles. For the teaching staff, "It was an eye-opener to see the collaboration of the students — the way they worked together in the room, allowing space for each other. I learned a lot about my students, seeing them in this new role." For some teachers the day offered the opportunity to mend fences with some students like Daniel did with Jose. "The informal nature of the day and my working with Jose really helped us to bridge our differences."

The teaching staff also learned to view the school experience from a students' point of view. For instance, they found that the day moved much more slowly than before. It seemed long compared to the quick rushing around that seemed a normal part of a teacher's day. I would like to mention three other emotions that teachers found unexpected.

Anxiety

Teachers who saw themselves as confident, lifelong learners, were surprised by their anxiety to save face in the classroom and not appear ignorant. Some teachers mentioned wanting to "melt into the background." Going through anxiety and the struggle of learning something totally new proved to be an invaluable experience, for the teachers now began to look critically at ways that they attempted to make students comfortable in class.

Praise

After being in the student role, the teachers also began to reconsider the feedback they gave to students. One teacher described her thinking this way: "I think that as a student if I had a teacher keep repeating that I was doing great, it can be off-putting — something I hadn't considered before." The role of praise was therefore reconsidered as teachers began to think of ways in which positive reinforcement and encouragement might be given to students without overdoing it. As one teacher put it praise is a "bit patronizing as well." Other teachers agreed and started to think about ways they could change their practice.

Surveillance

Teachers learned that being a student too often means always being under someone else's supervision. Being reminded to do one's jobs or homework seemed insulting and bothersome, making several staff reflect uncomfortably on their own style of interacting with students. They wondered whether there might be better ways to combine a sense of being present to student needs along with a more hands-off approach.

A Different Space: Physically and Mentally

Teachers found that by being students, they inhabited different spaces in the school. The departure from routine movement gave teachers a different perspective of school. They went to areas of the school that they did not usually frequent, and they sat in spaces that were usually the domain of students. This led teachers to feel more involved and connected to the school and to get a better sense of the whole school space.

Teachers admitted having forgotten what it was like to learn something new, to struggle with the process of learning. Most teachers realized that they most often taught in their own preferred mode of learning, contrary to what they had previously believed. This helped teachers to think about consciously varying their teaching methods within a class. Overall, teachers felt that they had "learned a

great deal in terms of getting closer to students, learning to see school from their point of view, and reflecting on teaching."

In a different vein, teachers felt relaxed around each other and felt a sense of community among themselves. Teachers in schools often see each other in the hallways or in the teachers' lounge or at meetings. It is not often that teachers find the time to hang out or learn together. After Role Reversal Day, teachers saw the need to have non-pressured times to interact and learn with each other or engage in activities like pottery or archery together.

Changes in the School

RRD led to several changes in the school. First, the staff, together with the students, decided that the Morning Silent meetings would henceforth be diversified to include meetings and walks outdoors during the summer. Second, the responsibility for organizing and managing Community Jobs was handed over to a rotating group of students.

Third, the teachers resolved to incorporate critical events into the school year that would blur the boundaries of staff/student and allow for a greater sense of community. Fourth, the teachers asked the students if they would like to offer some courses for the teachers. Fifth, the students were encouraged to offer courses at Inwoods, an elementary school attached to Brockwood Park. Finally, teachers resolved to look at their own teaching practices.

Conclusion: The Value of Third Spaces in Schools

Role Reversal Day provided for teachers and students ways of experiencing a third space in education. It provided teachers and students with peripheral vision and dispersed hierarchy. Conversations were the main activity and the mood was playful.

The event was in the spirit of Krishnamurti's emphasis on creating an open atmosphere that permeates the school. While Krishnamurti did not use the term "third space," it is consistent with his urging teachers to give up authority over the student and his emphasis on dialogic relationships where conversation is the venue for learning about the self and others in relation to the world.

Role Reversal Day illustrates how special events enable teachers and students to break out of what is simply taken for granted. They can create spaces for empathy and create the possibility of what Maxine Greene (2001, 65) calls "as-if perspectives" or "imaginative adventures into meaning." As schools and teachers are increasingly hemmed in by testing mandates, it is especially important to remind ourselves that young people yearn for spaces that "release the imagination" and invite them to learn in new ways.

Note

The names of the teachers and students have been changed to protect their identities, and teacher turnover and student graduations further protect the identities of participants. However, the author has obtained permission to use the name of the school.

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The No Child Left Behind Act Raises Growing Concerns

Kate McReynolds

As the curriculum narrows in response to NCLB, it is time to consider alternatives: education for democracy and, even more radically, focus on simply nurturing the growing child.

President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) represents the most sweeping federal education legislation in our nation's history. Its stated goal is to close the achievement gap between minority and non-minority students, between the disadvantaged and the advantaged, and between those living in poverty and those who are wealthy (McLoughlin 2003). This is a praiseworthy ambition. But as conceived, NCLB will not meet its aims. In fact, it will increase the achievement gap it seeks to close, and it will lower, not raise, educational standards. Moreover, NCLB will hurt children because it is designed to promote the interests of government and not children.

A central part of the Standards Movement, NCLB requires public schools to meet federally mandated standards in math and reading, or risk sanctions, including the loss of billions of dollars in federal funding. Accountability through high-stakes testing is used to evaluate a school's annual yearly progress (AYP) toward meeting these standards. Currently, math and reading tests must be administered to all children in grades 3 through 8, and once during high school. Science must be assessed by the 2007-2008 school year, and President Bush introduced several new NCLB initiatives in his 2006 State of the Union address. These include the American Competitiveness Initiative and the National Security Language Initiative. Each of these will entail additional high-stakes testing.

Narrow Curricula and Emotional Stress

Increasingly, schools that once offered a rich curriculum to all their students are reducing or eliminating instruction in history, science, and the arts to focus on math and reading. A survey conducted by the

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Center on Educational Policy found that since the passage of NCLB, 71% of the nation's school districts have narrowed their curriculum in order to meet federal benchmarks in math and reading (Dillon 2006). Federal pressure to increase standardized test scores in these subjects, and the fear of losing federal funding, has led to these troubling restrictions.

In the Jeffersonian view of democracy, such an education would promote independent thinking, judgment, critical reasoning, community responsibility, self-governance, justice, individuality, tolerance, respect, fairness, compromise, appreciation of differences, rejection of violence, and concern for the rights and welfare of all.

Curricula have narrowed because of the need for test-prep. In Washington, for example, parents report that preparing for the WASL, the state's standardized achievement test, "had become the be-all and end-all of their children's schooling, producing crushing pressure and a narrowed curriculum" (Shapiro 2005). A high school student in Seattle says, "I dream about the WASL." Among the many test prep activities are "WASL Wednesdays," when every class introduces some kind of practice for the test. (Shapiro 2005) A Seattle school nurse described third graders coming to her office in tears for fear of failing the WASL and her own son began sleepwalking before his fourth grade test. They have reason to worry. One Washington fourth grader was suspended from school because he did not answer a question on the WASL. As if that was not enough, he was then made to sit at a table with his head down for five hours while his successful test-taking classmates enjoyed a celebration in their honor (Shapiro 2005). Far from raising standards, NCLB is depriving children of meaningful educational experiences. Worse, it is creating a climate of fear that is making children miserable.

Multiple-Choice Tests

There is another, more insidious way that NCLB is lowering educational standards. According to Thomas Toch, co-director of the research group, EducationSector, the increase in testing required under NCLB puts pressure on states to switch to multiple choice tests. Although the multiple choice tests-generally "require students to merely recall and restate facts" (Winerip 2006), they can be scored at a fraction of the cost of tests that are hand written — those with essay questions. Forty-two percent of our nation's children are now taking mandated math and reading tests that are entirely multiple choice (Winerip 2006). This year Kansas and Mississippi switched to all multiple-choice tests, but Connecticut, by filing suit against the federal government, is resisting lowering its standards.

Michael Winerip (2006) of *The New York Times*, who has called attention to pressure to switch to multiple choice tests, calls special attention to the state of Connecticut. Since the 1980s Connecticut has administered its standardized achievement test to students every other year. It is considered one of the best achievement tests in the nation, in that it features essay questions, requires students to explain their work, and evaluates achievement in high school science by requiring students to design and conduct a lab experiment. Connecticut students rank among the best in the nation. But to test them annually, in compliance with NCLB, would cost the state eight million dollars more per year than the federal government provides for testing. To keep costs down, Connecticut requested permission to continue testing children every other year. Margaret Spellings, secretary of education, rejected the request, maintaining that annual testing is crucial if we are to close the achievement gap. She and the deputy secretary of education, Ray Simon, suggested that Connecticut eliminate writing assessment and essay questions, discontinue lab-based science assessment, and switch to multiple-choice tests (Winerip 2006)! It seems clear that some states are meeting the standards mandated by NCLB by lowering the bar.

Closing the Achievement Gap?

It's too early to tell whether NCLB will close the achievement gap between white students and students of color, and between wealthy students and the poor. Decades of standardized testing, which preceded NCLB, suggest that the gap in test scores will not close any time soon, if ever (Crain 2006; Olson 2006). And even if the scores change for the better, it's hard to know whether they reflect anything more than test-taking ability — or if they translate into real intellectual development.

Of greater concern is what is happening in classrooms. When we talk about the narrowing of the curriculum, let us remember for whom it gets narrowed. As Sam Dillon has pointed out in an excellent *New York Times* column (2006), there is growing evidence that the curriculum is narrowed for poor children and children of color. These are the students who are prevented from taking the rich curricula that include history, the arts, creative writing, and other subjects. These are the children subjected to the most hours of test-prep drudgery, turning learning into a miserable experience. Far from closing the achievement gap, The No Child Left Behind Act penalizes the educationally disadvantage students it is supposed to help. It has, moreover, created a new gap, that between well-off children who maintain the privilege of studying a full and varied curriculum, unfettered by test-prep, and those who may only study the narrow range of subjects for which the federal government has mandated yearly testing.

New NCLB Initiatives

Unfortunately there is no relief in sight. President Bush introduced several new NCLB initiatives in his 2006 State of the Union Address, among them the American Competitiveness Initiative and the National Security Language Initiative. Each will entail additional high-stakes testing. Moreover, the rhetoric surrounding these initiatives takes the government's conception of the purpose of education in a frightening new direction.

The broad aims of the American Competitiveness Initiative, to encourage American innovation and to strengthen the nation's competitive position in the world economy, are consistent with our national education policy since the launching of Sputnik. Its education agenda will focus on math, science, engineering, and technology. As Miller and others asked some years ago (1995), does this focus meet the needs of children? Does the emphasis on science promote well-rounded development?

The National Security Language Initiative, which seeks to dramatically increase the number of children studying languages spoken by our global competitors and enemies, is a frightening extension of education policy that promotes the interests of government with little consideration of the needs of children. Consider the remarks of Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education, in support of Bush's new initiatives:

> Improving education is critical not only to America's economic security, but also to our national security. Today, not one but 3,000 satellites circle the earth. U.S. soldiers use the latest communications and surveillance technology to fight the global war on terrorism. Advanced math skills are used to identify and undermine terrorist networks. Government and the private sector engineer new ways to protect lives and infrastructure from harm. And the effort to spread freedom to other nations and cultures demands speakers fluent in languages such as Arabic, Farsi, Chinese, and Russian…. Critical-need foreign language skills are necessary to advance the twin goals of national security and global competitiveness.

Now children must not only secure our nation's position in the global economy, they must prepare to fight terrorism and spread freedom worldwide. Education is not only tied to the future economy, but military goals. Is this what we, the people, want for our children? Is this what education is for?

A more radical goal is to think less about preparing children for the future altogether, and focus instead on the growing child.

It's time for us to once again consider alternative goals. One is the preparation of the young for democracy. In the Jeffersonian view of democracy, such an education would include would promote independent thinking, judgment, critical reasoning, community responsibility, self-governance, justice, individuality, tolerance, respect, fairness, compromise, appreciation of differences, rejection of violence, and concern for the rights and welfare of all. Such a focus is compatible with high educational standards and it is inclusive.

A more radical goal is to think less about preparing children for the future altogether, and focus instead on the growing child. In this child-centered view, educators need to examine what capacities children themselves are intent on developing. Educators need to focus on the growing child, here and now, who just might have interests and dreams of her own (Crain 2003). The child-centered view, which has roots in the works of Rousseau, Dewey, Steiner, Montessori, and many others, provides a viable alternative.

These two goals, preparation for democracy and the nurturance of the present, are not mutually exclusive. Both, moreover, present viable alternatives to education that thinks only of a nation's economic and military interests. They would provide a worthwhile future — and present life — for all children.

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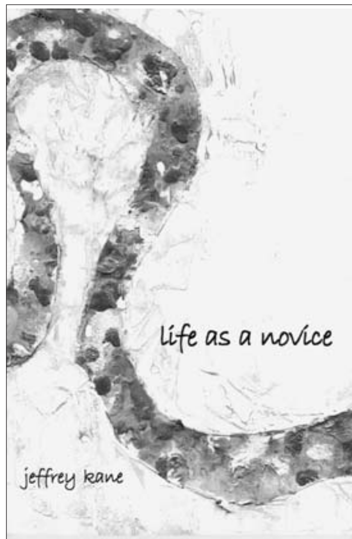

life as a novice

Jeffrey Kane

In sparse, poignant verse, Jeffrey Kane, Editor of Encounter from 1992 to 2002, expresses the burden of grief and the inspiration and wisdom he still receives from his son, who died in a tragic automobile accident in 2003 at the age of 21.

Time magazine essayist Roger Rosenblatt has written that Kane's poems have "the brevity and power of Emily Dickinson's, but they come from a different sorrow and a different endurance. They make you weep and clap. Mainly, they make you feel."

Copies of *life as a novice* may be ordered at $14.95 (plus $1.50 S&H) from Confrontation Press, English Department, C.W. Post Campus of Long Island University, 720 Northern Blvd., Brookville, NY 11548.

A Call to Action on the Education of Young Children

The Alliance for Childhood

WE ARE DEEPLY CONCERNED that current trends in early education, fueled by political pressure, are leading to an emphasis on unproven methods of academic instruction and unreliable standardized testing that can undermine learning and damage young children's healthy development.

Many states are moving toward universal preschool so that all children can benefit from early education. We strongly support these efforts, provided that preschool programs are based on well-established knowledge of how children learn and how to lay a foundation for lifelong learning — not on educational fads. *We call for early education that emphasizes experiential, hands-on activities, open-ended creative play, and caring human relationships.*

Preschool education must not follow the same path that has led kindergartens toward intense academic instruction with little or no time for child-initiated learning. If such practices were effective for five-year-olds, we would have seen better long-term results by now. *We call for a reversal of the pushing down of the curriculum that has transformed kindergarten into de facto first grade.*

This statement has been signed by over 175 eminent scholars and early childhood professionals, including T. Berry Brazelton, David Elkind, Howard Gardner, Jane Goodall, Jonathan Kozol, and Deborah Meier.

The Alliance for Childhood is a partnership of educators, health care professionals, researchers, and other childhood advocates who seek to improve the health and well-being of all children. The present statement was prepared by Joan Almon, President, and Ed Miller, Senior Researcher. Tel/Fax 301-779-1033; <info@allianceforchildhood.org>.

Education is not a race where the prize goes to the one who finishes first. To help young children develop literacy and a lifelong love of learning, we need to respect and, when needed, to strengthen their individual abilities and drive to learn. Instead, current trends in early education policy and practice heighten pressure and stress in children's lives, which can contribute to behavioral and learning problems. *We call for research on the causes of increased levels of anger, misbehavior, and school expulsion among young children.*

Justified concern for low-income children, who often lag academically, has been a powerful force behind the current overemphasis on early instruction in literacy and math. This well-intentioned but misguided policy may actually put children at increased risk of school failure by denying them positive early learning experiences. *We call for additional research that examines the long-term impact of different preschool and kindergarten practices on children from diverse backgrounds.*

Creative play that children can control is central to their physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. It contributes greatly to their language development, social skills, and problem-solving capacities, and lays an essential foundation for later academic learning. Yet many children do not have the opportunity to develop their capacity for socio-dramatic play. Preschool is the place to intervene and restore childhood play. *We call for teacher education that emphasizes the full development of the child including the importance of play, nurtures children's innate love of learning, and supports teachers' own capacities for creativity, autonomy, and integrity.*

The Real Deal

Chris Mercogliano

I have a friend who is a most unusual rabbi. With a New York Yankees cap for a yarmulke, he has spent the past three decades helping young people navigate the developmental labyrinth known as adolescence, first as a teacher in two alternative schools he started in California in the 1970s, then as a family therapist — work that taught him the critical role family dynamics play in teen problems — and then from the mid-80s to the mid-90s as a crisis intervener with homeless and runaway teens in the dark netherworld of New York City. Along the way he also helped raise three successful, happy teenagers of his own, which any of us who have done it know can be a career all in itself.

Following the publication of *Times Square Rabbi: Finding Hope in Lost Kids' Lives* (Hazelden 1997), Yehuda Fine took his hard-won wisdom on the road, crisscrossing the country to hold a series of workshops with large groups of high school students by day and then with their parents by night. During the workshops, he gathered the data for his latest book, *The Real Deal* (2006).

Those fortunate teens — over 24,000 to date, from the gangbangers of East L.A. to the overprivileged of the Upper West Side — quickly discovered that Yehuda's goal isn't to lecture them about safe sex or the perils of underage drinking. Instead his mission is to listen, to give them permission to ask about what is really going down in their lives.

Yehuda usually begins by conducting an informal survey, asking the students to respond to a set of his questions with a show of hands. The results are striking to say the least:

CHRIS MERCOGLIANO has been a teacher at the Albany Free School for 32 years and an administrator for the past 20. His most recent book is *Teaching the Restless: One School's Remarkable No-Ritalin Approach to Helping Children Learn and Succeed* (Beacon Press 2004).

- 100% have a friend who has a drug or alcohol problem.
- 100% have a friend who has been depressed.
- 100% know someone who is regularly having sex.
- 100% encounter insults and/or bullying on a daily basis in school.
- 90% or more have a friend who has thought about suicide.
- 90% are worried about violence, particularly since 9/11.
- 75% want to get married eventually, but only 20% think they will have a fulfilling marriage.
- More than 50% think they might get divorced.
- And, most disturbing of all, only 15% think they can turn to their parents for support in a crisis, while 85% wish they could talk more openly about all these issues with their parents.

Next, Yehuda passes around blank index cards and invites the kids to share, anonymously, their most serious questions, their deepest secrets, those things they don't dare ask their mothers and fathers. He promises that he will carry their issues and concerns, sensitively and again anonymously, to their parents so that their parents might begin to understand just what it is their children need from them.

What Yehuda quickly discovered is that his workshop participants are begging for the opportunity to open up, and they often do so with heartbreaking honesty. Along the way he has catalogued the kids' questions, and this is where *The Real Deal* begins, with the 75 most commonly asked ones.

The questions cover the full gamut of adolescent reality, from friendship and peer pressure ("I want to try and get help for my friend who is being

abused at home, but I'm afraid she'll hate me if I say anything," or "How can I tell if my friend is serious when she talks about suicide?") to sexuality and relationships ("I'm pretty sure I'm gay; should I tell my parents?" or "What age is the right time to start having sex?") to drugs and alcohol ("What's the difference between experimenting with drugs and having a drug problem?") to troubles at home ("I hate my mom and dad and want to run away from home; what should I do?")

The book represents the fulfillment of the author's promise to the teenagers. He has delivered their questions to the parents of America, and in a manner as honest and direct as the teens have been with him. His analysis is straightforward and challenging. Children learn the most about dealing with life's obstacles from the behavior of their parents, he cautions, much more than their words. They model who adults are, not what they say.

But at the same time Yehuda has ample compassion for parents who are struggling with rearing teenagers in today's confusing, stressed-out world, one in which over a quarter of American children are being raised by single parents and in which members of the average family communicate with one another for fewer than eight minutes per day. His advice is uncomplicated and grounded in the common sense that modernity has ruthlessly stripped from everyday life. Talk to your children often, he urges, and make sure no topic — sex, alcohol, depression, violence — is off limits. Our kids want to know what we think, as long as we don't lecture them to death. Besides, if we don't give them information, they'll wind up getting the facts anyway from peers, the media, or the local drug dealer.

Children also want to be involved in family matters and problems, says Yehuda, so include them in important discussions. And above all, never be afraid to admit you were wrong and then apologize. The worst mistake any of us can make is trying to be the perfect parent. When we act like perfect parents, we give teens the message that they can't approach us for help because they haven't measured up to our standards. We blow the chance to teach them how to face adversity and learn from their mistakes. The bottom line is that children growing up in families where they can't possibly admit their failures become extremely vulnerable to the kinds of outside influence from which they need parental protection.

Adolescence is becoming a maze in which a rapidly increasing number of young people are getting stuck. The tragedy is that when it comes to providing the right kinds of guidance and support, so many of their parents are lost too.

Yehuda Fine is the real deal. If parents could find a way to follow even half of his advice, the mental health of this nation would take a quantum leap forward. Teen depression and suicide would plummet. So would substance abuse, unwanted pregnancies, and crime.

Adolescence is becoming a maze in which a rapidly increasing number of young people are getting stuck. The tragedy is that when it comes to providing the right kinds of guidance and support, so many of their parents are lost too.

My friend has a map.

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Let's Not Forget Quiet Time

Ann Gazzard

Quiet time is an opportunity for children to discover the more expansive, sensitive, feeling, and creative aspects of themselves.

We constantly hear about the need to enrich our children's environment to stimulate their intellectual growth and intelligence. Parents provide colorful mobiles around a baby's crib, an abundance of books and toys, and engaging conversation. They try to activate the baby's sensory apparatus, especially the eyes, ears, and touch. These forms of stimulation are invaluable, no doubt. But the value to the child, and to the adult for that matter, of the converse — periods of stillness and quiet — has been overlooked.

What about the capacity to be alone with one's thoughts? What about the moments when the baby just watches the world, without our infringement? These are also sources of cognitive nourishment. In a world that places increasing demands upon our sensory modalities, it's time to reconsider the importance of quietude.

Multimedia-equipped homes and cars, and even children's book bags, make it ever more likely that engagement with others is always close at hand. The changes in our spoken language also reveal this — chat rooms, instant messaging, text and pictures, and so on. It is almost as if this is how the world always was, and for upcoming generations this is how it will appear. There are other traditions, however, that need to be re-invoked for what else they have to offer. Was it so long ago that a child walked to school or rode the bus, contented to be with their own thoughts? Are the opportunities for quiet reflection in moments such as these being stolen or lost?

Quiet time alone has much to offer. For starters, it is much easier to become attuned to the sounds of the natural environment. We become aware of birds chirping, leaves rustling, wind howling, or brooks gurgling. We also become aware of the feelings these sounds help us experience. Aesthetic delights of any sort are usually more easily accessed in periods of

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quietude. When the mind has a chance to settle with itself, not pulled in a multitude of directions by external stimulation, it becomes easier to notice the finer details of the beauty that surround us. The quiet joy of sunshine clipping a fresh vase of daffodils, the tenderness with which tall grasses bow their heads in the wind — such sensations are heightened in periods of peace and quiet.

Quiet solitude also facilitates an awareness of our feelings in general. We may become aware of feelings we have about past events, feelings that the busyness of activity precludes us from acknowledging. Quiet time alone also gives us the opportunity to consider how we really feel about the future. Such introspection is especially valuable in the adolescent years, when young people are searching for personal identities in the society they will enter. But awareness of one's feelings is important throughout the life cycle. It enriches and deepens our experience of life and enables us to make better decisions.

Religious and spiritual disciplines throughout the world have long hailed the virtues of quiet time and silence. Contemplation and meditative practices geared towards the accumulation of wisdom have fueled these endeavors. Perhaps we can gain from these longstanding traditions by embracing more opportunities every day to let our minds rest in the comfort of their own company, at least for a while.

But it is not only quiet solitude that carries advantages. Quiet time with others is also a joy perhaps too readily overlooked because of the habit of conversation. Reaching to others for the security of company guaranteed by verbal interaction fails to recognize the deeper security that might be forthcoming in periods of silence. Unfortunately for many, being together with someone in silence has the sad connotation of animosity, that is, "we're not talking." Working together quietly at home on projects and being able to recognize periods of contentment that others feel with themselves and allowing them the space to dwell there, are examples to the contrary. They are examples that show the honor given to others in respect for periods of silence.

Sometimes children, like adults, need the time and space to explore themselves in different activities, different feelings and different modes of expression without interruption. Self-growth and the development of self-esteem depend upon this. New talents and new strengths emerge from these opportunities.

Creativity

If we look at the lives of highly creative people, we find that in many cases they have relied heavily on inner resources that came during periods of relative isolation. For example, Immanuel Kant, Henry David Thoreau, and others were famous for their walks.

Students of the creative process (e.g., Wallas 1926) have pointed to the need for a period of incubation, when solutions that don't come during conscious effort percolate "below," in the unconscious, and then emerge. This incubation often seems to require a time of quietude as well.

According to Julia Cameron, award winning author and author of *The Artist's Way*,

> …this [walking] is the vastly overlooked creative tool of our time…. I don't think I can say enough about it…. When you walk, you are able to hear more cleanly and more keenly…. Life is about listening … listening to ourselves. (Toms and Holland 1997, 8-9).

In a similar vein Isabel Allende says,

> I think that you are more creative when you have free time, when you have solved your basic needs … writing requires much concentration and silence. I can only get that in total solitude. If … I can't retreat completely, then I can't write. I can write journalism, letters, speeches, but I can't write fiction [without it]."(Toms and Holland 1997, 100)

For a recent *New York Times* editorial, Clyde Haberman (2005) interviewed several MacArthur

Fellows, the so-called "young genius award winners," who told him that they eschewed iPods and cellphones when they walked around the city. "I'm a great believer in daydreaming, "said Teresita Fernandez, a New York City sculptor. That's why her cellphone stays off when she walks about.

Students of the creative process (e.g., Wallas 1926) have pointed to the need for a period of incubation, when solutions that don't come during conscious effort percolate "below," in the unconscious, and then emerge. This incubation often seems to require a time of quietude as well. For example, the mathematician Henri Poincaré wrote about his failed effort to solve a problem:

> Disgusted with my effort failure, I went to spend a few days at the seaside, and thought of something else. One morning, walking on the bluff, the idea came to me, with just the … characteristics of brevity, suddenness and immediate certainty…. (Chiselin 1952).

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi also emphasizes the need for time away from ordinary daily pressures. He says,

> For instance Robertson Davies, the Canadian author, said that one of the most important things in life was … being able to take a nap every day after lunch for 20 minutes [because] it's during idle time that ideas have a chance to recombine in new ways. (Toms and Holland 1997).

Recommendations

What, then, might we do to help our children feel comfortable with more quiet time? Adults modeling respect for silence and quietude is a very good place to start. Adults who can confidently respect their own need for time alone or at least quiet time set the stage for children similarly respecting their own needs. Respectfully taking for oneself and offering to others the opportunity to fulfill such needs creates a harmonious environment. It also forestalls these needs from asserting their fulfillment via frustration and finally withdrawal. Our culture, so heavily weighted towards external stimulation and material comfort, fails consequently to rightfully respect more introverted modes of being. As a result, terms like "introversion" have acquired negative connotations, when in fact the term merely refers to people who become invigorated through some time alone as opposed to the "extrovert" who turns to others to be replenished. Fear of morbidity and other such associations that accompany parental concern about children happy in their own company needs to be brought back into perspective. Cultural expectations need to be balanced with an understanding of a more well rounded, healthy psychological development.

Offering children alternatives to media and technology as outlets for expression and creative activity can help them find ways to be content with themselves. Whether it be taking a walk in nature, riding a bike, drawing a picture or keeping a journal, there are numerous opportunities an adult can make available to them. It is not so much a matter of finding a hobby to fill the space of time alone. It is rather finding an expressive outlet for the aspects of self that emerge when there is freedom from the patterns of day-to-day living and one's usual mode of being and expression.

Quiet time is an opportunity to discover the more expansive, sensitive, feeling, and creative aspects of ourselves. The more we, the adults, can generate quiet opportunities for ourselves, the more we will be able to support our offspring and students in similar pursuits. Becoming aware of one's own need for quiet time is the turning point. As it is often said in psychotherapy circles, fifty percent of the successful work is accomplished by simply recognizing the problem. Here, too, changes in behavior will occur rather effortlessly once the need is recognized. It then becomes relatively easy to talk about the need for quiet with other adults and with children, and to provide the crayons, paint, bicycles, trips to the woods or coastline — or whatever helps make quiet possible. What's more, there will be a mutually beneficial outcome. For in honoring the need for quiet in the other, we honor our own.

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Helping Students Explore Personal Identities

Kjersti VanSlyke-Briggs

Discourse mapping and literary techniques can help students learn about their social worlds and themselves.

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As a high school English teacher working with alternative school students, I commonly found that students hadn't probed their own identity issues beyond a surface level. This made it difficult for them to understand the characters in the novels we studied in class. Students couldn't understand how a character's social position and identity affected the character's choices in the novel. In addition, students did not understand how their own social position could affect how they relate to a character.

To complicate the matter, when I asked students to consider their own identities, they often resorted to the negative labels that had been assigned to them based on learning disabilities, behavior problems, and emotional disorders. They had so quickly adopted the identities attributed to them that they had not considered their own perceptions of themselves. In my effort to get students to delve more deeply into exploring their own identities, I tried two approaches, both with positive outcomes.

Discourses

One method involves the use of what James Paul Gee calls *Discourses*. He describes Discourses, as distinguished from ordinary discourses, as "ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions, and clothes" (Gee 1996, 127). These identities take the form of broad social categories that began at birth. Primary Discourses include items such as having a working class background, being a daughter, and growing up in a rural area. Discourses are related to social power and social hierarchies. There are also Secondary Discourses which develop later in life due to interactions with com-

munity, career, and the later developments of one's personal life. These Discourses could include student, teacher, liberal, and wife.

One activity I like to begin with is Discourse mapping. The goal is to have students begin to creatively examine all of the forces that helped create their identities. We start by brainstorming a list of all the Discourses which interact with the student's being. After sharing my own map, students create a montage of magazine pictures and photos that speak to each of the Discourses which they identified in their brainstorming. Students also create word bubbles to explain the purpose of each picture selection. For instance, one student who had recently moved to our district from a much larger city had a New York skyline glued to her map and her bubble explained the importance of an urban lifestyle in shaping her identity.

Sample Discourse Map

Discourse mapping is an activity that I have taken with me to the field of teacher education. Now that I am teaching literacy courses for students who hope to become teachers, we also examine these maps for clues to how they will interact with students and what literacies they will bring to the classroom.

When students share their maps with their classmates, they discuss the biases and societal implications of their particular Discourses. For example, a student who had farming as a Primary Discourse also discussed the stereotypes related to that career option. At this point many students begin to see the relationships between how they are positioned in society and how they respond to others based on that positioning. Such insights may help students understand the situations and barriers they'll encounter throughout their lives.

Occasionally, I have students who are embarrassed about parts of their Discourses or have personal reasons for not sharing them with the class. In these cases, students can simply share these thoughts on the back of their Discourse maps, so that I am the only one who will see that aspect of their identities. They might also choose to ignore that aspect altogether. Some Discourses are painful for students to face, yet those are the Discourses that most shape how students respond to text. There are students in all schools, not just alternative schools, who have to deal with personal issues like a parent who has been arrested or their own drug problems. Students who have been molested, abused, or even abandoned live in every school district and carry with them the weight of these experiences. I have found that the mapping activity can lead to valuable personal discussions among the students.

Heaney's Poem, "Digging"

A second method involves the use of literature. As part of a senior year unit, in which I teach Frank McCourt's *Angela's Ashes* (1996), we spend a significant amount of time discussing the elements that may have shaped the author's identity and perspective. In order to better connect these experiences to our own, we also examine Seamus Heaney's (1985) poem, "Digging." This poem describes Heaney's inner conflict with following family tradition and discusses his striking out on his own with his writing. Students can identify with this break from family tradition and the need to defend one's own life choices. After reading the poem, we discuss our own acceptance, rejection, and renegotiation of family conventions, traditions, or beliefs. These discussions help students not only to understand Frank McCourt better, but also to clarify their own identities.

The use of literature in this manner allows it to function both as a window and a mirror for students. It provides a window to other cultures and peoples,

while simultaneously reflecting back aspects of their own lives. As Carol Witherell explains (1991, 92-93), "the coherence of self is grounded in its narrative structure. This narrative of a life is not random; rather, it is given coherence through traditions of time, value and purpose." We are shaped by the past and students often try to deny this aspect of self. My students often attempt to claim that they are not anything like their families and they often reject this structure of their lives. These disenfranchised students need new ways of voicing self and ways of discovering this identity and connection to the past. By listening to the voices of other authors talking about their lives, students can better connect to their own.

Once students are able to make the connections between their own lives and those of the authors they are reading, they are able to establish their own narratives of life. The activity begins by asking students to use Heaney's poem as a model for a poem of their own. Students often used this opportunity to discuss the conflicts they had with their own family traditions, or to celebrate their differences with their traditions. Many of the students find that they are not as different as they had claimed, but instead find ways to renegotiate the family past in ways which better align with their current lives.

Amanda, for instance, spoke of the fact that she will be the first girl to graduate from high school in her family. Although she became pregnant her senior year, and at one point had contemplated dropping out, she resolved that she would graduate and open new ground for her family and new opportunities for her unborn baby. This was a choice that she had a difficult time making because she was encouraged by her family to drop out and marry.

Matt, another student from the same class faced similar choices. He was encouraged by his father to take over the family business. Matt instead opted for a vocation focus in his high school classes that would lead to a career he felt was better suited to his needs. This choice was painful to Matt, for he had worked with his father for years and had been groomed to stay in the busines after graduation. Matt's emotional poem (see inset) tells this story and communicates the deep frustration he felt making these choices.

Once students have examined their poems, we return to Heaney and McCourt with students better able to see the conflicts both authors faced as they renegotiated their families' influence on the shaping of their own identities and life choices. Students are also able to look for what Hicks (2002) called "seams and ruptures" — areas of conflict within Discourses that push the individual in new directions or understandings of self.

I have used other works that communicate similar conflicts. A personal favorite is Alice Walker's (1998) short story, "Everyday Use." Walker's story puts the conflict in a different perspective, presenting the *mother's* view of a daughter who has moved away from the family and small community conventions.

My goal in having students participate in a project like this — modeling their own poems after Heaney's — is not to stir up conflict within families or to have students write creative little poems. My students come to class with a great deal of frustration and angst about not only who they are, but where they are going in the future. They are conflicted because there are no easy answers and this project gives them a chance to explore who they re-

It's My Life

As my hammer swings I laugh,
I know what I will be doing
2, 3, 6, 10 years from now.
The same as what I have done every day after school
For the past three years.

As he sits day and night on the phone,
Running around all the time for his own life,
I hope he stops saying I'll take his place.
His business, it's a trap, to whoever works there.
This is why I won't.

I never wanted to work for my father.
Especially at his business. That's his life,
Not mine, mine is working on houses.

He can't change my life,
He can't control my life
I will do what I will with it.

It's not his life to put where he wants.
It's my life to live.
It's my life.

ally are and what they really want from life. One student, Erin, who lived with her grandmother, put it this way:

> My Grandma likes Wendy's
> Because my Aunt works there
> She thinks working there is what's best for me
> But I don't want to get grease in my hair….

The poem continues with her plans for her future and her desire to go on to college, and ends with the line, "I will not relinquish my failing fears," her fears of a failed future based on conventional expectations. She vowed to hold onto that image in order to push herself to go on and do something different with her life. Many students deal with these issues of identity as they come to view themselves as separate from their families.

Working with Heaney's poem helps students to think critically about their own positions in the world, their families, and communities. Projects like this help students to personally connect with authors and become more involved with texts. Using literature as a window and mirror to examine oneself, students begin to see literature as part of the self rather than something their English teacher assigned so they can get credit for the class. Literature and writing become tools to find one's place in the world and to challenge what is contradictory to self. Through this conscious reflection, students can create new constructions of self and perhaps alleviate some of the frustration they feel. The creation of a space in which to explore these issues in a classroom is time well spent.

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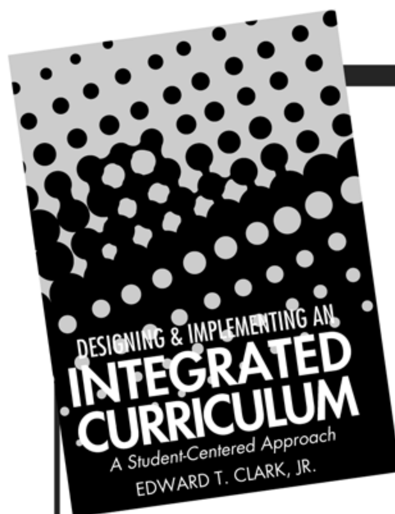

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Edward T. Clark, Jr.

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The Courage to Teach Program

Reflections on Renewal

Mary Barr Goral, Anne B. Bucalos,
Cindy Meyers Gnadinger, and Maureen R. Norris

A structured retreat helps participants bring energy and focus back into their classrooms — and into their personal lives.

> In 1994, under the direction of Parker J. Palmer, the Fetzer Institute created the COURAGE TO TEACH (CTT) program, piloting an approach to personal and professional renewal for educators called "teacher formation." The formation process invites educators to reclaim their own wholeness and vocational clarity, and makes connections between the renewal of a teacher's spirit and the revitalization of public education.
> (Center for Courage & Renewal 2006)

According to Parker Palmer (1997a), when students are asked to describe good teachers, they report on a variety of teaching methods used by the teachers in very different learning environments. In other words, all good teachers do not use similar techniques. However, Palmer noted one common characteristic of good teachers: They have a strong sense of personal identity infused in their work. This personal identity, according to Palmer, depends heavily on self-knowledge, including the knowledge of one's intellectual, emotional, and spiritual self. Palmer urges us to realize that all these qualities are required for wholeness in the human self, in education, and in pedagogical discourse. If this understanding of our wholeness is forgotten — that is if we forget, as Stephen Glazer (1999) says, how to look to our inner experience as a resource for knowledge and understanding — we lose resourcefulness, connectedness, our sense of well-being, and confidence.

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Cindy Gnadinger and Anne Bucalos are Associate Professors of Education at Bellarmine University. Maureen R. Norris is Dean of the School of Education at the University.

The Courage to Teach (CCT) program is part of the Fetzer Institute's Teacher Foundation Program for K–12 teachers. It is actually a series of seasonal retreats where educators gather to be renewed and refreshed. This non-invasive program gives teachers the chance to get away from the university environment to a natural setting four times a year for two to three days at a time. The CTT program holds as its central tenet, "creating a space that welcomes the soul." Trained facilitators lead participants through both group and individual sessions. Interestingly, little emphasis is placed on actual pedagogical ideas, but instead teachers are encouraged to open their hearts and souls through poetry, reflection, and introspection. Palmer (1997b, 21) believes we must take "the conversation of colleagues into the deep places where we might grow in self-knowledge for the sake of our professional practice." By allowing teachers time and a safe place to explore this inner landscape, the CTT program helps educators move toward a more honest and truthful relationship with themselves and with their students.

Our University's Involvement

In 1998, several faculty and administrators at our university, Bellarmine, developed a project which became known as "Teacher Formation and the Core of Student Learning." We had two goals: to reform our core curriculum and to provide faculty development in the form of CCT retreats. We hoped that our efforts to transform the education we offered — which would require considerable work — would benefit from the kind of faculty renewal and commitment the CCT program provides.

Our first cohort of faculty and administrators participated in the CCT Program in 1999-2001. The second cohort followed in 2001-2003, and the last cohort participated in 2003-2004. Faculty and administrators representing all departments (for example, biologists, psychologists, and nurses), as well as local educators and community members came together for seasonal retreats to work on personal renewal of spirit.

Because the CTT program was designed for K–12 public school teachers, it was of special interest to those of us who teach in our School of Education. As teachers of teachers, we were in a good position to recognize that the complexities of teaching require, as Palmer (1997) believes, intellect, emotion, and spirit. The following are reflections of some of us who participated in the CTT program.

Mary

In the fall of 2003, I joined the faculty of our school of education and shortly thereafter was approached by one of the professors in the School of Health Sciences to become involved in the CCT program. Because I have a strong interest in education as a spiritual practice, I was familiar with Palmer's work, but the idea of committing to four 3-day retreats seemed like a bigger obligation than I could manage.

As a new faculty member, I wanted to prove myself worthy of the academy and felt a heavy responsibility to very involved and visible at the university — not off at retreats. Ironically, the responsibilities associated with teaching, which can be stressful and overwhelming, are addressed by CTT.

After much deliberation and rearranging of schedules, I made my commitment to become a part of the 2003/2004 CTT program. The seasonal retreats took place at a wooded, peaceful, and remote church camp, about an hour and a half from campus. Just the drive itself, through rolling hills, fall foliage, and an autumn sunset, caused me to relax. Although I had read pieces of Parker Palmer's work, I was unprepared for what the retreat brought me. I expected to discuss teaching, the stress of the *publish or perish* environment and the seemingly unending committee work. Rather, we read poetry by some of my favorite authors (including Mary Oliver and David Whyte), took solitary walks in the woods, and reflected on issues such as autumn's paradox of dying and seeding.

The remaining three retreats were similar. Our group of approximately 20 professors and administrators listened to and read beautiful, heartfelt poetry, most often reflective of the season, and spent time in nature. We also thought deeply about nature's gifts and wrote about such things as winter's clarity, the feeling of spring, and summer's state of plenty.

With the approach of each subsequent retreat, I became more and more enamored of the program and looked forward to the reflective time and the gather-

ing with new friends. When the time came for our final retreat, I did not want it to end. Our group subsequently has tried throughout the past two years to come together, but nothing has been quite the same. It took the commitment to a well-designed organized program to really force us to come together in community as colleagues.

As with all professional development programs, the ideal is to come away with something that we can apply to our work or to our personal lives. The CTT program brought me numerous gifts, a few of which I will share. First, I had the opportunity to meet professors from across our campus. Just like in all lines of work, it is common to only get to know the people in your immediate environment. Our school of education is not located on the main part of campus, so the only way we get to know colleagues outside our department is through committee work, where you rarely have time to socialize. Spending extended quality time with colleagues allowed me to get to know them in a way that would otherwise not have been possible. This kind of deeper relationship can then lead to collaborative work across disciplines. Although I have not co-taught a class to date, several professors have brainstormed a number of ideas for interdisciplinary courses for the future.

A second gift that I took away from the retreats was a renewal of my love for poetry. Poetry is an art that opens the soul. To bring poetry to young people is a passion that I have had for quite some time. When I taught 7th and 8th grade in a Waldorf school, I saw the power that beautiful poetry can have on the lives of young adults. Because of this experience, I wanted desperately to bring this same love of poetry to my college students, but felt some reservations. However, the use of poetry at the CTT retreats and the shared knowledge that other professors were bringing poetry to their students gave me the courage to introduce poetry to my undergraduate and graduate classes. This is something that I still do today.

Perhaps the biggest benefit from the CTT program was the idea of seasonal retreats. At our university, we have a fairly heavy teaching load, as well as, expectations for scholarship and service. As a new professor, I had trouble finding time to write. One day when I was especially missing the previous year's retreats, it dawned on me that I could continue taking seasonal retreats and use this time for writing and research. To date, I have taken five such retreats and have found them to be truly amazing. I choose somewhere to go that is quiet, in a natural setting, and normally not too far from home. I then find a bed and breakfast or a small cabin, pack up my laptop and my books, and literally head for the hills. Rather than becoming stressed because I cannot find time to write, I now look forward to writing because I associate it with time away, solitude, and being in nature.

From the gift of new colleagues to the renewing and productive seasonal retreats, the CTT program is something that definitely enhanced my life. I am thankful for the opportunity to have participated.

Cindy

I vividly recall my first CTT retreat. I rushed away from campus that fall afternoon to drive to the retreat center. As I left campus, I quickly realized I had forgotten to activate my e-mail's "out of office" assistant. Accepting I would be inundated with e-mails when I returned to campus, I headed on. Moments later I received a message on my cell phone that my babysitter had canceled for the afternoon. So I had to make an unexpected stop at home to make last-minute arrangements for my children. Once again, I was on my way.

Soon after arriving at the quiet retreat center, I found myself sitting in a circle, with colleagues representing various departments from around the university, confused and unsure as to the commitment I had made. With the hectic afternoon still lingering in my mind, I tried to have an open mind. We began with introductions and a piece of poetry.

Although I do not recall the title of the poem that initiated our retreat, I do remember it was written by Thomas Merton. In this particular piece of poetry, Merton insisted we maintain some level of quiet and stillness in our life. "That's easy for Merton to say, he didn't have a full time job, a husband, and three kids to raise!" I shared my thoughts aloud with the others in the room. This initiated a conversation among the group about the importance of "gifting oneself" with solitude and time, something I had very little of at that point in my life.

For the retreats that followed, my attempts to leave town were very similar to the first time. However, I slowly realized how much I looked forward to the time in retreat. Thomas Merton was right; the solitude was truly a gift! For me, it was one that I rarely experienced outside of CTT.

According to Parker Palmer (1997b), "we teach who we are" (p. 15). This idea resonated with me throughout that first memorable retreat and through all the subsequent retreats. We teach who we are. My inner voice started an internal dialogue that continues through today. "*We teach who we are… who am I?*" This question served as the foundation for my meditation and reflection time during CTT.

Parker Palmer noted one common characteristic of good teachers: They have a strong sense of personal identity infused in their work. This personal identity, according to Palmer, depends heavily on self-knowledge, including the knowledge of one's intellectual, emotional, and spiritual self.

I came to understand what Palmer meant. I saw that my teaching life mirrored the life I lived, a life that was rushed and often hectic. I realized that my classes too, often felt rushed, and hectic. I began to slow down a little and learned to say "no" at times to give myself the gift of time and solitude that Merton so eloquently wrote about in his poem. At a private institution, where the teaching load is quite heavy and the expectation for scholarly activity continues to increase, little time is left for introspection. *Courage to Teach* provided the opportunity for me to see the value of solitude and stillness.

Maureen

I remember thinking how much I needed renewal — renewal of spirit, for sure. I had been in the classroom as a professor of special education for almost 20 years. Now as Dean, I would have new responsibilities, but would also continue to teach. What faced me was an interesting dilemma; how would I have the courage to teach and also the courage to "Dean"?

Our group was composed of a mixture of university faculty, administration including my Provost, two local school teachers and the educator from our retreat meeting place. At the beginning of our retreat, I was unaware of what a blessing my group, as well as, the location would be. Some of the members of my Courage group were longstanding friends and colleagues. As the education faculty dean, I was asked to nominate some teachers from our local schools. I had the opportunity to involve some of my former students in the group, which proved very worthwhile.

As our retreats continued, I began to question how could I continue to be a teacher and yet assume the role of dean, which has different expectations than that of someone in the classroom? I was a reluctant dean. My heart and soul had always been with students from the elementary classroom, to the special education classroom, to the college classroom. I knew I made a difference in those settings. My Courage group, which included one of my graduates, affirmed what I knew about myself as teacher. They acknowledged that I am a caring, nurturing teacher who works tirelessly to bring out the best in students. Could I continue to stay true to myself as I assumed a new role?

Looking back, I realize that the Courage retreats allowed me the time to think in the quiet, to reflect on the issues facing me and help me to keep perspective. Those first few years as dean were very difficult. I was in the process of rebuilding a new faculty as a result of the retirements of three long-term and respected faculty. I also was developing new programs and in the beginning stages of re-accreditation. I worked hard to build a community, but was presented with many challenges. Luckily at our retreats I felt safe in the space created for members of the group. I also felt a sense of solidarity with fellow courage members and learned much about myself and my colleagues.

My favorite visual image of my retreats was our facilitator reminding us of keeping members safe like a small bird held gently in our hands. Through the retreats, I was able to find some joy from the struggle to "Dean" as I am.

Anne

I embarked on what I believed to be an adventure where I could do what I love most when not teaching … talking about teaching! I was both surprised and dismayed when, at the first retreat, our leader informed us that we would not be discussing teaching, and in fact, a number of the participants in our group were not professional teachers or professors. I wondered, then, what *would* we be doing? Because I had faulty expectations, I had to reframe my preconceived notions about where this experience would take me and how I might respond. Admittedly, this was difficult for me to overcome, yet necessary if I were to have courage to continue.

I was especially eager to participate in the "clearness committee," a cornerstone of the CTT retreats where one individual poses a problem he or she is experiencing for which clearness is sought, and those in the group with that individual simply listen and ask clarifying questions. There are definite boundaries: no advice giving, no "fixing" of problems, no telling someone what he or she should do, no treating this as a "therapy" group. I was certainly game, and anxious for the interaction.

I lasted through two such committees, emerging frustrated and drained. They *were* emotional and, at first blush, seemed very therapy-like. At this point I was becoming convinced that the CTT experience was not for me. There was too much "sharing," too much closeness, and not enough teacher talk. Besides, I had so much work to do, and it was piling up in my office by the minute. I wondered about returning for future retreats, and why my experience seemed to be so different from those on retreat with me.

Following my first retreat, I put CTT out of my mind for a time. But when the next retreat approached, I needed to decide about my participation, and I began to analyze why I felt uncomfortable. Was it the lack of structure? Was it reaching into the soul and exploring it? Or was it the vulnerability of the emotional reactions? I had always prided myself on my close relationships to my K-12 students, and now my college students. I believe I'm a good listener and certainly willing to hear students' concerns. So I wondered, why the discomfort? I began to realize that I was unwilling to extend that same listening and understanding to my colleagues. The "teacher" in me believed that other teachers should have their emotions in check, and we should be about the business of being "professional" and under control. I not only needed to realize that others wanted and needed good listeners, but that I needed to free myself from always being "in control." Instead of teaching who I am, I had been teaching who I thought professional teachers should be: always calm, always knowing, always in control. I needed CTT to bring my expectations into perspective and to allow me to open up myself so that others could be open to me.

I continue to concentrate on this "work." I understand that teaching is really about listening and accepting that others sometimes need to reveal their souls. I am more focused on bringing my students to this level of awareness about their inner selves. My classroom is more attuned to what it feels like to teach from one's heart rather than just teaching from one's head.

Conclusion

e. e. cummings (1938) wrote, "we can never be born enough." In the CCT program, each participant gained a sense of renewal. Each described the kind of mystery that happens when we have the time and space to reconnect with some part of ourselves. When we have this freedom, we are able to teach more directly from the heart and soul. We develop the courage to be who we really are — and the courage to teach.

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Brief Report

Ethical Standards and Standardized Tests

Jerry Robicheau

In 1996 the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium developed ethical standards for educational leaders. Standard 5 reads, "A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness and in an ethical manner." Although there is no legal requirement that individuals follow this standard, it is a way to examine one's behavior.

The American Association of School Administrators also formulated a statement of ethics in 1962, revised in 1981. Standard 6 requires administrators to "pursue appropriate measures to correct those laws, policies and regulations which are not consistent with sound educational goals." The same statement is included in the ethical standards adopted by the Board of Directors of The National Association of Elementary Principals in 1976 and in the code of ethics adopted by the National Association of Secondary Principals in 1973.

Is the current reliance on standard tests in keeping with "sound educational goals"? Pardini (2004) points out the reliance on the tests contradicts a comprehensive system of accountability. Standardized tests measure only a portion of students' skills and learning. Valid assessment must be comprehensive, truly assessing what a student knows. More pointedly, Starratt (2004) and Rebore (2001) contend that relying on the results of standardized tests, without regard to how students learn, is unethical. A full and valid assessment must consider how students organize their thoughts, examine alternatives, demonstrate their knowledge, conduct inquiry, articulate their thinking, demonstrate their proficiency in writing, and look beyond their classroom and the ramification of what they have learned (Newmann 1996).

Thus, a case can be made that, to act ethically, school leaders must provide assessments that consider the whole child. And, according to the standards for elementary and secondary principals cited above, school leaders also are obliged to question laws and regulations that restrict assessment to standardized tests.

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How to Submit Your Manuscript to ENCOUNTER

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Envisioning the Good School

Hunter O'Hara

In my graduate course on teacher-learner relationships, I have found it valuable to ask the students to tell me what they thought a good or effective school might be like. Students find the topic exciting, and it stimulates deep and creative thought. In a recent class, we identified the *transcendent teacher/learner relationship* as being a key factor for meaningful learning to occur. Transcendent relationships are characterized by particular qualities that include caring, trust, mutual respect, and reciprocity. Transcendence in this discussion refers to *going beyond* what Clark Moustakas (1966) has referred to as the conventions, rubrics, and systems that have historically limited the context in which appropriate and meaningful learning can occur. Both teacher and learner embark on a joint pilgrimage; teacher and learner roles are blurred as both simultaneously become teacher and learner in the pursuit and exploration of a question that engages them.

Such an encounter could include any learning topic from the life of an animal in a zoo to the people and cultures of South Africa. The key is that teacher and learner share a mutual encounter that is unencumbered by the limitations of "badges of office." Frequently, a life-altering encounter occurs for one or both in the relationship.

My students and I began to imagine what an entire school built around transcendence qualities would look and feel like. The school would be a place of genuine human equality, flexibility, and abundant opportunity. Learning encounters would be safe, lively, and intensely collaborative. Human dignity would be consistently upheld, with creativity and diversity valued and nurtured. The physical environments would be cheery and beautiful.

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My graduate students and I also developed ideas on how a school might implement these ideals. We came up with these steps.

- Create a welcoming, supportive, warm, and nurturing environment. Model a positive outlook on life.
- Establish a classroom community, a network of friends, in which a sense of shelter can be provided by peers as well as the classroom teacher. Engender teamwork, not competition, between children and make it safe for all learners to take risks.
- Model respectful attitudes and do not tolerate dialogue or behavior that does not convey respect for each and every individual in the classroom community. Model respect for diversity.
- Encourage humor and laugh out loud with learners.
- Demonstrate to each child that they are valued and valuable.
- Demonstrate passion for learning and for what you teach. The teacher needs to inspire learners by demonstrating inspiring behavior and ideas.
- Get to know each learner personally and speak with each one individually each day as you circulate, before and after school, at recess and lunch, and at other appropriate times. Sincere and encouraging remarks and conversations are desirable. Non-curriculum-related dialogue is effective in conveying that your interest in, and concern for, each learner extends beyond school.

- Convey to learners that you trust them, and be willing to take measured risks to demonstrate that trust.
- Look for unique interests, qualities and characteristics in each child and facilitate the child's unique development. Use your awareness to expand your repertoire of strategies to teach each child.
- Adopt and successfully implement an "all children will succeed in this classroom" policy
- As you plan and implement exciting learning experiences, reach deep within and remember and feel what it is like to be in the learner's place.

As the students conceived the school of transcendence, they commented that they found the experience to be liberating. The exercise provided the first opportunity they had ever had to create a school according to what *they* felt was essential, drawing upon their research and their collective years in the profession of teaching. The exercise strengthened their vision for schools that could then provide them with goals for their classroom, for their school, and for their relationships with learners, colleagues, administrators, and the school community.

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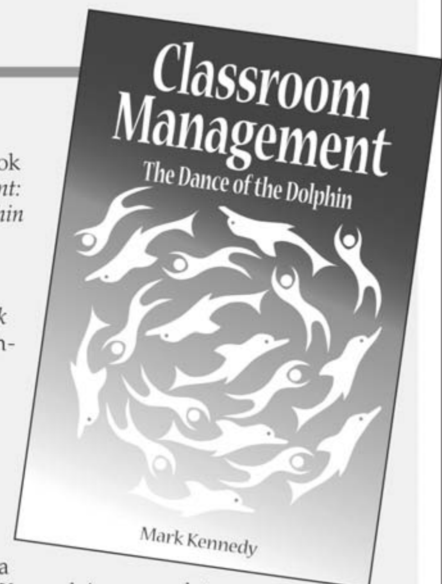
PRACTICAL GUIDES TO MORE EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
by Mark Kennedy

A teacher writes:
"*Lessons from the Hawk* is an optimal blend of theory and practical application for helping students become more successful. Kennedy not only presents a theory of learning and teaching but also provides tools to implement his ideas. The book includes an assessment survey along with outlines for curriculum plans, unit plans, and individual lesson plans...."

A teacher writes:
"Mark Kennedy's book *Classroom Management: The Dance of the Dolphin* does for classroom management what his previous book *Lessons from the Hawk* did for students' learning styles in the classroom....
Mr. Kennedy has a fresh and inviting approach to his subject...."

And another:
"I have begun using a modified version [of Kennedy's approach to management] in one of my classes, and it has already met with great success. Students are managing themselves and learning more."



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Review Essay

Ancient Roots of Holistic Education

John P. Miller

What Is Ancient Philosophy?

by Pierre Hadot
Published by Belknap Press (Cambridge MA), 2002

The Shape of Ancient Thought: Comparative Studies in Greek and Indian Philosophies

by Tomas McEvilley
Published by Allworth Press (New York), 2002

Holistic education is sometimes associated with the "new age" movement. This is unfortunate, for its roots can be traced to indigenous and ancient cultures. In this paper I will explore its roots in Greece and India. I am indebted to two scholars in this exploration: Thomas McEvilley and Pierre Hadot. I will examine some of their research regarding the ancients and then discuss the implications for holistic education.

McEvilley

Thomas McEvilley (2002) begins his book with a quotation by Guthrie (1962, 81):

> The motives and methods of the Indian schools, and the theological and mystical background of their thought, are so utterly different from those of the Greeks that there is little profit in comparison. (v. 2, p. 53)

McEvilley spent thirty years investigating this statement and found it to be "deeply and glaringly false"(p. xx) and rooted in racist and colonial ideologies. McEvilley, in a work of wondrous scholarship, documents the close relationship between the Greeks and the ancient Indians. For example, he notes that Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit come from a common source (p. xxi). He goes beyond similar superficial similarities between Greek and Indian thought to examine "typological and historical/archeological factors"(p. xxxi). He argues that first there was a flow of ideas from India to the pre-Socratics and then back to India during the Hellenistic period.

The seventh century B.C. has been called the "Orientalizing Period" in Greece as "Greek merchants, mercenary soldiers, and tourists were traveling widely"(p. 5) and sparked an Eastern influence on Greek thinking and writing. In the sixth century B.C. Greek-Indian contact took place through the Persian Empire, which extended into India and touched Greece. McEvilley notes that the archeological remains of the Persian palaces suggest "an easy-going multicultural milieu" that allowed for a flow of ideas and motifs. For example, Greek art became popular in Asia as statues from Greece were brought to Persia. Trade routes through Persia also allowed Indian ascetics to travel to Greece. It is even reported that an Indian yogi went to Athens to talk to Socrates.

McEvilley also points out a connection between the ancient Hindu treatises, the *Upanisads*, and the pre-Socratic philosophy of Heraclitus. For example, both works view the physical world as constantly changing and less real than the world of spirit, which Heraclitus called "the hidden harmony." In both writings, the inner self is seen as more connected to this hidden harmony than to the material world.

In an especially illuminating section, McEvilley explores the relationship between Pythagoras and Indian thought. Pythagoras was interested in numbers and their connection to astronomy and music. He came to see an "intimate relationship between as-

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tronomy and acoustics," a relationship that suggests the "underlying unity of all things"(p. 48). McEvilley points out that Indian Vedic literature at this time also describes a mathematically defined cosmos that includes the relationship between astronomy and sound. The Indian expression of the universe as sound is found in the mantra *Nada Brahma*. Berendt (1983) has written a book on this concept and says that not only does *Nada Brahma* mean that "God, the Creator, is sound," but more fundamentally that

The ancient worldview of the Greeks and Indians is close to the perennial philosophy, which suggests that the material world is changing and illusionary when compared to the much vaster spiritual world.

> Creation, the cosmos, the world, is sound….
> Sound is the world.
> But it also means: Sound is joy; sound praises.
> And even, Emptiness is sound. And finally,
> Spirit and soul are sound. (p. 18)

Another important pre-Socratic philosopher was Empedocles, who believed that time was cyclical. He thought that the universe passed through four recurring phases that moved from to Love to Hate and then back to Love again. Cyclical time is also fundamental to Eastern disciplines, particularly Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism. Of these, McEvilley says that the Buddhist view of time is closest to that of Empedocles; for it too posits four stages and movement back and forth between Being (Love) and Non-Being (Hate). This cyclical view of time contrasts with the Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions, which see time as linear, beginning with Creation and ending with the Last Judgment. Today, the Western secular view of time still tends to emphasize scientific progress and linear movement.

Closely tied to cyclical time is a belief in reincarnation, and this idea, too, was shared by both the Greeks and Indians. Aristotle (*Problemata* 17:3) wrote, "In the movement of the heavens and of each star, there is a circle; so why shouldn't the birth and death of people circular too, so that they are born and destroyed again (and again)" (*Probelmata* 17:3).

McEvilley observes that Western scholars have never been comfortable with the concept of reincarnation in Greek thought. He speculates that this may be due to underlying Judeo-Christian feelings against even discussing it. He states:

> Dominant in the pre-Socratic period, it [reincarnation] survived in a variety of forms through the Roman Empire and was consistently posited by such major lineages as the Platonic and the Stoic. Still it is widely ignored in discussion of Greek philosophy. There is a kind of denial, a pretense that it is not there, like the rhinoceros in the room. (p.117)

The ancient worldview of the Greeks and Indians is close to the perennial philosophy, which suggests that the material world is changing and illusionary when compared to the much vaster spiritual world. Within each person the soul is a microcosm of this spiritual world and can attune itself to spirit through contemplative practices. These practices can lead to freedom from the cycle of reincarnation.

An important section of McEvilley's book draws parallels between Plato and Indian thought. For example, in the *Timeaus* Plato's monistic concept of space is similar to the concept of unity, which is called *akasa* in the *Upanisads*.

Moreover, Plato's concept of the soul is similar to the Indian belief that the soul contains knowledge and wisdom, and that education is a matter of drawing out this wisdom. Plato's *Meno* tells us that "there is nothing that the soul has not learned," and his *Timeaus* teaches that "each soul is a microcosm of the World Soul." Similarly, McEvilley points out, the *Chandogya Upanisad* says that "the little space within the heart is as great as this vast universe." (p. 166)

Other concepts shared by the ancient Greeks and Indian philosophers include the spherical form of the universe, the relationship between the One and the Many, and the correspondence between the macrocosm and the microcosm.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail all the parallels that McEvilley draws between Greek and Indian thought. I encourage readers to examine his book, *The Shape of Ancient Thought*, on their own.

Hadot

Pierre Hadot, the French philosopher, makes the case that ancient philosophy was not just an intellectual exercise, but primarily a contemplative practice. For example, the Platonic dialogues were a form of spiritual practice that demanded self-inquiry and self-transformation. Hadot (2002, 65) states that

> To live in a philosophical way meant, above all, to turn toward intellectual and spiritual life, carrying out a conversion which involved "the whole soul," which is to say the whole of moral life.

Philosophy then could be called the education of the soul.

Hadot describes various spiritual exercises that the ancient philosophers pursued in their work. They practiced various forms of contemplation such as being fully present in the moment. For example, the Roman poet Horace wrote:

> Let the soul be happy in the present, and refuse to worry about what will come later.... Think about arranging the present as best you can, with serene mind. All else is carried away as by a river. (Cited in Hadot, p. 196)

Being in the present requires constant attention. This constant awareness was particularly stressed by the Stoics. Hadot notes that

> For them, philosophy was a unique act which had to be practiced at each instant, with constantly renewed attention (*proshoke*) to oneself and to the present moment…. Thanks to this attention, the philosopher is always perfectly aware not only what he is doing, but also of what he is thinking (this is the task of lived logic) and of what he is — in other words, of his place within the cosmos. (p. 138)

Buddhists practice something very similar. This practice is called mindfulness which involves moment-to-moment awareness. The Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh, has written several books about mindfulness practice. Below are two examples from Hanh's (1976) The *Miracle of Mindfulness* which show how mindfulness can be applied to daily life.

Mindfulness While Making Tea

> Prepare a pot of tea to serve a guest or to drink by yourself.
>
> Do each movement slowly, in mindfulness. Do not let one detail of your movements go by without being mindful of it. Know that your hand lifts the pot by its handle. Know that you are pouring the fragrant warm tea into the cup. Follow each step in mindfulness. Breathe gently and more deeply than usual. Take hold of your breath if your mind strays.

Washing the Dishes

> Wash the dishes relaxingly, as though each bowl is an object of contemplation. Consider each bowl as sacred. Follow your breath to prevent your mind from straying. Do not try to hurry to get the job over with. Consider washing the dishes the most important thing in life. Washing the dishes is meditation. If you cannot wash the dishes in mindfulness, neither can you meditate while sitting in silence. (p. 85)

Hadot, like McEvilly, explicitly makes the connection between ancient Greek and Asian philosophy. In fact, he observes that our Western heirs were closer to the Orient than we are (p. 279).

Important to both the Greeks and Indians was the *presence* of the teacher or guru. Hadot (p. 70) writes:

> Philosophy then becomes the lived experience of a presence. From the experience of the presence of a beloved being, we rise to the experience of a transcendent presence.

This is similar to concept of *darhsan* in India which involves being in the presence of an enlightened or realized person. Again, this relationship between teacher and pupil is not just intellectual but is based on affection and love. Hadot (p. 70) argues that the Greeks believed that even the study of science or geometry engages the entire soul and is "always linked to Eros, desire, yearning, and choice.

Implications

What are the implications of the works of McEvilley and Hadot for holistic education? For me they have generated a renewed and deep respect for the work of our ancestors. Without benefit of all the knowledge and technology that we have today, they developed sophisticated spiritual practices that are still in use today. I do not believe that we have improved on these practices in any significant way, and in some ways we have removed them from their broader context. With regard to yogic practices in the West, practitioners have focused on hatha yoga, or the physical postures, rather than seeing yoga as a holistic system.

> ***Without benefit of all the knowledge and technology that we have today, our ancestors developed sophisticated spiritual practices that are still in use today.***

More positively, contemporary researchers are documenting the impact of these ancient practices scientifically. Our communications systems can also make these practices available to more people.

Perennial Philosophy

As mentioned earlier, ancient Western and Asian philosophies are close to what is called the perennial philosophy, and I believe holistic educators can benefit from pondering it. The term "perennial philosophy" was first used by Agostino Steuco in referring the work of the Renaissance philosopher, Marsilio Ficino. Leibniz picked up this thread in 18th century. In the last century Aldous Huxley (1970) wrote a book on this topic. He describes (p. vii) the perennial philosophy as

> the metaphysic that recognizes a divine Reality substantial to the world of things and lives and minds; the psychology that finds in the soul something similar to, or even identical with, divine Reality; the ethic that places man's final end in the knowledge of the immanent and transcendent Ground of all being — the thing is immemorial and universal.

More recently Ken Wilber (1997) has written extensively about the perennial philosophy. Ferrer (2002) has pointed out that it is important not to approach the perennial philosophy in a reductionistic manner. The universality of the perennial philosophy must also respect the diversity of spiritual traditions and practices. Ferrer calls for a "more relaxed universalism" that acknowledges the mysterious relationship between the One and Many. Anna Lemkow (1990, 24) has identified an important paradox in relation to the perennial philosophy when she writes that

> A paradoxical feature of the perennial philosophy is that it is perennial, a recurrent yet open-ended wisdom that develops commensurately with the evolution of human consciousness. For, as Lama Anagarika Govinda stated in another context, wisdom is not merely an intellectually formulated doctrine, proclaimed at a certain point in human history, but a movement which reveals its deepest nature in contact with different conditions and circumstances of human life and on every new levels of human consciousness.

So the relaxed universalism of Ferrer and the perennial philosophy are not static but dynamic and manifest in different conditions and circumstances.

In my view, the perennial philosophy provides the philosophical foundation for holistic education and contains the following elements:

- There is an interconnectedness of reality and a mysterious unity (e.g., Huxely's divine Reality) in the universe.
- There is an intimate connection between the individual's inner self, or soul, and this mysterious unity.
- Knowledge of this mysterious unity can be developed through various contemplative practices.
- Values are derived from seeing and realizing the interconnectedness of reality.
- This realization can lead to social activity designed to counter injustice and relieve the suffering of all beings. (Miller 2006, 16)

A Holistic Vision of Education

The ancient philosophies, both Greek and Asian, support a holistic vision of education — that is, education for the whole person. Education for the ancients was not to be limited intellect but engaged body, mind, and spirit. It included the radical idea that we possess an inner wisdom, buried within the soul, which needs to be drawn out. Holistic educators, such as Montessori and Steiner, also emphasize the importance of nurturing the soul life of the student. A mysterious force within the child can serve as a guide. Modern education, as espoused by departments and ministries of education, has ignored this crucial aspect of teaching. Today we have a truncated and uninspiring vision of education that has been given to us by politicians and the media. The work of McEvilley and Hadot can reconnect us with our Eastern and Western roots and inspire us to re-vision education in holistic terms.

For the ancients, learning should engage the whole person through dialogue, contemplative practices, and the relationship between teacher and student. The relationship between teacher and student ought to be one of affection and love. Holistic educators have acknowledged contemplative practices and the importance of affection and caring in the teacher/student relationship (Miller 2006; Noddings 1992).

Finally, we might explore a new vision of the university inspired by the Plato's Academy and the ancient Buddhist University of Nalanda. These ancient models might help us find a new vision for the modern university. Nalanda was founded in the 5th Century BC in what is now northern India. At one point there were 10,000 students and 1500 professors there. At Nalanda, meditation was practiced along with scholarship; the university contained both libraries and meditation halls. I had the opportunity to visit the ruins of Nalanda in 1993 where one can still see the outline of these halls and the libraries.

Hadot notes that underlying Plato's Academy was a vision of community based on love. It is only in this atmosphere that inquiry and dialogue should occur. The aim of Plato's Academy was to develop the person whose thought and action were congruent and whole. In contrast, some Sophists had turned love of wisdom into the love of words. They had made little attempt to live their lives in accordance with their discourse or espoused beliefs. Such a pursuit of knowledge on a purely intellectual basis has persisted through the decades. As Thoreau noted in the 19th Century, professors of philosophy abounded, but there were few true philosophers in the true sense of the word — people who discussed how to live a meaningful life. As Thoreau (1983, 57) said,

> There are nowadays professors of philosophy, but not philosophers. Yet it is admirable to profess because it was once admirable to live. To be a philosopher is not merely to have subtle thoughts, or even to found a school, but so to love wisdom as to live according to its dictates, a life of simplicity, independence, magnanimity, and trust.

I think Thoreau's assessment is still valid today. We must do better. By integrating scholarship with contemplative practices and the education of the whole person, we can help students not only gain knowledge, but live full lives.

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Book Review

Secret Spaces of Childhood

Edited by Elizabeth Goodenough

Published by the University of Michigan Press (Ann Arbor, 2003)

Reviewed by Judith S. Kaufman

> Though children, like poets, might be called professors of the five senses, their research is silent and invisible. The complex and ambiguous nature of early existence must be reconstructed by others, through memory and from distant points of exile. (p.10).

So begins Elizabeth Goodenough's introduction to *Secret Spaces of Childhood*, a remarkably diverse collection of poems, essays, visual art, memoir, and fiction, each depicting the spaces we forged apart from adults, and sometimes apart from friends and siblings. Goodenough notes that these places represent the quest for "I," the place where we can begin to make sense of the world on our own terms. The disciplinary backgrounds of the contributors to this volume include social work, anthropology, sociology, history, education, economics, architecture, urban planning, pediatrics, human development, literature, fine arts, and religion. "These writers… hold a mirror up to us, the people who form a child's human and material environment" (p. 15).

For a section entitled Symposium, contributors were asked to provide autobiographical impressions of their own childhood secret spaces, extend their notions of secret spaces in general, and write about secret spaces that may have caught their attention. There are some wonderful essays here, and I suppose that the passages I marked for later comment represent those secret spaces that spoke to me. As I was reading, I found myself time and again saying, "Yes, that was my secret space."

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Noel Riley Fitch writes of "Moonies" (her understanding of honeymoons), "a private magical spot" under the dining room table. "No eyes. No prayers, challenges, or decisions. In charge of my own domain" (p. 32). Jim Harrison describes thickets and said, "After a few minutes of sitting you hear your own tentative heartbeat…. Your normally watchful dog takes a snooze and occasionally you doze off yourself within these few years of earth where you feel no dislocation and are totally at home." (p. 37) Nan Knighton writes about the terrors of childhood and how she used writing to disassociate: "I think when I wrote, I must have entered a safe zone" (p. 44).

The ways in which those in power directly or indirectly oppress children are also addressed in this collection. Goodenough cites William Blake, who labeled the separate domain that children inhabit as "Innocence," but he also "illuminated a dark compressed space of psychic violation where children of the underclass comply with an establishment that alienates and exploits them" (p. 12). As more and more children are left impoverished in this "global" community, Goodenough takes up the task of contributing to a discourse that is capable of reconstructing childhood "imaginatively, institutionally, and internationally."

Another theme that threads its way through this book concerns the limits of adult memory. Goodenough acknowledges the limits of adult recollections in the quote I used to open this review. She writes that the secret spaces of childhood are invisible and thus must be reconstructed by others through memory and "from distant points of exile" (p. 10). She notes as well, in the same paragraph, that "adults can never reclaim the intimate spaces of their first instincts and impressions" (p. 10). This makes sense because of course we can never recall a memory as it was; we are no longer the same individuals whose experiences created the memory.

So then, what do we learn from adults remembering and analyzing the secret spaces of childhood? In my studies with a memory-work collective, analyzing our own early childhood memories, we found that there are multiple and varied stories that we can tell based on the memories that we construct out of the continuous moments of our lives.

However, we tend to tell a few rather than many stories, and the stories that we do tell often reveal and are constrained by the dominant values of the cultures within which we are situated. In effect, those values function to select the moments that we take from the time stream in order to tell a tightly woven narrative of our lives. We are aware of these values in varying degrees, but many of them are so familiar and taken for granted, they are invisible and sometimes oppressive influences in and around our lives. They shape what we see and know, and we participate in perpetuating their influence in the dominant culture (Kaufman et al. 2003).

Thus, adult recollections of secret spaces represent a record of our socialization in our respective cultures and communities. In Goodenough's volume, U.C. Knoepflmacher arrives at a similar conclusion when he writes that it is not possible to make "our way back to original childhood spaces" (p. 297). Those memories are shaped by all the succeeding layers of memories, and the "outer shapes inevitably determine the inner one" (p. 308)."

Some of the authors in this volume miss an opportunity to interrogate their own perceptions. Eugene Provenzo wonders if cyberspace can replace books as a source of secret spaces. He suggests that perhaps it can, but cautions "that we have entered a brave new world whose secret spaces are more like the seemingly infinite black holes found in outer space than the comforting spaces found in books. One cannot help but wonder what we might be losing, and just how concerned we should be for our children" (p. 73).

Similarly, Mark Jonathan Harris extols books over cyberspace and doubts that secret spaces can be found on the net. He observes that cyberspace is "essentially communal, rather than private," and it cannot provide the private psychic space that can be provided by books.

But while these writers raise serious reservations about technology, I wish the authors had pointed to the need to for objective research on the topic. We will have to ask children about the intersection of cyberspace with secret spaces.

On a personal note, I am not sure that the writers' reservations about technology are correct when it comes to video games. Our son Steve tells me that Nintendo can provide an "escape by yourself." In particular, he mentions the escape provided by role-play games. There is a parallel here to the experience of entering a text when we read a good novel. Bruner (1989) tells us that when do this, we enmesh the characters in our own contexts and become, in Barthes' phrase, "writerly". We stretch ourselves in this secret space as we imaginatively stretch the worlds of the characters on the page. Perhaps video games can function in the same way.

The relationship between environmental devastation and its impact on children's secret spaces is taken up in this collection, but again, some of the authors in this volume miss the opportunity to interrogate their perceptions. Goodenough expresses a fear that our children will lose access to secret spaces as "we manicure the grounds of real-estate developments, cut funding for children's art programs, or allow excessive concerns about safety to cheat children of taking all risks" (p.16). Edward O. Wilson muses that the construction of hideaways must be built into our genetic code — "an epigenetic constant in our development." It provides identification with place and brings us close to earth and nature in a way that can sustain our love for both (p. 110). No one can deny that environmental destruction will alter childhood, and that we must not stop in our efforts to prevent further destruction. But children's activities are more than a barometer for what is wrong; they may point us in positive directions as well.

Louise Chawla's essay on a UNESCO report, *Growing up in Canaansland: Children's Recommendations on Improving a Squatter Camp*, shows that when we listen closely to children living under the most dire of circumstances, we find that they are tremendously resourceful and flexible as they reinvent, redefine, and re-vision their special places. We also find that they are integral participants in the improvement of their community.

Chawla notes that densely populated urban areas offer few places "for children only." Thus, children spend their time in multigenerational places, and when adults are accepting, these places "offer compensations of their own" (p. 224). When, in contrast, whole communities are forced into relocations and children's spaces are lost, they "imagine possibilities for the future" in their drawings of their new settlements. And where danger is a constant concern, children's safe places are in their homes with their families. For children who have the luxury of safety, secret spaces can be sought away from home.

Susan Engel, in her essay, also listens closely to children. She studies children's narratives and views them as 'boundaries between the secret and the known.' Her focus is not on construing a developmental structure for narrative; rather her interest lies with the ways children use their stories to construct spheres of reality. She cites Heinz Werner in this regard and says, "His work is perhaps the first and the only to focus on children's experience of themselves and the world, rather than their capacities" (p. 158). Engel calls on us to rethink our expectations that children's secret spaces will parallel the secret spaces that adults had as children. Robert Coles writes about the "secret sources of intuition (p. 315)" that children have and the ways in which they can penetrate adult veneers and teach us much about ourselves and children's "capabilities and possibilities as alert, revelatory observers" (p. 315).

James Christian Steward writes about Sally Mann's photographs of her children, which pierce through the popular cultural veneer of childhood innocence. Mann's black and white photos of children first exhibited in New York in 1992, elicited accusations of child abuse and improper sexuality. Steward, however, astutely observes that the photos suggest a "redefinition of the worlds of childhood and adulthood, and the artificial lines drawn between them"…and perhaps the "crisis of the American family is among other things a crisis of representation" (p. 213)." Steward draws the reader's attention to a quote by Anne Frank (age 12) that Mann used to end her book of photographs, "Who would ever think that so much can go on in the soul of a young girl?" Both Mann and Steward are inviting their audience to ask this question of all children before we impose our experiences on them.

I liked this collection. I wanted a little more theory to thread the essays, memoirs, art, and poetry together, but there was something to be found in the spaces left empty between the various pieces of writing. These writers were, in a sense, dialoguing with each other, and depending on the perspective you brought with you when you entered this text, you heard different pieces of the conversation. I also wanted more essays like those by Chawla, Engels, and Coles. As a scholar of human development, I wanted to be closer to children's perceptions of their secret spaces. I wanted to see through their eyes, not the eyes of an adult. I suppose it may be my turn now to supply some of this work, or perhaps someone else will be inspired by this eclectic, pleasing, disturbing, and stimulating collection. In the end, I accepted Goodenough's invitation to conjure, question, and draw conclusions about the situations and spaces we should preserve or extend for children because of their influence on the "human imagination and the human spirit" (p. 19).

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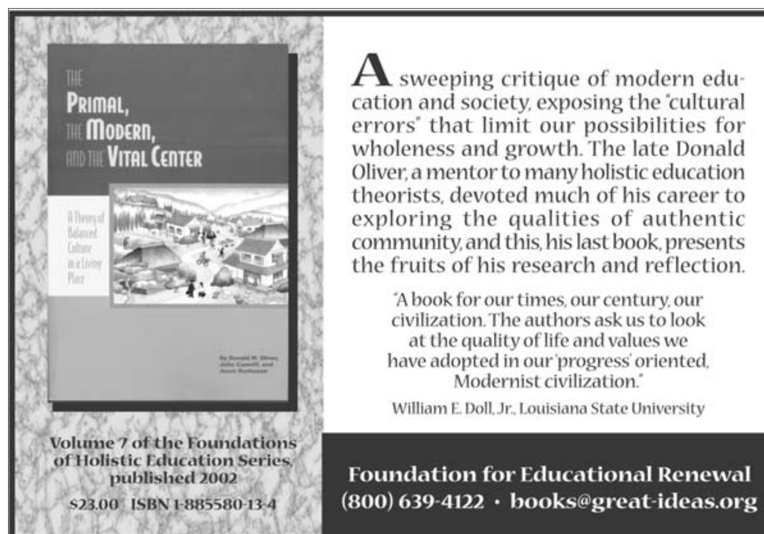

Film Review

Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin

Reviewed by Alexandra Miletta

In these times, when the need for activism has never been more urgent, educators must look for exemplary role models to inspire the young. Bayard Rustin (1912-1987), who is often missing from the pages of schoolbooks, dedicated his life to the civil rights movement and is best known for his contribution to organizing the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. *Brother Outsider*, produced and directed in 2003 by Nancy Kates and Bennett Singer, is a moving documentary of his many accomplishments. The film lends itself to the sort of provocative discussions school communities should hunger for in these troubled times.

Using primary-source archival materials, first-hand accounts, and interviews with those who knew him well, the filmmakers have created an award-winning portrait of Rustin that is thematic as well as chronological. "Bayard liked to cause trouble," comments an interviewee early on in the film, and we learn that Rustin called for "angelic troublemakers" willing to use their bodies "to tuck them in places so the wheels don't turn." In stirring voiceovers taken from Rustin's writings and recorded interviews, actor Erik Todd Dellums helps bring Rustin to life in authentic ways, as when he confesses that he never explicitly told his Quaker grandmother he was gay, although he said he liked to "hang out with guys" at high school parties. In another moment, the man inspired by Gandhi to advocate for nonviolence, and to persuade Martin Luther King, Jr. to get rid of his guns during the Montgomery bus boycott, says calmly, "There is no need to beat me. I am not resisting you." Arrested and jailed for violating Jim Crow laws, and for refusing to serve in the army during WWII, it was probably Rustin's arrest in 1953 in Pasadena for a homosexual encounter that made him most vulnerable to public attack. Although he was openly gay, and did not hide his Young Communist League affiliation during his college years, Rustin was forced to resign in 1960 from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference by Representative Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., just as Rustin was organizing the March on Washington. FBI field reports and wiretap transcripts are interspersed throughout the film to remind viewers that the government kept a watchful eye on this particular troublemaker, even though he was often working in the shadows.

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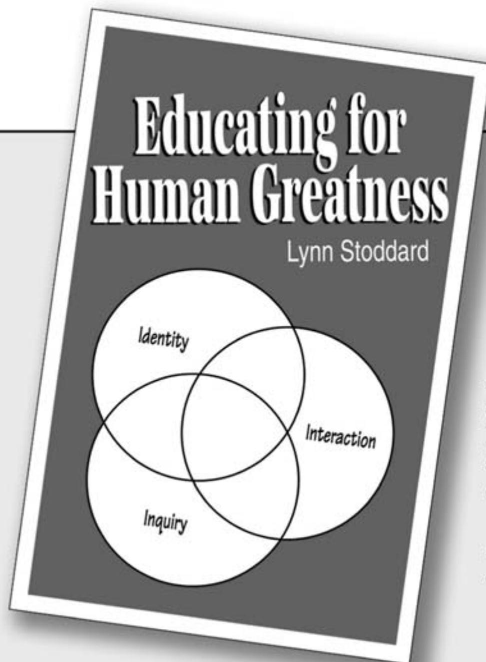
In the electrifying footage leading up to the March on Washington, you begin to feel you are witness to the greatest moment in America's fight for social justice. It's hard to imagine, especially in today's wired world, that the event was "organized on 3 by 5 cards out of Bayard's back pocket," as one interviewee reminds us. Because his vivid personality has begun to unfold in the layers of stories, photographs, song excerpts, and voices, your admiration for him runs deep when he appears behind Mahalia Jackson at the podium, singing along, and again walking behind a young Bob Dylan and Joan Baez at the microphone. But the filmmakers don't want to sugarcoat his history, and they cannot dispense with his controversial support of President Johnson's Vietnam policy, and his unwillingness to join the war protests of the time. In one debate, Rustin complains that both parties stink, but the nature of politics is to choose the one that stinks the least, a view that still endures.

Later in his life Rustin traveled to refugee camps in Thailand and Cambodia, and in a particularly moving sequence we see him clapping and singing "Oh Freedom" with smiling children. Actress Liv Ullmann recounts how when blood donations were needed in one camp, Rustin set an example for her

own sense of charity when he rolled up his sleeves despite the less than sanitary conditions. He taught her an essential lesson that "it's normal to care about somebody at your side." In today's world, when it is unacceptable to be openly racist, yet homophobia and the evils of discrimination and prejudice persist, this film offers important reminders that there are growing gaps in wealth, power, and between genders and races. "We are all one, and if we don't know it, we will learn it the hard way," Rustin is quoted as saying in the end of the film. Educators can play a crucial role in conveying that message to children in their earliest and formative years.

For treaders wanting to know more about Rustin and the film, and for an excellent discussion guide, visit <www.rustin.org>. High schools and libraries can purchase the film for $49.95 at <http://newsreel.org/nav/title.asp?tc=CN0148>. As part of the Human Rights Watch High School Program, the documentary is available to be shown in New York City high schools, accompanied by a visit from the filmmaker. Their website <www.hrw.org/iff/2006/classroom> also lists other suggested films for involving youth in activism and debate.



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Educating for Human Greatness

In this wise and perceptive book, veteran public school teacher/administrator Lynn Stoddard surveys the current state of public education in America and concludes that things have gone terribly wrong. His solution is to have parents and educators start by realizing that standardization in education is neither possible or effective. Only then can they focus on creating schools that truly educate for human greatness.

To create such schools Stoddard proposes that parents, teachers, administrators and school board members keep six cardinal principles constantly in mind:

- Value Positive Human Diversity and Cherish Every Student's Uniqueness
- Draw Out and Develop Each Child's Latent Talents
- Respect the Autonomy of the Individual by Restoring Freedom and Responsibility
- Invite Inquiry, Curiosity, and Hunger for Knowledge in the Classroom
- Support Professionalism as Teachers Live by these Principles
- Parents and Teachers Unite to Help Children Grow in Human Greatness

Educating for Human Greatness deserves an honored place on the reading list of every parent who really cares about the future of their children, every teacher and administrator who puts students first in their professional lives, and every school board member who wants schools to be places where student development is a reality, not just a slogan.