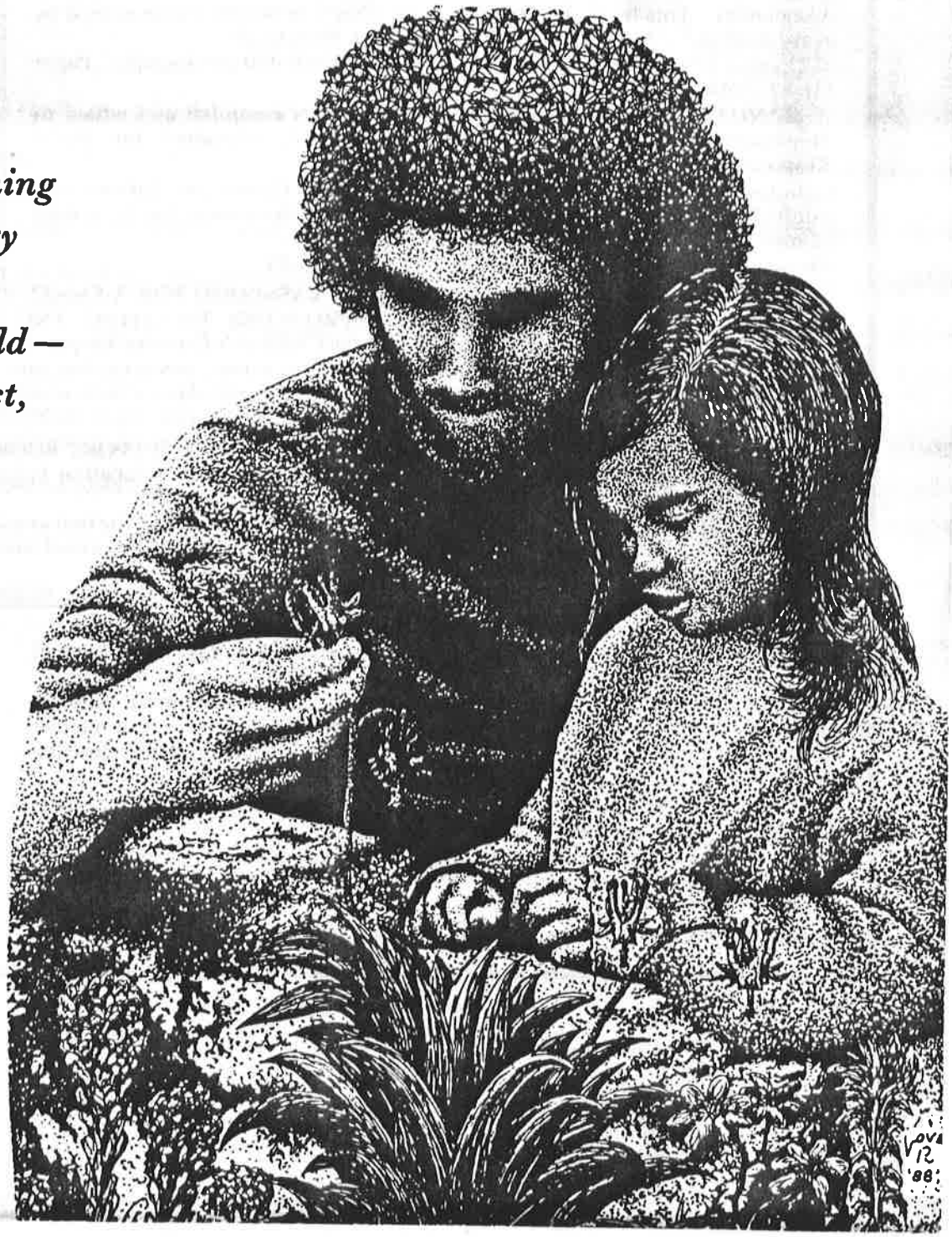
HOLISTIC EDUCATION REVIEW

VOL. 1 NO. 3 FALL 1988 $3.50

"Within you is the miracle of life, and with its blossoming comes the opportunity to pass on the real treasures of this world— love, sincerity, respect, and humility."



Educational Resources from New Society Publishers

AN OUTBREAK OF PEACE by Sarah Pirtle.
Nominated for "Best Books for Young Adults List," American Library Association. "Really demonstrates how it is possible to work for peace with one's own family, friends, and acquaintances."—*The Los Angeles Times.*
384 pages. Illustrated. Paper $9.95 Cloth $29.95

SEEDS OF PEACE compiled and edited by Jeanne Larson and Madge Micheels-Cyrus.
Indexed and well-organized collection of more than 1700 quotations on war, peace, and the quest for justice. "Educates and inspires. It is an important addition to any library collection."—*Kliatt Young Adult Paperback Book Guide.*
276 pages. Illustrated. Paper $12.95 Cloth $34.95

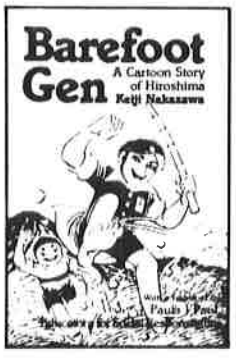
THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE: ACTIVE NONVIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES edited by Robert Cooney and Helen Michalowski.
Pictorial encyclopedia of the struggles for peace and justice through nonviolent action. Nominated for "Best Books for Young Adults List," American Library Association. "This book should be in every library in America and studied by every student."—*Kliatt Young Adult Paperback Book Guide.*
272 pages. Large format. Illustrated with more than 400 photographs. Paper $16.95 Cloth $39.95

A MANUAL ON NONVIOLENCE AND CHILDREN compiled and edited by Stephanie Judson; foreword by Paula J. Paul, Educators for Social Responsibility.
Includes "For the Fun of It! Selected Cooperative Games for Children and Adults." A practical guide for teachers and parents. Recommended by *School Library Journal* and *The Horn Book.*
160 pages. Large format. Illustrated. $10.95 Cloth $24.95

THE FRIENDLY CLASSROOM FOR A SMALL PLANET: A HANDBOOK ON CREATIVE APPROACHES TO LIVING AND PROBLEM SOLVING FOR CHILDREN by the Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program.
Skills, tools, exercises, games, resource lists, and more! A proven educational response to growing concerns about violence and interpersonal hostilities.
120 pages. Large format. Illustrated. Paper $9.95 Cloth $29.95

WATERMELONS NOT WAR! A SUPPORT BOOK FOR PARENTING IN THE NUCLEAR AGE by the Nuclear Education Project; afterword by Dr. Helen Caldicott.
"A wise and compassionate work, it's the best available resource for parents and others trying to raise children well-informed enough to face the fears we all share."—*New Age Journal.*
176 pages. Large format. Illustrated. Paper $9.95 Cloth $24.95

BAREFOOT GEN: A CARTOON STORY OF HIROSHIMA by Keiji Nakazawa.
The powerful, tragic story of the bombing or Hiroshima, seen through the eyes of the artist as a young boy. Focuses on the ethical dilemmas faced by a peace-loving family in a militarized culture. "*Barefoot Gen* merits careful reading, especially in schools..... It is is a graphic 'lest we forget' depiction of nuclear devastation and a troubling index of certain kinds of urban ruin even before the bombs fall."—*The Los Angeles Times.*
Volume 1—300 pages. Paper $9.95 Cloth $29.95
Volume 2—290 pages. Paper $8.95 Cloth $29.95



Order from **New Society Publishers,** *Box H, 4527 Springfield Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19143. For shipping and handling, please add $1.50 for first book, 50¢ for each additional. Write for complete catalogue.*

For MasterCard/Visa orders, call toll free: 1-800-333-9093.

books promoting fundamental social change through nonviolent action

HOLISTIC EDUCATION REVIEW

FALL 1988 VOL. I NO. 3

Holistic Education Review aims to stimulate discussion and application of all person-centered educational ideas and methods. Articles explore how education can encourage the fullest possible development of human potentials and planetary consciousness. We believe that human fulfillment, global cooperation and ecological responsibility should be the primary goals of education, and we will inquire into the historical, social, and philosophical issues that have prevented them from so becoming.

Holistic Education Review, P.O. Box 1476, Greenfield, MA 01302
Publisher and Executive Editor: Ron Miller, Ph.D.
Managing Editor: Mary Ellen Sweeney, Ph.D.
Production: Sharp Offset Printing Inc., Rutland, VT
Circulation: ARS Strategic Mail Services, Amherst, MA

Cover illustration and quotation by Richard J. Oddo. Quotation is from his new book of essays and drawings, *Within a Miraculous Realm*, available for $9.95 from Spiritual Warrior Press, P.O. Box 7012, Halcyon, CA 93420

Member,
Educational Press Association
of America

EDPRESS

ISSN 0898-0926

HOLISTIC EDUCATION REVIEW welcomes contributions from readers.

Holistic Education Review is the premier forum for innovative, experimental, leading edge ideas in education. We explore bold new ideas that challenge traditional assumptions and methods of mainstream education. We seek to explain, in greater depth, person-centered approaches in education such as Montessori, Waldorf, humanistic, alternative, homeschooling and many others—and to promote a dialogue among them on a variety of issues.

The **Review** depends on you, our readers, to make this dialogue come alive. Please respond to our articles and editorials! What is your point of view on the issues addressed in the **Review**? What issues concern you that are not adequately addressed? What are the problems facing education and society today, and what solutions do you propose?

Upcoming issues will focus on peace and global education (Winter, 1988—deadline Sept. 30), The New Professionalism—Teacher Empowerment (Spring, 1989—deadline December 30), as well as spirituality, democracy, and the arts in education. We encourage you to submit articles on any of these topics.

Guidelines:

Holistic Education Review is concerned with the fullest possible development of human potentials—intellectual, emotional, social, physical, artistic, and spiritual. Articles should examine how education, and society in general, can encourage this development. Our main interest is in elementary and high school education, although material on college or professional instruction, or adult education, may be considered if it is exceptionally compelling.

We want articles that are supported by evidence (pertinent examples or research) and clear thinking, but not strictly scholarly work. Scholarly authors should summarize, translate, or interpret academic literature for the benefit of practicing educators and others who may not have an opportunity to consult the literature directly. Bibliographies are helpful. Please indicate references with numbered footnotes and a bibliographic list at the conclusion of the article; see the articles in this issue for examples.

We encourage authors to write with passion rather than dry, academic objectivity. First person is entirely acceptable, and radical viewpoints are welcome, as long as they are supported by evidence and good writing.

Articles should be typed, double-spaced; please send two copies. The Review does not pay for contributions, but offers professional exposure and a reprint service.

Please contact us for more details.

Photos

We are always looking for good quality photos showing young people exploring and learning. Black and white glossies are preferred. We will return all photos and negatives. Please obtain and send us the written permission of subjects or their parents. We encourage photographers to submit photos of children from minority groups.

Resource listings

We want to provide comprehensive guides to conferences, teacher training programs, publications, and educational networks and organizations. We encourage you to send in news in any of these areas.

Letters to the Review

We want your reports from the frontlines. What is happening in your classrooms, school, community? Tell us how **Holistic Education Review** can address your problems, concerns, and visions.

Advertising

Display and classified ads are available. Please contact us for rates and details.

Holistic Education Review is published in March, June, September, and December.
Regular subscription rate: $12.50 per year, $22 for two years.

REPRINTS are available

Reprints of individual articles may be ordered from Holistic Education Review. The cost depends on the number of pages per article and the number of copies ordered, according to the table below.

Number of reprints ordered	Number of pages in article				
	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-16	17-20
50	$ 70	$ 93	$106	$117	$130
100	79	100	116	133	150
250	87	110	132	148	171
500	104	133	158	176	202
1000	144	161	186	214	233
Addl. 50s	3	5	6	7	8

HOLISTIC EDUCATION REVIEW P.O. BOX 1476 GREENFIELD, MA 01302

C4R: A New System of Schooling

by Donald N. Lombardi and Raymond J. Corsini

Based on the insights of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology, the Corsini 4-R method emphasizes personal responsibility, respect, resourcefulness, and responsiveness. The method is currently in use in four nations and is proving to be effective.

Many children come out of traditional academic schools after twelve years of mandatory education with inadequate knowledge of science or social science, with little ability to communicate or to compute, and with negative attitudes towards themselves, their families and society, and worst of all with a dislike for the whole formal learning process. There seems to be no consensus on the part of educational experts relative to the causes or the cure of the problem of ineffective education except to spend more money doing more of the same thing.

However, an innovative alternative system, the Corsini Four R-system (C4R), growing out of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology and based primarily on the political concepts of equality and individual liberty, appears to have demonstrated that without any extra money it achieves superiority over the traditional system in several important ways.[1]

History and current status

Raymond Corsini, a psychologist, began developing his system, first called *Individual Education* (IE) and now called the *Corsini Four R-system* (C4R), in 1968 as the result of a challenge by the principal of a small school to construct a better system of schooling. Its development, which took three years, was done by inductive reasoning, based primarily on his experiences as a student, teacher, professor, counselor, writer and psychologist. C4R was first installed into a Catholic elementary school in 1972 and was finally fully accepted by the school board because of favorable results relative to *academic learning* (increased over expectation), *attitudes* of parents, faculty and children (highly favorable) and *opinions* of school visitors (highly favorable).

As of the time of this writing there are two C4R schools in Hawaii, five on the USA mainland and one each in Canada, Holland and Israel. The ten schools vary relative to ages of children, school sizes, socio-economic levels, races, urban/rural environments, etc., but all report uniform positive results in *learning, attitudes, discipline* and *adjustment*. School principals describe them as happy places where a great deal of cognitive and affective learning takes place with satisfaction on the part of principals, faculty and parents.

What is C4R?

C4R is a learning environment based on mutual respect in which children are treated as equals with adults (parents and faculty), with rights and obligations established by a "constitution" which governs the school's functioning based

Donald N. Lombardi is a Professor of Psychology at Seton Hall University. He is also a Licensed Practicing Psychologist in New Jersey. He has lectured and published in this country and abroad, including the book* Search for Significance *in 1975.

Raymond J. Corsini is the developer of the Corsini 4-R School System currently in use in the U.S., Canada, Holland and Israel. Dr. Corsini is the author or editor of twenty-five books in psychology and education, and is on the Affiliate Graduate Faculty of the Department of Psychology of the University of Hawaii.

—Rites of Passage, Meditation, and Modern Culture

This journal explores ideas on the leading edges of education. Some of these ideas, like the Corsini Four-R method (p. 4) or whole language reading instruction (p. 8), are excitingly innovative, yet are still somewhat familiar because they are grounded in modern, scholarly thought. Other approaches, however, are derived from wholly different world views—from Oriental or "primitive" cultures which modern Western people tend to ignore or disparage. In this issue, we are exploring several such approaches, because we believe they have much to teach us. Many of the concepts and language used by these approaches—especially in "A Neo-Humanist Model of Education" (page 12) and "Meditation: Opening the Door to True Education" (page 23)—may seem exceptionally exotic and even hard to swallow, but we believe they are worth serious consideration, at least to stimulate a more critical awareness of our own cultural prejudices.

The scientific-technological world view of the industrial West is a limited understanding of human existence. It is true that the industrial age has yielded various material benefits, such as a comfortable standard of living for many people, medical "miracles," and a wide range of technologies which make our work more productive and our leisure more interesting. Fine. But in its determination to control Nature through calculation and technology, the modern age has almost completely forgotten the human soul. There is a deeper part of ourselves which cannot be nourished by material comfort or technological marvels—and this inner spirit has become a stranger to many of us.

People of the industrial age generally believe that the rituals of "primitive" cultures are merely superstitious. Scientifically minded people consider all forms of mysticism to be an escapist "quest for certainty" (to use John Dewey's phrase). But what we, with our technological bias, call superstitious or unscientific, is often an unconscious or archetypal recognition that the human spirit struggles for growth, transformation, and meaning. Meditation is a personal discipline for freeing up this spiritual unfolding; rites of passage are a cultural means of supporting the individual in this effort. To take meditation and rites of passage seriously is to honor the more subtle, and more sacred, parts of ourselves. To consider them mere superstition or an escape from the real world is to diminish the sacred in human life. And that is the lamentable error of the industrial world view—we have almost totally lost the sense of the sacred in human life.

By "sacred" I do not necessarily mean religion. This is not an endorsement of any one church, cult, or dogma. The sense of the sacred is simply our willingness to look within ourselves, beyond our immediate needs and social roles, in a sincere effort to experience our ultimate relationship to the cosmos. People will explain that relationship differently—and that is why the world has so many religions—but before we can truly explain it we must experience it, and it is the experience itself which is missing in modern culture. We are so overwhelmed by scientific findings, expert advice, public opinion polls, ideologies, advertising, and authoritarian education, that we do not know how to look within or beyond. We are trained to compete rigorously for our personal economic and social advantage, and to support our nations to do the same—but we are neither taught nor encouraged to step back and contemplate who we really are.

Here is an example: this past summer my wife and I went to our town's celebration of Independence Day—a huge bonfire in a large grassy field. The ingredients were there for a wonderful ritual: a magnificent fire sending sparks high into the night sky, the gathering of the entire community, including infants and elders, a warm summer evening with the wind rustling through the trees. Yet the event was only a pale imitation of a meaningful ritual. Reflecting the state of modern culture, we were merely an assortment of individuals with little sense of common purpose or connection to something larger than ourselves. Some people bought hot dogs and soda at a booth; some kids threw firecrackers; and some parents yelled at their kids. Friends and neighbors chatted a bit as we watched the fire—but it stirred nothing deep in our souls. There was no ritual, no real communal celebration of the meaning of Independence Day or our neighborly community or the summer night. People, by and large, just came to be entertained.

There is a hunger in the human spirit, a yearning for meaning and connection, which is increasingly frustrated by the limited world view of the industrial age. Already, we see the stirrings of a post-industrial, post-technological age in the making. This does not mean that we must give up all the achievements of the past two centuries—but it is certain that we must find a healthier balance of material and spiritual satisfactions. Meditation and rites of passage are time-honored methods for restoring this balance. They are appropriate models for education; in a true post-industrial age, perhaps they will be the essence of education.

RON MILLER

essentially on the American ideal of democracy. The C4R system advances four goals for student development: *responsibility* (to be built by involving children in decisions about their own education, under close, realistic guidance), *respect* (to be nurtured by treating students with respect and by requiring respect), *resourcefulness* (encouraged by opportunities to prepare for three main life tasks: occupation and leisure, family life, and membership in society), and *responsiveness* (encouraged by striving for a school environment in which people demonstrate trust in others and caring for others).

A C4R school has three curriculums each taking about two hours daily of faculty time: *Academic* (the same curriculum as any other school), *Creative* (subjects not on the academic curriculum), and *Socialization* (activities related to helping children learn how to adjust to society). Children appear to learn as much of the academic basics in about one-half the teaching and studying time usually found in a traditional school.[2] An explanation for this unusual efficiency is the political/economical model of the school and its resulting effects on motivation to learn and reduction of negative attitudes displayed by children towards schooling.[3]

Some elements of the system in action

Here are some of the more unusual aspects of C4R: (1) Children have considerable options on where to be and what to do during the school day; (2) children have five different modes for learning academic subjects: (a) class attendance (b) studying in the library (c) studying with peers (d) working with teacher/tutors (e) in their home; (3) every child has a self-selected faculty member as his/her teacher/advisor; (4) there are no grades; (5) the kind and degree of learning is based on objective tests given weekly in terms of specific units of instruction; (6) faculty are not to communicate with parents unless the child is present; (7) children 'nominate' faculty members as advisors but once a faculty member accepts a child as a counselee, only the child can make changes to another teacher/advisor; (8) there are no report cards, only weekly progress reports to *students* who are advised to show them to their parents; (9) children set their own pace of learning and can be simultaneously studying subjects at different levels; (10) no rewards, honors, or special attention given to children for academic performance.

Discipline. Among the noted advantages of C4R has been a sense of purposeful order, general politeness, careful accordance to the rules of the school and general lack of tension.[4] The system is intended to make children disciples of a responsible and democratic point of view. The democratic relaxed ambience of the school comes from two sources: a philosophy of freedom and responsibility and a simple disciplinary system based on three rules and logical predictable pre-accepted consequences for breaking rules by all (parents and children).

The C4R school rules are the following: (1) Do nothing that could be dangerous or damaging; (2) Always be in a supervised place or en route from one supervised place to another; (3) If a teacher signals you to leave a classroom, do so immediately and in silence.

These rules are so simple that three-year old children can understand them. No child is accepted unless parents and children accept the logic and the consequences that come from breaking the rules. And no child or no parent ever has had trouble with understanding or accepting them. Rules are upheld inflexibly and no excuse is ever accepted for any violation.

Repeated violations lead to pre-established consequences including (a) two conferences (after the third and sixth violations) intended to find the cause of misbehavior and to correct it, (b) Dreikurs-type suspensions* for the ninth, tenth, and eleventh violations and (c) after a twelfth violation, possible expulsion from the school on the grounds that a repeated offender is not good for the school and the school is not good for that child.

Classroom dynamics. Every teacher has power to exclude or expel any child from a classroom. This must be done only by using the so-called GO signal, a non-verbal command. To balance this teacher power, any child has the right either to avoid entering any classroom and to leave any classroom. In short, entrance or egress in any classroom is completely up to either the teacher or the child.

This fundamental right of a teacher to determine who he/she will allow into the room and allow to stay in his/her room and the right of children to decide in which classroom to go and from which classrooms to leave is basic to the freedom of choice of C4R schools. Any other process, in Corsini's judgment, makes a school the equivalent of a prison.

While this is a land "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all people are created equal," our present school system is identical in its dynamics and structure to a concentration camp or a correctional institution.

Political/philosophical aspects of individual education

The various elements of C4R come from a consistent political/philosophical view. While this is a land "conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all people are created equal" our present school system is identical in its dynamics and structure to a concentration camp or a correctional institution. (Dr. Lombardi worked for twenty years in a youth house setting and Dr. Corsini for fifteen years in correctional systems).

The *Declaration of Independence* stressed Equality and Liberty, elements written into the Constitution and reaffirmed many times since in laws and proclamations. And yet, up to the *Emancipation Proclamation*, black people were in slavery in the land of the free

*A day's suspension with special stipulations.[5]

for seventy years. And for twice as long, up to 1920, women were not permitted to vote in the home of the free. Even Germany and Russia gave women the franchise before the United States.

It is Dr. Corsini's strong belief and claim that in the United States children are being treated by the schools as unequal (and as inferior) and they are not given due liberty. It is the thesis of this paper that as a result of the inequitable treatment that exists in current traditional schools, children resist learning in rebellion against adults. The fact that adults are doing what they are doing for "good reasons" makes no difference. King George the Third and his advisors had "good reasons" for not giving the colonists due representation. Hitler and Stalin had "good reasons" for being dictators. That parents and teachers dominate children relative to their schooling is a fact. They do it for the "good" of children. But children have no understanding of this: they rebel against domination by not learning, by their violence and by sabotage.[6]

The blacks had abolitionists and women had suffragettes but no one speaks against unjust treatment of children by the schools. The present situation in schools is logically identical with that for four and one-half million slaves in 1860 or for all women in the United States in 1910. Just as "everyone" accepted the right for white people to have black people as slaves and just as "everyone" accepted the correctness of not permitting women to vote, so too, today, "everyone" accepts the propriety of children being in prison-type schools.

In traditional schools children must be where they are told to be and they are to do what they are told to do, and they must obey all orders. The analogy to slavery is evident. We prepare children for democracy by having them in an autocracy.

Economic theory. C4R schools operate on the free market economy principle. A teacher is viewed as a provider of services. To the extent that students use his/her services, he /she is a valuable faculty member on the theory that the customer is always right. Students can boycott a faculty member as a teacher/advisor, a creative teacher and an academic teacher. The free economy concept is an essential aspect of C4R.

In a slave society, control is done by rewards and punishment as arbitrarily decided by the dictator. In a free society based on laws, natural and logical consequences are used. In a C4R school there are no rewards and no punishments, only consequences.

Essentially, natural consequences means that the teacher does nothing if he/she sees a child making a mistake or sees the child operating in a wrongful manner, except to give the child information and advice, unless, of course, the mistake or action could cause serious harm. The theory of natural consequences is that the child will learn from the natural reactions of reality.[7]

An example of a *natural consequence* in a C4R school is this: Children have a progress chart (see chart below) on which results of objective tests are keyed to the academic curriculum. A blank box means that the child did not take a test and so there is no evidence that the child has learned that particular unit. A dot means the child took but failed the test. Two dots would mean that the child failed the test twice, etc. A slash line means that the child has passed the test and a crossed line means that the teacher/advisor counseled the child subsequently to passing the test.

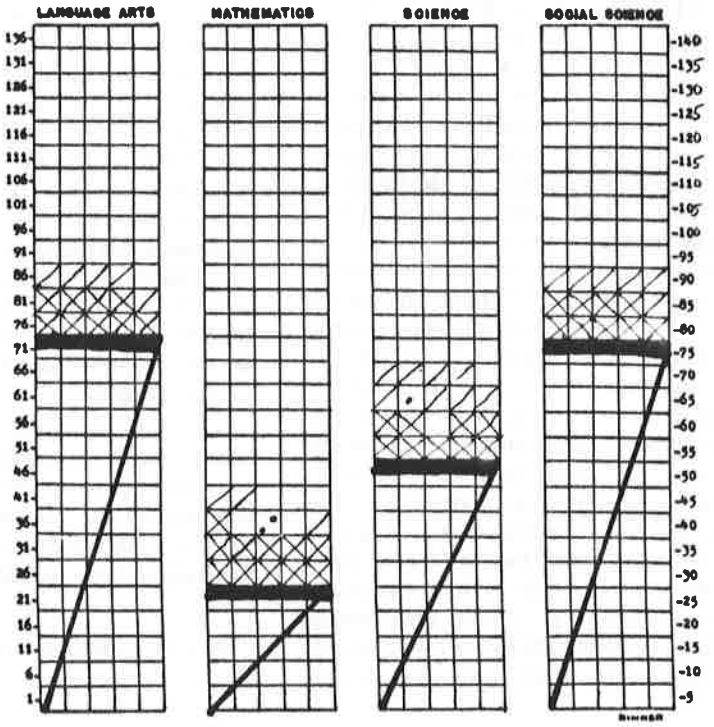
The progress chart gives evidence of the natural consequence of a child's effort relative to learning the curriculum. It is a record of the child's interaction with the academic program of the school. It is a reflection of reality. A child's progress chart is updated weekly.

Logical consequences are what happens to people as a result of others' reaction to their behavior. Thus, if you are an honest and friendly person, people will react to you similarly. If you do not pay your bills, people will shun you. If you violate the speed laws, the police will arrest you.

The C4R disciplinary process is an exact analog of our legal system: all students know the school's three rules and consequences for breaking the rules. There is due process, and students have right to counsel since in C4R the child's teacher/advisor becomes his/her lawyer in front of the principal for disciplinary infractions. Every child has a clear understanding of the exact consequences of a series of violations. For example: after a sixth violation there will be a conference with the principal, the child's teacher/advisor and the child's parents.

SCHOOL PROGRESS CHART

STUDENT A. DALE TEACHER/ADVISOR OZAKI



A reconceptualization of schooling

C4R is a truly American system in that it emphasizes essential human equality and individual freedom, and therefore practically is more effective and more efficient as a method for better preparing children for life. The traditional system of schooling which is rooted in the same cultural lag as was slavery and lack of suffrage, generates tension, conflict, rebellion and lack of bonding between adults and children. The tragedy is that adults mean well but nevertheless their behavior harms children.

Traditional education sees children as advanced animals who have to be trained and therefore are best dealt with with a firm hand by superior beings who know best what children should learn and how and when and where, with children being made to do what adults 'know' is best for them, directed by rewards with a strict curriculum without regard to individual differences or individual desires. C4R sees children as immature adults who should be dealt with due regard for their humanity, treated with respect and given freedom of choices.

In the land of the free and the home of the brave, children, out of love and ignorance, due to the cultural lag as in the case of the blacks and women, are still being treated as inferior objects controlled by superior persons (adults) since children do not know what is good for them. And that is exactly what is mostly wrong with the present educational system.

Notes

1. R. B. Armstrong, "Individual Education: Principals' Evaluation" *Individual Psychology* 41 (1985), pp. 8-21.

2. E. C. Froemel, "The Evaluation of Individual Education in Joliet, Illinois" (mimeograph), University of Chicago: Applied Research Division, Human Resources Center, 1980; L. Krebs, "Summary of Research on an Individual Education School" *Journal of Individual Psychology* 38 (1982), pp. 245-252.

3. E. R. Whittington, "Individual Education at an Alternative School" *Journal of Individual Psychology* 33 (1977), 2a, pp. 356-370.

4. M. Muirhead and J. Fong, "An Analysis of Visitors' Responses" *Journal of Individual Psychology* 33 (1977), 2a, pp. 366-370.

5. A. B. Pratt, "Summary of Research on Individual Education to 1984" *Journal of Individual Psychology* 41 (1985), pp. 39-54; A. B. Pratt and M. Mastroianni, "Summary of Research on Individual Education" *Journal of Individual Psychology* 37 (1981), pp. 232-246; Pratt and Mastroianni, "How Corsini Four-R Schools Work" (pamphlet). Columbus, Ohio: 144 Learning Center, 1984.

6. J. W. Brehm, *A Theory of Psychological Reactance* (New York: Academic Press, 1966).

7. R. Dreikurs, *Psychology in the Classroom* (second edition). (New York: Harper and Row, 1968).

Reading as a Whole:

Why Basal Reading Series are Not the Answer

by Constance Weaver

A holistic approach to reading instruction recognizes that children learn to read through meaning rather than mechanically acquired skills. The whole-language approach challenges the traditional, technological model of reading instruction.

In the first issue of *Holistic Education Review*, Edward Clark contrasts the pervasive mechanistic, *technological* approach to education with a holistic, *ecological* approach.[1] Perhaps nowhere in education is the pervasiveness of the outmoded technological model so apparent as in the methods and materials typically used in teaching children to read. The fact that the majority of our young people do become at least minimally literate is a tribute not to the reading instruction to which they are subjected, but to the complexity of the human mind and our innate drive to make sense of our world.

This concern about a technological approach to reading is shared by many in the field of English Education and reading, and in particular by the members of the Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English, of which I am currently the Director. What we shall try to do in this and subsequent articles is offer a taste of the kinds of research that support a holistic approach to the teaching of reading, discuss some of the concerns about basal reading series and the technological paradigm that they both reflect and promote, and characterize what has come to be known as a "whole language" approach to the development of literacy, showing how it stimulates far greater growth in understanding and using language than is often the result with a technological approach. The present article will focus particularly on the first two of these aims, indicating how our understanding of the reading process and the acquisition of literacy demonstrates the inappropriateness of a technological approach to teaching children to read.

At the request of the aforementioned Commission on Reading, Kenneth Goodman, Patrick Shannon, Yvonne Freeman, and Sharon Murphy have prepared a *Report Card on Basal Readers* that documents our concerns about basal reading series and the model of education that they represent.[2] Unfortunately, reading instruction is dominated by a basal reading series in approximately ninety percent of American schools today.[3] A basal reading series is not merely a set of books for children to read from; rather, it is a comprehensive *program* consisting of pupil books with reading selections, teachers' manuals that tell the teacher exactly how to teach the lesson, workbooks and dittos, tests and more tests, plus various other paraphernalia. The fact that a 55-page pupil book for first grade can be accompanied by a teacher's manual of 350 pages, as well as all

Connie Weaver is a Professor of English at Western Michigan University, where she teaches courses in the reading and writing processes and in integrating the language arts in elementary school. A holistic approach to the development of literacy is discussed in her recent book,* Reading Process and Practice: From Socio-psycholinguistics to Whole Language *(Heinemann, 1988). She is currently Director of the Commission on Reading of the National Council of Teachers of English, which sponsored the* Report Card on Basal Readers *discussed in this article.

the other materials, should itself cause us to ask, "What's going on here?"

The *Report Card on Basal Readers* documents in detail how basal reading materials and instruction came over half a century ago to be based upon concepts from classical science, behavioral psychology, business and industry, and how these outmoded concepts are still reflected in most basal reading series today. Such concepts lead to the aforementioned "technological" view of teaching and learning, which is characterized by such assumptions as the following:

1. The learner is passive.
2. Children will learn only what they are directly taught.
3. Knowledge is constructed "bottom up" from elemental building blocks, from the smallest parts to increasingly large wholes.
4. Errors reflect a learner's failure to learn and/or apply what has been taught.
5. What's important is the measurable *product* of instruction, not the process of learning.[4]

To quote from the *Report Card on Basal Readers*, "In this view learning is the result of teaching, piece by piece, item by item. The whole, reading, is the sum of the parts, words and skills. Learners are passive and controlled." In such a view, teachers are not expected to be responsible professionals who make informed decisions; they're "scripted technicians," most of whom do in fact follow the directions, the scripts, in the teachers' manuals. And of course, children are reduced even more, to manipulated parts in the educational machine.

This view might not be detrimental to learning to read if it in fact reflected how people read, or even how children learn to read. But it reflects neither.

Let us consider, first, some examples[5] that should help to demonstrate that proficient readers do not read primarily by going from part to whole: that they do not build meaning by decoding words letter-by-letter, or by determining the meanings of sentences word-by-word, or even by determining the meanings of paragraphs and larger wholes sentence by sentence. Try, first, to read the following paragraph of a version of "Little Red Riding Hood," told from the wolf's point of view:

> -nc- -p-n - t-m- th-r- w-as - h-nds-m-y--ng w-lf n-m-d L-b-. L-b- l-v-d w-th h-s m-th-r -nd f-th-r -t th- -dg- -f - d--p, d-rk w--ds. -v-r- d--, L-b- w-nt t- h-nt -t th- -dg- -f th- w--ds, n--r th- l-ttl- v-ll-g- -f C-l--s.

Surely it is clear from even this brief example that when we can use semantic and syntactic cues, we do not decode words letter by letter as we read. It should be equally clear that we do not need nearly all the graphic clues normally available to us.

> The blonke was maily, like all the others. Unlike the other blonkes, however, it had spiss crinet completely covering its fairney cloots and concealing, just below one of them, a small wam.
>
> This particular blonke was quite drumly—lennow, in fact, and almost samded. When yerden, it did not quetch like the other blonkes, or even blore. The other blored very readily.
>
> It was probably his bellytimber that had made the one blonke so drumly. The bellytimber was quite kexy, had a strong shawk, and was apparently venenated. There was only one thing to do with the venenated bellytimber: givel it in the flosh. This would be much better than to sparple it in the wong, since the blonkes that were not drumly could icchen in the wond, but not in the flosh.

Obviously we can tell that this blonke is in certain ways not like the others, that it is probably the blonke's "bellytimber" that had made him so drumly, unlike the others, and perhaps that it is advisable to keep the other blonkes away from the venenated bellytimber. We are not simply building meaning word-by-word or sentence-by-sentence, but using everything we know to construct relationships among words and sentences. That is, in order to construct meaning as we read, we must have and use adequate background knowledge, we must continually apply various strategies to make sense of the sentences and words on a page. Meaning is not merely the end of reading, the product, but the beginning and the means as well.

Meaning is not merely the end of reading, the product, but the beginning and the means as well.

What, then, of building the meaning of sentences word-by-word? A brief example should again suggest the impossibility of such a procedure. Take, for instance, the word "run." How would you define it? See if your definition or definitions are appropriate for the following sentences:

1. Can you run the store for an hour?
2. Can you run the word processor?
3. Can you run the 500-yard dash?
4. Can you run in the next election?
5. Can you run next year's marathon?
6. I helped Samuel with his milk run.
7. They'll print 5,000 copies in the first run.
8. Sherry has a run in her hose.
9. There was a run on snow shovels yesterday morning.
10. It was a long run.

In how many of these sentences did your definition, or definitions, fit? Clearly we cannot take meanings for words out of our mental dictionaries and simply fit them into the sentences we're reading; we have to determine what each word means in combination with the other words.

One last example may begin to illustrate the fact that we do not build the meaning of paragraphs and larger wholes merely sentence by sentence. See if you can get some sense of what a *blonke* is as you read the following paragraphs:

If learning to read were significantly different from mature, proficient reading, there might still be justification for part-to-whole technology in teaching children to read. However, children who learn to read in the home, or in what are nowadays often called "whole language" classrooms, learn to read in much the same way as they learned to talk.[6] Starting with an intention to make meaning, they tend first to read a book holistically, telling the story from the pictures or reciting the

memorized story. Then, gradually, they fill in the parts: they learn to recognize the words (at first, only in familiar contexts) and begin to grasp some of the correspondences between letters and sounds. Thus for young children too, meaning is the beginning and the means of reading, not merely the end.

Let us examine, as an analogy, how children learn to speak their native language. Imagine, if you will, the following scenario:

> A young mother greets her husband enthusiastically as they sit down to dinner. "Guess what, dear? I've found this marvelous program for teaching Johnny to talk. It's called "Getting Back to Basics: Teaching Your Child to Talk." It's a great program. It starts first with the basic sounds, like /d/ in *dog*. First you teach the child to say these sounds in isolation and then you teach him to blend them together. Why, in a couple of weeks Johnny might be able to say "dada."

Fortunately, in this scenario, the woman's husband is not impressed. He dismisses his wife's suggestion by commenting that he never heard of a child being "taught" to talk that way, one sound at a time, blending sounds to make words.

We do not directly *teach* children to talk. We do not teach them rules for putting sounds together to form words and words together to form sentences—partly because we do not consciously know most of the rules ourselves. For example: unless you have had some training in linguistics, you probably do not know the "rule" for making regular verbs past tense; *love* becomes *loved*, with a /d/ sound; and *hate* becomes *hated*, with a vowel plus a /d/. But why? What is the "rule" that governs these regular patterns? Clearly even if we did know these rules, it would be futile to try to teach the rules directly to infants. Fortunately, however, *children do not need to be taught the rules directly.*

While children to some extent imitate what they hear, they also create the language anew, forming increasingly sophisticated hypotheses about how the language is structured. A simple negative sentence like *No* will give way in time to sentences like *No cookie*, then perhaps *No eat cookie*, then to more sophisticated sentences like *Me no ate cookie*, later *I didn't ate the cookie*, and finally to an adult structure, *I didn't eat the cookie*. All of this occurs without explicit adult instruction. We adults facilitate language growth by modeling adult language for children, by transacting with them verbally in functional and meaningful contexts, by focusing on the meaning of children's utterances rather than the form, and by generally ignoring "errors" of form rather than fact, since we realize that most children's language will gradually come to resemble that of the adults in their environment.[7]

A new paradigm

In short, the way children learn to talk is characterized not by a mechanistic, reductionistic, technological model of learning, but by a transactional model that reflects not classical science, but the paradigm offered by quantum physics, the "new" paradigm emerging in a variety of disciplines. This paradigm can be contrasted point-by-point with the paradigm that underlies much of today's education, and certainly much of the instruction in today's basal readers. According to this paradigm:

1. The learner is active, gradually formulating increasingly sophisticated hypotheses about the environment in order to learn.
2. Children do not learn merely, or even mainly, what they are directly taught.
3. Knowledge is not simply constructed "bottom up," from smaller parts to increasingly larger wholes. Rather, the whole is achieved by working at least as much "top down," by drawing upon one's entire lifetime of knowledge, experience, and cognitive strategies.
4. Errors often reflect the learner's current stage of development; as such, they are not necessarily to be viewed as "wrong."
5. What's most important is the *process* of learning. Paradoxically, focusing on the process of learning rather than the measurable product of instruction generally produces more sophisticated and more long-lasting products.

This paradigm describes, as I have indicated, the way in which children learn to talk and, later, the way in which they learn to read most naturally. But when these same children begin school, we all too often treat them as if the only way they could or would learn is through the "technology" of the basal reader, a totally opposite approach. According to the NCTE Reading Commission's *Report Card on Basal Readers*, underlying virtually all of the basal reading series available in the United States today is the assumption "that the learning of reading can happen skill by skill and word by word and that learning is the direct result of teaching." Not only are "decoding" and word recognition taught skill-by-skill, but so is comprehension.

The difference between the kinds that facilitate learning to read more naturally can be illustrated by an excerpt from a major American basal reading series and an excerpt from a little book in the Ready to Read set of materials that are used in New Zealand. Both would be for approximately first grade level, or perhaps kindergarten:

To put it bluntly, the mechanistic, reductionistic, technological paradigm is simply not an appropriate model for literacy education.

Excerpt from Economy Level C Pre-Primer[8]

The Dog in the Van

Did I see a dog?
I did!
The dog went into the van.
Did I see a red dog?
Is the dog red?

Is the dog in the van?
Is it red?
Is a red dog in the van?

I did not paint the dog.
I did not paint Happy.
Happy went into the paint.

The dog is red.
The paint made it red.
I did not see a red dog.
It went into the van.
A red dog is in the van.

Excerpt from GREEDY CAT,
by Joy Cowley[9]

(a book in the Ready to Read series)

Mum went shopping
and got some sausages.
Along came greedy cat.
He looked in the shopping bag.
Gobble, gobble, gobble
and that was the end of that.

(Subsequent episodes have identical language, except for the new item that Mum buys. Finally, she buys a POT OF PEPPER—and that is the end of *that*!)

In the first selection, we can see concern for repeating words time and again, to ensure mastery; we also see an attempt to use primarily words that reflect regular letter/sound patterns (the short vowel sounds, for example). However, the "story" as a whole is virtual nonsense, and the reader cannot very readily use context or cognitive schemas to predict what will come next. This is in sharp contrast to what readers do normally, as we began to understand from reading the "Red Riding Hood" passage. We use our knowledge of syntax, the developing meaning of a coherent text, and our life time of experience to predict as we read. The selection about the dog in the van thwarts such productive reading strategies.

The book *Greedy Cat*, on the other hand, encourages such prediction, because the episodes repeat with only a word or phrase being changed. Furthermore, reading is enhanced by the rhythm, and by the rhyme in the third and sixth lines. Such features in beginning reading materials help make books like *Greedy Cat* as easy to read as possible, whereas the materials found in the early levels of most basal reading series make reading and learning to read as difficult as possible.

In sum, then, both reading and learning to read are in many respects whole-to-part processes that begin with what the learner brings to the task, both in the way of cognitive processing strategies and specific knowledge and experience. The fact that most basal reading materials adopt a part-to-whole approach, and most teachers teach reading that way, does not mean that it is typically *learned* that way. In fact, there is considerable evidence that the poorer readers tend to be the ones who try to read using little more than the skills they have been explicitly taught, while the better readers intuitively use more sophisticated and more productive strategies. Janet Emig's summary of the teaching-learning relationship seems particularly applicable to the direct teaching of reading: "That teachers teach and children learn no one will deny. But to believe that children learn *because* teachers teach and only what teachers explicitly teach is to engage in magical thinking."[10]

To put it bluntly, the mechanistic, reductionistic, technological paradigm is simply not an appropriate model for literacy education. The fact that millions, even billions, of children have learned to read with basal readers is a tribute not to the technology of basals, but to young children's drive to make sense of the world, including the world of books and print. But why should we persist in reading instruction that thwarts rather than facilitates children's natural strategies for making sense of the world? Paradoxically, freeing ourselves from a technological concept of reading instruction is vital in order better to facilitate the technological literacy that is increasingly demanded by our post-industrial society.

Notes

1. Edward T. Clark, Jr., "The Search for a New Educational Paradigm" *Holistic Education Review* 1 (Spring, 1988), pp. 18-30.

2. Kenneth Goodman, Patrick Shannon, Yvonne Freeman and Sharon Murphy, *Report Card on Basal Readers* (New York: Richard C. Owen Co., 1988).

3. Richard C. Anderson, Elfrieda H. Hiebert, Judith A. Scott, and Ian A. G. Wilkinson, *Becoming a Nation of Readers: The Report of the Commission on Reading* (Champaign, IL: Center for the Study of Reading, 1985).

4. Constance Weaver, *Reading Process and Practice: From Socio-Psycholinguistics to Whole Language* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1988), pp. 181-183.

5. These exercises are taken from Weaver, *Reading Process and Practice.*

6. See Don Holdaway, *The Foundations of Literacy* (Sydney: Ashton-Scholastic, 1979; Jerome C. Harste, Virginia A. Woodward and Carolyn L. Burke, *Language Stories and Literacy Lessons* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1984); William H. Teale and Elizabeth Sulzby, eds., *Emergent Literacy: Writing and Reading* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1986); and, for an excellent summary, Judith M. Newman, ed., *Whole Language: Theory in Use* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1985), pp. 1-36.

7. Judith W. Lindfors, *Children's Language and Learning* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1980); Celia Genishi and Anne Dyson, *Language Assessment in the Early Years* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1984).

8. L. Matteoni, F. Sucher, M. Klein, and K. Welch, *Economy Reading Series* (Oklahoma City), 1986.

9. Joy Cowley, *Greedy Cat* (Illus. by Robyn Belton) (Wellington, N.Z.: Department of Education), 1983. (Available from Richard C. Owen, Publishers, New York).

10. Janet Emig, "Non-Magical Thinking: Presenting Writing Developmentally in Schools"—pp. 135-44 of *The Web of Meaning: Essays on Writing, Teaching, Learning and Thinking* (Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook, 1983).

A Neo-Humanist Model of Education

by Kathleen Hatley

The commonly expressed purposes of education are manifold—the induction of the young into the ways of living in their culture, training for citizenship, perpetuation of the social order, vocational development, cultivation of leisure time skills, personal growth, or the reconstruction of society toward increased justice and equality. Most expressed purposes of education presuppose a generational continuum of experience with little significant alteration in focus, perception or value structure. However, there are signs of an emerging "paradigm shift" in human consciousness indicated by a confluence of contemporary thought in quantum theory and the "new physics," Eastern spirituality, Western mysticism, psychologies of the unconscious mind and deep ecology that could render obsolete the current conservative mind-set concerning the purposes, intents and objectives of education. This transformation in human consciousness, with its attendant new view of the universe and our place in it, has the potential to spawn a process of learning as distinct from our present day educational factory as is the digital watch from the sundial.

To understand this conceptual shift, it is necessary to briefly examine the collective mind-set that has dominated our civilization up until the present time. The origin of our present world-view has been traced from numerous cyclical and historical perspectives, but there is general agreement that human consciousness has evolved from a participating state of identity with the natural environment to a progressively isolated, alienated and fragmented existence.[1] The separation of subject from object, logical thinking, linear development and the ideology of unrestrained progress have led us to a cultural precipice over which awaits potential environmental disaster, nuclear war, social chaos, economic disintegration, personal schizophrenia or any combinations thereof. The values which best describe this journey of separation have been represented by such words as freedom, individualism, objectivity, hierarchies, competition, survival of the fittest, growth, rationality, etc.

In response to these multiple crises, a second set of values has emerged, which is best exemplified by such corresponding words as responsibility, collectivity, subjective approach, networks, cooperation, collective welfare, sustainability, intuition, etc. These changing sets of values represent a shift from a preoccupation with individual achievement to a concern for a holistic and collective harmony, a shift which quite possibly

Neo-humanism is an ecological, holistic, comprehensive philosophy recently developed by Indian philosopher P. R. Sarkar. Drawing upon ancient yogic teachings on the levels of consciousness, a neo-humanist approach to education seeks to develop the more subtle capacities of the human mind.

Kathleen Hatley received a Liberal Arts degree with a Dance Education Major, and a minor in Comparative Religion and Philosophy through the University Without Walls. She was a co-founder and staff person of Flaming Rainbow University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma (an alternative, accredited university program primarily serving the Native American community).

Kathleen is currently completing a Master's Degree in Curriculum & Instruction at Oklahoma State University, where she also teaches an undergraduate course called "Schooling in American Society," and supervises intern teachers. All four of her sons have home-schooled. One of her favorite projects is organizing and developing the program for a sixty-family educational enrichment cooperative each summer. She is also an active member of a local peace network and edits a bi-monthly paper called "Waging Peace."

She has been a student of Prabhát Rainjan Sarkár's philosophy for the past seventeen years.

holds the key to the survival and livability of our planet.

In biological terms, the first set of values might best be described as evolutionary, the second as ecological. The former is goal-oriented, concerned with overcoming limitations through struggle and aspirations. The latter is more concerned with "Being"—with establishing a collective harmony in the present—and is primarily concerned with process rather than goals. Expressed in geometric images, the former might be represented by an arrow, the latter by the circle.[2]

The Philosophy of Neo-Humanism

Neo-Humanism is a recent philosophy propounded by Indian philosopher Prabhát Rainjan Sarkár, which comprehensively describes the emerging mode of consciousness, but further, attempts to integrate the most dynamic and useful components of the old paradigm. Like Fritjof Capra,[3] Sarkár believes that both reductionism and holism are necessary, that evolution and ecology are both valid models of development—that the arrow can be integrated with the circle. Neo-Humanism is the most recent extension of Sarkár's political philosophy and provides the conceptual link between his socio-economic theories and the spiritual teachings of Tantra Yoga.

According to Sarkár, traditional humanism falls short, not in its intent, which has historically been to awaken humanity to its unity and common destiny, but in its scope, as it fails to embrace the whole of creation.[4] In this sense, Neo-Humanism closely resembles the philosophical base of Deep Ecology, as first articulated by Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess. The essence of this philosophical affinity may be summarized in five basic principles, each of which stems from nature, but has cognitive and social implications:

1. **All living things are connected with each other and with their environment** (gives rise to a networking mode of thinking).
2. **Biological egalitarianism** (corresponds to principle of social equality).
3. **Resources are limited and can be rendered useless even before they are depleted** (develops concepts of voluntary simplicity and controls on technological development).
4. **Long term sustainability of an ecosystem is dependent on a broad range of species and resources** (emphasizes the importance of a broad-based economy and multiculturalism).
5. **Suitable communities should rely on local resources rather than importing them, and recycle these resources rather than exporting them as waste products** (gives rise to whole range of social management policies such as bio-regions or economic units).

Neo-Humanism proposes a deepening of the deep ecology approach by suggesting the cultivation of an ecology of mind (internal psychic), an ecology of body (internal physical), and an ecology of culture (external psychic), as well as the traditional ecology of nature (external physical).[5]

The relationship between modern physics and Tantra Yoga is complex, and an in-depth examination of it is well beyond the scope of this article. Briefly, prior to 1927, the physical universe was thought to be mechanistic, with strict cause-and-effect relationships. Matter was matter. Energy was energy. Until Einstein's theories, there were absolutes, giving rise to a strict philosophical determinism. If you knew the initial condition of something, you could determine its future. Einstein's theory of relativity established that there are no absolutes in the physical universe, that there is an inherent indeterminism or uncertainty even if all the conditions are known. The most elementary agreement between quantum physics and Tantra is that matter is just a concentrated form of energy, and energy is just a kind of motion, or wave.[6] Some theoretical physicists are now quietly examining the possible existence of a unified field of consciousness, and the relationship of mind to vibration, energy and matter. The intuitional science of the Yogis provides a comprehensive explanation of these relationships, and the ancient and sacred (introversial) teachings of tantra are beginning to be confirmed by the modern (extroversial) teachings of science. Some recent popular books explore the relationship between Eastern mystical philosophies and recent scientific discoveries, and I refer the reader to them for a more detailed look at the subject.[7]

While Eastern psychology has long recognized the existence of the causal mind, or an aspect of mind disassociated from the physical body, Western psychologists have only begun to study the phenomenon under the guise of transpersonal psychology. The interest in "human potential" and the "education of the whole child" tie in closely with the goal of Neo-Humanist education, which is to "systematically develop all the layers of human existence."[8] In order to better understand these "layers of human existence," the following simplified description of the human mind, according to the psychology of Tantra, is provided.

A key concept in the ancient and modern teachings of Tantra is that existence is not a single reality, but a continuum of various layers of being, ranging from the densest (the physical body) through subtler and finer psychic layers, to the unified field of infinite consciousness referred to in connection with theoretical physics. According to Tantra, there are five main levels of awareness in the unit mind (there are corresponding levels in the cosmic mind, but these will not be dealt with in this article). These spheres of awareness are referred to in Sanskrit as "kosas."

Level 1 — ka'mamaya kos'a

This is the level of mind completely identified with matter, or the physical body. It is concerned with receiving information from the sense organs and transmitting it to the motor organs. It is the level of instinct and the maintenance of human life, and is the product of millions of years of animal evolution (the activities of this kosa are mediated by the "reptilian" brain).

Level 2 — manomaya kos'a

This level of the mind is concerned with the experience of pleasure, pain and other sentiments mediated by the "mammalian" brain, in addition to memory, rational thinking, symbolizing, dreaming and abstraction, all of which are mediated by the neo-cortex. On this level, a person gains some measure of control over their activities and experiences the beginnings of mental existence independent from sensory output.

Level 3 — atimanasa kos'a

This is the first level of the causal mind, in which content is transpersonally, not individually determined. At this level, each mind is connected to every other person or organism, so the mind can intuit the minds of other entities. This level is responsible for subtle human values, intuition, creativity, insight, precognitive and other experiences that transcend the traditional barriers of time, space and individuality. Experiences at this level resolve the contradictions and paradoxes of Level 2 and provide the unity behind dialectical conflicts. Level 3 cannot be appreciated without the ability to control and silence the two lower levels of the mind.

Level 4 — vijana'namaya kos'a

This is the highest level of mind at which a sense of separate existence persists. It is the level of transpersonal archetypes and the source of "divine" human qualities—mercy, compassion, magnanimity, etc. This level of the subliminal mind forms the content of many revelations, religious awakenings and inspirational visions. The most important capacity of this level is the power of discrimination, or the ability to distinguish that which is conducive to spiritual evolution from that which is not.

Level 5 — hiran'yamaya kos'a

At this level there is the experience of oneness with all of creation, unaffected by any sense of individual existence or limiting ideas. Only a thin veil separates the person from pure infinite consciousness, or "Jivatman."

Tantric psychology recognizes the developmental aspect of the structural mind, and corresponds with Western psychology on a number of sub-levels within the broader categories of Levels 1 & 2. Sarkár is critical of the tendency of Western psychology to confuse the pre-personal with the transpersonal (called the pre-trans fallacy) and of the failure to provide psychological techniques that foster progression into the higher states of consciousness. The significance of Tantric psychology is that it provides a framework for the expansion of the human mind into subjective realms of experience from a firm foundation of healthy ego development. When considered in association with emergent ideas in theoretical physics and deep ecology, it provides a possible direction for the evolution of the human mind.

Implications for educational theory

The foregoing is a very generalized overview of Neo-Humanist philosophy in terms of other emergent ideas in such diverse fields as philosophy, psychology, physics and ecology. For the purpose of establishing a theoretical base, let us now assume that these currents of thought are valid, and do, in fact, constitute a perceptual association between previously unrelated areas of knowledge. If this assumption is true, it implies a vastly expanded conception of human potential, and requires a thoughtful analysis of optimum learning environments to achieve such potential.

Many scholars have expressed the need for an education that develops the more subtle capacities of human mind. Paul Weinpahl, in his description of Spinozistic metaphysics, points out that all forms of conceptualization are levels of "imagination," that true understanding occurs only at the intuitive, mystical level.[9] Arthur Foshay suggests that a transforming educational experience "pushes us out of our restricted environment into unlimited freedom of thought and imagination." He proposes that we "seek opportunities for the spiritual/peak experience in the subject matter that we teach" and that we "try to find the experience as a property of the subject matter itself."[10] In the same vein, Rudolf Steiner contends that the death of a science occurs when it no longer becomes anyone's inner experience.[11] George B. Leonard urges us to design learning environments that awaken transcendent joy in the learner, and to reclaim the ecstasy that is our natural human condition.[12]

It is clear that much that goes on in our schools does not contribute to such an "ecstasy of learning," that rather than containing "spiritual/peak experiences," subject matter is more often dull, dry and lifeless. The task of any new theory of education then, would seem to be the discovery of how to infuse the entire learning process with this life energy, an awesome but essential task if schools are to remain a dominant influence amidst a myriad of competing cultural forces.

Neo-Humanist educational theory builds on the pioneering work of such metaphysical thinkers/educators as Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, with some important new directions. The philosophy contains an essential dynamism, as it promotes a continual adjustment to time, place and circumstance, thus avoiding the trap of becoming a rigid dogma, or methodology. Because of this essential dynamism, and the fact that the philosophy promotes a "process" of curriculum development rather than a curriculum "product," I will take the liberty of being speculative as well as descriptive about its implications for educational theory.

The task of infusing the curriculum with ecstasy becomes less formidable when one recognizes that children are born with the proclivity for ecstatic interaction with their environment, and that much of what has passed for education until now has actually been the programming-out of this joyful relatedness.

The task of infusing the curriculum with ecstasy becomes less formidable when one recognizes that children are born with the proclivity for ecstatic interaction with their environment, and that much of what has passed for education until now has actually been the programming-out of this joyful relatedness. Rudolf Steiner suggests that an early emphasis on categorization, abstraction, classification and generalization inhibits the child's

natural tendency toward perceptual wholeness, and prevents the orderly expansion of the higher faculties of mind. Regarding these same four objective methods of organizing knowledge, George Leonard says "these modes of thought are useful . . . the new culture will continue using them . . . but I suspect they will be recognized for what they are: dangerous instruments that should be used with caution."[13] Joseph Chilton Pearce's research suggests that there is a normal, progressive bonding process that humans undergo, that if allowed to flourish, would lead us fully into joyful, conscious relatedness.[14] So perhaps we should focus our attention on discovering what activities or experiences promote this joyful bonding with an ever-expanding matrix. This should be a fairly simple process, involving careful attention to a child's interests and awareness level, and active involvement, empathy and continued personal growth on the part of the teacher. Unfortunately, this simple human process becomes a complicated proposal when attempted within the limiting context of the existing educational structure, with its emphasis not on awareness and patient attention, but on immediate results, test scores and accountability.

Photo by Tom Gregory

In the Neo-Humanist model of early education, the emphasis is on the provision of a varied and stimulating environment in which the children learn all abstract, intellectual concepts through the concrete experience of their sense and motor organs. The important relationship between the emotions and cognition is affirmed, and all effort is made to create a classroom atmosphere saturated with pleasurable emotions. Stories, fairy tales and myths which stimulate a high degree of emotional involvement are utilized to transmit knowledge and values. This emphasis is quite consistent with current early education theory, so I will move on to some other areas which are somewhat unique to Neo-Humanist theory.

Within a philosophical system that promotes the interrelatedness of all animate and inanimate creation, biological egalitarianism and a developed bioregional awareness, the early study of ecological relationships naturally forms a cornerstone of all knowledge. The ecology curriculum of Neo-Humanist education is an integrated blend of nature study, myth, music, mathematics, language, art and science experiences. The critical need for early and profound ecological awareness is emphasized by many philosophers. Michael Tobias, in *Deep Ecology* states:

> A child needs, from the beginning, a sense of community, of nurturance. The child's literal, valueless contact with nature is easily transformed into a strong ego-centeredness. As an adult, when forced to weigh literal values, he'll always choose progress. Introducing the child to nature must be seen as crucial to humanity in the coming age of radical will. Otherwise, the child, having missed out on any truly coherent contact with the natural world—sustained contact—is likely to seek order in his universe by turning to machines . . . to see our future realistically, basic principles of ecology have become as essential as literacy.[15]

Aldous Huxley grew to a deep ecological perspective, partly as a result of his long association with D. H. Lawrence. When asked whether early scientific training in ecology was too complicated for children he replied, "That's precisely the reason why we begin with it. Never give children the chance of imagining that anything exists in isolation. Make it plain from the very first that all living is relationship. Show them the relationships in the woods, in the fields, in the ponds and streams, in the village and the country around it."[16]

Paul Shepard is another philosopher who emphasizes the critical need for ecological education. His ecotopian vision is fascinating and somewhat unrealistic, but does contain a relevant and detailed theoretical discussion of the maturation and education of the people of the future:

> I believe that every child under ten has three ecological needs: architecturally complex play space shared with companions; a cumulative and increasingly diverse experience of non-human forms, animate and inanimate, whose taxonomic names and generic relationships *he must learn*; and occasional and progressively more strenuous excurisons into the wilderness, where he may, in a limited way, confront the non-human . . . the collection and study of plants and animals is more important than any other learning activity.[17]

Paul Shepard's "progressively more strenuous excursions into the wilderness" bear a striking similarity to Neo-Humanism's "STUVOL," a type of adventure club for the young, in which the rhythm of psychological growth (stress/relaxation) is invoked, and the children are led into unpredictable and challenging situations, taught how to assimilate the energy of opposing forces

and use it to augment their own strength. (This, in its essence, is the foundation of the advanced spiritual science of Tantra).

In the Neo-Humanist curriculum, ecological education serves to ground the child firmly in her natural, physical reality, but beyond this, it is situated within a sophisticated cosmology, a "wheel of knowledge" in which the circular evolution of the universe (called Brahmacakra in Sanskrit) is presented to the child in ever more complex and detailed stages (in the early grades, the wheel of knowledge is called "the circle of love," in the upper grades, "the cosmic cycle"). From the very early years, the child's spiritual (not to be confused with religious)* world view is cultivated as she discovers herself situated within a cosmic unity that encompasses a unified field of infinite consciousness, the creation of space and gases, fire and stars, water and earth, plants and animals, human beings, and finally the developed saints and sages who joyfully seek to merge their minds once again into the infinite whole.[18]

Practical application

The academic units in the Neo-Humanist curriculum are multi-dimensional, integrated, and limited only by the teacher's and student's imaginations. Every element or creature on the "wheel of knowledge" is approached from all levels of the child's being – physical, emotional, imaginative, intellectual, intuitive and spiritual. For example, a unit on Air and Wind might include (in age-appropriate form) a story and dramatic play about a "wind spirit" who takes the children on a wind journey, a wind dance with flying colored streamers, lying on the soft grass to look for shapes in the clouds, guided fantasy about flying on the back of the wind (possibly to view a variety of geographical terrain), songs and fingerplays about the wind, water color painting of the trees being blown in the wind, construction of pinwheels and wind mobiles, flying kites, sailing boats, constructing weather vanes and anemometers, study of windmills and wind energy, or a look at the changes in the environment brought about by the changing personality of the wind

The important point in the above example is that all studies are approached with a harmonious balance between inner-directed and outer-directed activities. One way of analyzing the "balanced curriculum" is in terms of hemispheric specialty, and Neo-Humanist education seeks to develop the complimentary function of both the intellect (dominated by the left hemisphere) and the intuition (dominated by the right). At the risk of over-simplifying a complex area of study, let's assume the validity of some current research that defines left hemispheric functions as verbal, analytic, rational, logical, linear, sequential and time-oriented, and the right hemispheric functions as non-verbal, spatial, synthetic, intuitive, creative, holistic, simultaneous and timeless. Very generalized orientations would be toward science and math on the part of the left hemisphere, and music, art and dance on the part of the right. (Note: The correspondence of the

* See Appendix

specialized hemispheric processes with the values shift mentioned earlier in this article suggests the possible emergence of the right hemisphere from an historical oppression). Interestingly, the ancient intuitional science of Tantra long ago defined the left/right polarity of the brain – one side of which is conducive to worldly pursuits (apara) and the other to higher realization (para). They developed a subtle science of breath control (pranayama) to gain control over this polarity by regulating the flow of breath through the left and right nostrils.

In order to develop the harmonious interplay between the two modes of awareness, every academic lesson in the Neo-Humanist curriculum is integrated with artistic activities, and painting, music, sculpture, drama, dance and mime are given as much importance as reading and writing. But further, the Neo-Humanist curriculum includes systematic training to develop the creative imagination of the right brain in these three areas: 1) fantasy and fantasy play, 2) guided imagery, and 3) metaphoric thinking.

Fantasy

Bruno Bettleheim states that "the unconscious is the source of raw materials and the basis upon which the ego erects the edifice of our personality. In this simile our fantasies are the natural resources which promote and shape this raw material making it useful for the ego's personality building tasks. If we are deprived of this natural resource our life remains limited . . . childhood is the time when these fantasies need to be nurtured."[19]

In the early learning years, all subjects in the Neo-Humanist curriculum are approached through the medium of fantasy. The letters of the alphabet are not presented as lifeless symbols, but are infused with powerful pictorial meaning as imaginative stories are woven around them. Direct instruction is mostly delayed until the child reaches Piaget's stage of formal operations. Every opportunity is taken to lead children into a joyful exploration of the world around them through creative storytelling. That fantasy enriches intellectual activity is indicated by a recent study showing that low fantasy children are more externally oriented, revealing much action and little thought in play activities, while high fantasy children, in contrast, were more highly structured and creative.[20]

In Neo-Humanist schools, opportunities and raw materials for fantasy play are ever present. It is recognized that in the early years, two very powerful forces are operating simultaneously in the child; structuring a knowledge of the world *as it is* in the conscious mind by exploring it with the senses and motor organs, and imagining and playing with the world in ways *it is not* with fantasy – parallel activities which develop both halves of the brain.

Guided imagery

In response to an inquiry about his working methods, Einstein wrote "Words or language do not seem to play any role in my mechanism of thought. The psychic entities which serve as the elements in my thought are certain signs and clear *images* which can be voluntarily reproduced or combined."[21] The power of visualization to develop problem-solving abilities, heightened perception, sensitivity, awareness, self-healing skills and even motor skills has been documented in recent studies. Deep, internal guided imagery can be used even with very young children to open the doors of their imagination and release the creative energies of the higher layers of mind.

Metaphoric thinking

All creative thinking involves the linking of separate ideas – the synthesis of two frames of reference into a single novel idea. This type of metaphoric thinking or problem solving often occurs in dreams or reverie, when awareness transcends the rational subconscious mind and is elevated to the first level of the superconscious mind, or the Atimanasa Kosa. Throughout history, great scientists, philosophers and artists have experienced profound insights or creative inspiration by means of the subtle mechanism of this creative level of mind. While in a traditional educational setting, with its emphasis on the "right answer," lateral, or divergent thinking (looking at a problem from a new angle) is often discouraged, or seen as a waste of precious time, in Neo-Humanist schools this valuable layer of the mind is consciously developed and the natural, connection-making abilities of children are encouraged through games and conversation. It is recognized that this type of thinking, rather than being an historical anomaly, is the birthright of all.

As well as fostering the development of the conscious, subconscious and first layer of the superconscious, or causal mind, Neo–Humanist education provides the psychological techniques for the careful progression into even more subtle layers of consciousness, recognizing that the human being is a vast reservoir of psychic potential. The science of intuitional development is part of the educational process from kindergarten on, and the technique used to transcend the restricted awareness of the sensory and rational levels of consciousness is meditation. Fairly extensive research has been done documenting the numerous positive effects of meditation: stress reduction, increased concentration, increased resistance to perceptual illusions, increased intelligence test scores, increased self-actualization and internal locus of control, increased flexibility of perception, to mention just a few.[22]

Recognizing the potential negative effects of forcing children to meditate mechanistically, the process is approached not only through teacher example, but through creative "meditation stories." Because of the deep level of teacher/student interaction in Neo-Humanist schools, teachers are selected not only for their intellectual capacity, but also on the basis of high moral character and a commitment to continued personal growth.

In summary

The transformation in human consciousness, with its attendant new view of the universe and our place in it, may not yet constitute a new orthodoxy, but its intuitively and rationally coherent concepts make it increasingly difficult to hold on to the old.

A realistic appraisal of our present material reality leads to the unavoidable conclusion that we are entering an age of resource scarcity in which numerous adjustments to the social and ecological imbalances we have created will be necessary. Simultaneously, new information about the human mind hints that we are embarking upon a fascinating journey of discovery about human potential. Certainly this unlock-

ing of human potential is likely to ease some of the physical restrictions caused by the environmental crises and create some level of comfort and security for many people, but it is unlikely that the *primary focus* will continue to be on increased comfort and security. Decreasing emphasis on material progress and the conquest of nature and other people is likely to lead to increasing attention to culture, learning and relationship.

Neo-Humanist education represents the conscious attempt to meet this future in a balanced way. It is also an endeavor to address what may prove to be a crucial philosophical and educational dilemma: suppose that scientists, working in such diverse fields as physics, mathematics and ecology manage to find some technological entry into the implicit order (unified field of consciousness, divine ordering intelligence, cosmic entity, etc.). Can we find a way to communicate this expanded awareness to the young without the imposition of narrow religious dogma? Neo-Humanist education offers us a working model of an educational philosophy based on the concept of spiritual expansion—"It is a harmonious synthesis of freedom and responsibility, mysticism and practicality, challenge and relaxation, self-reliance and interdependence. Through it, students will attain both self-knowledge and objective knowledge; for it develops mastery of the world on the one hand, and transcendence of it on the other. It is not only an intellectual education, which often simply makes people more selfish—it is an education of the heart."[23]

Notes

1. Morris Berman, *The Reenchantment of the World.* (Cornell University Press, 1981).
2. Michael B. Towsey, *Eternal Dance of the Macrocosm.* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Proutist Publications, 1986).
3. Ken Wilber (ed.) *The Holographic Paradigm and Other Paradoxes.* (Shambala Press, 1982).
4. P. R. Sarkár, *Neo-Humanism in a Nutshell.* (Calcutta: Manasi Press, 1987).
5. Michael Towsey, *Eternal Dance of the Macrocosm.*
6. *Ibid.*
7. Fritjof Capra, *The Tao of Physics.* (Shambala Publications, 1976). & Gary Zukav, *The Dancing Wu-Li Masters.* (William Morrow & Co., 1979).
8. Ac. Ańandamitrá, Avd., *Neo-Humanist Education.* (Amanda Marga Publications, Philippines, 1986). This is a readable, concise seminal work on the subject of Neo-Humanist education. I am grateful to the author for much of the information in the "Practical Application" section of this article
9. Paul Weinpahl, *The Radical Spinoza*
10. Arthur W. Foshay, *A Humanistic Approach to Curriculum Theory: One Aspect* (University of Birmingham, England, 1980)
11. Willi Aeppli, *The Developing Child.* (New York: Anthroposophic Press, 1986).
12. George B. Leonard, *Education and Ecstasy.* (New York: Dell Publishing Co 1968).
13. George B. Leonard, *The Transformation* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1972), p. 45
14. Joseph Chilton Pearce, *Magical Child* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1977).
15. Michael Tobias (ed.), *Deep Ecology.* (San Diego, CA: Avant Books, 1985).
16. Bill Devall & George Sessions, *Deep Ecology.* (Gibbs M. Smith, Inc., 1985), p. 170
17. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
18. Ańandamitrá, *Neo-Humanist Education,* p. 96.
19. Bruno Bettleheim, *The Uses of Enchantment.* (Vintage Books, 1975), p. 121.
20. Jerome Singer, *The Child's World of Make Believe.* (New York: Academic Press, 1973).
21. Jacques Hademard, *The Psychology of Invention in the Mathematical Mind.* (Princeton University press, 1945). Quoted in *Neo-Humanist Education,* p. 65.
22. Elaine & Arthur Aron, *The Maharishi Effect.* (Stillpoint Publishing, 1986).
23. Ańandamitrá, *Neo-Humanist Education,* p. 151.

Appendix

Differences between spirituality and religion

Spirituality	Religion
Based on experience and individual perception.	Externally imposed belief system.
A rational approach to absolute truth.	Based on revelatory scriptures. The scriptures of different religions are mutually contradictory and hostile.
Has a universal validity.	Impassioned by regional sentiments, language bias, class and caste prejudices, sectarian urges and similarity in manners and customs.
No opportunity for exploitation. No vested interest.	Unhindered opportunity for exploitation through priestdom, Mulladom, etc.
Based on love, liberty and equality.	Based on fear-generated faith, superstition, beliefs and irrationality.
Not bound by time, space and person—immutable.	Dogmas and their observance change with the time, space and person—not eternal.
Only entity required for its realization is mind. Realizable by expansion of the mind through spiritual self-culture and self-discipline which cause introversion of mental potentialities.	Ritualistic observances making use of external objects of the phenomenal world. Advocates sanctity of holy places, etc. Causes extroversion of mental energies.
Has a universal approach and appeal and a uniformly beneficient effect.	Rituals of different religions are mutually antagonistic, leading to mutual distrust, disintegration and destruction.
Synthetic, creative, evolutional and progressive.	Analytic, repressive, regressive.
Unifying.	Divisive.

Meditation and Parenthood

by Joseph H. Pearl

My children have always been embarrassed by the fact that I meditate. They prefer that their friends not find out. It makes me seem weird, they say. (And there is no aspect of family life quite so embarrassing to an adolescent child as having a weird parent.) Oh, they're tolerant of me. They realize that I have a right to lead my own life just as they (as I so often tell them) have a right to live theirs. But, still, my getting up early every morning to sit for an hour or so in my *zendo* (otherwise known in our house as the linen closet) doesn't quite fit with their image of what a father should be. This doesn't surprise me. Their view is no more than a reflection of the society within which they have grown up.

The typical American views meditation as a self-centered withdrawal from the world, and hardly compatible with the very worldly social and practical responsibilities of parenthood. The stereotypical meditator sits alone, eyes closed, seeking some mysterious altered state of consciousness labelled *spiritual enlightenment, liberation, ultimate truth,* or whatever. And, as with all stereotypes, this one contains some truth. At the Buddhist meditation retreats that I attend, my fellow meditators and I are encouraged to forget about the practical problems of our everyday lives for the duration of the retreat. In addition, we're instructed to avoid any social interaction with each other, through word, touch, or even eye contact. And most of us, if asked about our purpose for being there, would answer with phrases like *spiritual enlightenment* and *liberation from suffering.*

But, as with all stereotypes, this one is misleading, too. Most meditation traditions emphasize that the practice of meditation, however one conceives of its ultimate purpose, is intended to have the short-term benefit of enhancing the meditator's capacity to meet everyday practical demands and to generally lead a satisfying and socially useful life. One withdraws from the world for short periods of time so that one can better appreciate the world and function well within it the rest of the time.

Being a developmental psychologist, as well as a meditator and a father, I have frequently found myself wondering in what manner my being a meditator related to my being a father. Does it help or does it hurt? My children's embarrassment notwithstanding, I have concluded that it helps. In what follows, I'll explain how.

Vipassana (insight) meditation is an established method of freeing oneself from unconscious desires and aversions that distort our perception and hence our relationships. A parent (or educator) thus freed is more capable of giving children the unconditional positive regard that is essential for their healthy development.

Joseph Pearl received his Ph.D. in Education and Psychology from the University of Michigan in 1971. Since then he has been teaching courses in Educational Psychology, Human Development, and Transpersonal Psychology at Oklahoma State University, and also actively participating in the rearing of his two daughters, now 17 and 19 years old. He has been practicing Buddhist vipassana meditation for the past five years under the guidance of Shinzen Young, director of Los Angeles' Community Meditation Center.

A Buddhist theory of personality

From my perspective as a psychologist, Buddhism seems to be as much a theory of personality as it is a religion, its main premise being that most human behavior is not truly free. Western psychology only recognizes this lack of freedom in extreme cases—compulsions, obsessions, phobias, etc.—which are seen as being pathological, and distinguished from healthy behavior, seen as being generated by free choice. According to Buddhism, though, virtually all behavior is, however subtly, unfree.

The kind of Buddhist meditation that I practice, called *vipassana*, is based on a particular understanding of this fundamental lack of freedom: Our behavior is unfree because it is driven by rigid personality structures, called *sankharas*, that are the result of our previous experiences (including, according to the traditional Buddhist belief in reincarnation, experiences during previous lifetimes). But our sankharas are not simply the passive result of the experiences themselves. Rather, they are the result of certain kinds of *reactions* to the experiences, reactions that are themselves driven by similar, already existing sankharas, which are thus self-perpetuating in nature. The total of all one's sankharas is referred to as one's *karma*.

The reactions that produce (and are produced by) our sankharas may be broadly grouped under three headings: *raga, dvesa,* and *moha. Raga* (translated as *craving*) is a drive to hold on to and to repeat pleasant experiences. *Dvesa* (*aversion*) is a drive to push away and to avoid unpleasant experiences. *Moha* (*delusion*) is a drive to avoid clear, accurate awareness, i.e., a drive to delude oneself, in order to maximize the experience of pleasure and minimize the experience of pain. (Moha would be reflected, for example, in the tendency to be unaware of one's shortcomings as a parent, or to have an inflated notion of the "giftedness" of one's child.) To the extent that one responds to an experience with craving, one generates a new sankhara of raga which, in turn, strengthens the foundation within the personality for future responses of craving. Likewise, for responses of aversion and self-delusion.

The goal of human development for Buddhism is liberation from the driving forces of one's sankharas, from one's karma. Liberation results when one is able to live in such a way that all one's old sankharas are dissolved and no new ones are created. At that point one will no longer have a craving for pleasant experiences or an aversion to unpleasant experiences, and will thus have an undistorted awareness of the nature of reality (including, most importantly, the nature of one's own self). The result, according to Buddhism, will be true freedom.

Most meditation traditions emphasize that the practice of meditation, however one conceives of its ultimate purpose, is intended to have the short-term benefit of enhancing the meditator's capacity to meet everyday practical demands and to generally lead a satisfying and socially useful life.

But how can this be accomplished? The key is the potential variability of our reactions to experiences. To the extent that we react to experiences with craving, aversion, and delusion, new sankharas are generated. *But,* to the extent that we are able to meet our experiences with an attitude of equanimity (without craving or aversion) and with clarity of perception (without delusion), two important things happen. First, no new sankharas are generated. Second, the existing sankharas that have been successfully resisted in the current situation begin to dissolve. As they dissolve, a period of diminished driveness might occur, experienced as increased peace of mind and freedom. But soon other sankharas, from a deeper layer of the personality, rise to the surface to replace those that have dissolved, and to reestablish the driving urges of craving, aversion, and delusion. (Clearly, a return to driveness after a period of relative freedom is a step *forward* on the developmental path although it may be frustrating and discouraging.) To the extent that one is able to continue meeting one's experiences with clarity of perception and an attitude of equanimity, all one's sankharas will, eventually, be dissolved, resulting in the end of driveness altogether, liberation from the bondage of karma, true freedom.

The problem, of course, is that most of our reactions are dominated by our existing sankharas. While we may, for a variety of reasons, occasionally react to an experience with equanimity and clarity of perception, it is unlikely that we will do so consistently enough to make significant progress in the overall dissolution of our sankharas. But it is possible, according to Buddhism, through the disciplined practice of various mental training techniques, to develop one's capacity to react to experiences in a sankhara dissolving rather than a sankhara generating way. Vipassana meditation is one such technique.

Vipassana meditation

The technique of vipassana meditation is simple and straightforward. You place yourself in a non-distracting environment (for example, in a quiet darkened room, with eyes closed, wearing loose clothing, sitting in a comfortable, upright position) and engage in the passive, disinterested observation of the contents and flow of your own consciousness. You explicitly *resist* craving (trying to produce pleasant awarenesses, or hold on to any pleasant awareness which spontaneously arises) and aversion (trying to avoid unpleasant awarenesses, or push away any unpleasant awareness which spontaneously arises). And, especially, you do not try to accomplish the avoidance of craving pleasant awarenesses and having an aversion to unpleasant awarenesses by suppressing full, precise awareness of their specific qualities of pleasantness or unpleasantness. To do so would be delusion. You must also avoid getting caught up in self-reflective thinking *about* the contents of consciousness (e.g., "Nothing is happening. I'm probably not doing it right." or "My legs are killing me. I

don't think I can last much longer.") When such thoughts arise, as they inevitably will, one is to simply observe them. Ultimately one's goal is to maintain this combination of full, precise awareness and equanimity, what might be called the vipassana attitude, under all circumstances, all of the time.

It is, of course, difficult to maintain the vipassana attitude (even in the artificial circumstances of formal meditation, which are designed to facilitate it) since one must work against the driving forces of one's sankharas. Difficult, but not impossible. Buddhism promises that with consistent practice of the vipassana technique your skill will increase and you will begin to dissolve more old sankharas than create new ones. As a result, you will become less and less driven and you will begin to gain *insight*. (*Insight* is the most common translation of *vipassana*.) That is, you will begin to experience reality more clearly, particularly regarding the nature of pleasure and pain, satisfaction and suffering. Specifically, you will discover that with less craving pleasure is experienced more fully, and is thus more satisfying, since one is not distracted by the effort to hold on to it. One directly apprehends that the driving force of craving is distinct from the pleasure and is in itself, in fact, a source of suffering. You will also discover that with less aversion pain is experienced more fully, since one is not distracted by the effort to push it away, but, paradoxically, that it causes *less* suffering! One directly apprehends that the suffering which usually accompanies an awareness of pain is not an integral part of the pain itself but is, instead, a result of one's *resistance* to it. As insight develops, the motivational structure of one's personality changes. Instead of being driven by sankharas of craving and aversion, one's actions arise as spontaneous responses to present reality, experienced (legitimately) as free choices, a natural expression of one's insight into *dharma*, the true nature of reality. Buddhism teaches that such actions will be characterized by love and compassion (as exemplified in the life of the Buddha).

It must be emphasized that such undriveness does not entail indifference to the state of the world within which one lives. A kind of passivity is, indeed, at the heart of the vipassana attitude, but the object of that passivity is not the *world* but one's *awareness* of the world as it emerges into consciousness. One no longer interferes with arising awarenesses, clinging to pleasant ones, pushing away unpleasant ones, and reshaping them, generally, to maximize pleasantness and minimize unpleasantness. But one might still *choose* (as a free, spontaneous expression of one's insight into dharma) to attempt to change the state of the world or to modify the conditions of one's life, though one will no longer be *driven* to do so.

The nature of healthy personality development and the task of rearing psychologically healthy children

One of the most useful and influential of contemporary personality theories is that of Carl Rogers. Rogers' theory is built around his understanding of the development of the self. During infancy, according to Rogers, we begin to differentiate one aspect of our experience from all the rest. This aspect is called the *self*. It is reflected, as we grow older, in our use of the words *I*, *me*, and *mine*. As we develop our capacity to discriminate between that which is and that which is not a part of ourselves, we begin to form a conception of ourselves. One's self-concept might begin with simple discriminations between that which is physically a part of oneself (one's hand, for example) and that which is not physically a part of oneself (the rattle which one sometimes holds in one's hand). But soon the self-concept develops more subtle and complex aspects including, most importantly, an aspect of self-evaluation. Children begin to think of themselves as being either good or bad. This self-evaluative aspect is largely a reflection of the way in which they are responded to by their parents. To the extent that children receive positive feelings (affection, approval, etc.) from their parents they develop what Rogers calls "positive regard" for themselves. According to Rogers, the development of a strong sense of positive self-regard is the key to healthy personality development.

But positive self-regard, by itself, is not enough. Even children who receive an adequate balance of positive over negative feelings from their parents are at risk if the positive feelings they receive are *conditional* upon their proper (as defined by their parents) behavior. They will then internalize the conditionality of their parents' positive feelings for them and develop what Rogers calls "conditions of worth." That is, they will feel a sense of positive self-regard only under certain conditions. The child (and later the adult) with conditions of worth is driven to avoid those behaviors (and the thought associated with such behaviors) that violate the conditions of worth. Performing such behaviors or thinking such thoughts causes the child to feel guilty and unworthy. People with conditions of worth limit their behavior and thoughts and distort their perception of reality in order to protect themselves against these painful feelings. They repress threatening aspects of their selves and thus the full, healthy development of the self – what Rogers calls "self-actualization" – is impossible for them.

The primary requisite for healthy personality development is the receipt of* unconditional *positive regard during infancy and childhood, which occurs when parents bestow affection and approval on their children* regardless *of how they behave.

The primary requisite for healthy personality development is the receipt of *unconditional* positive regard during infancy and childhood, which occurs when parents bestow affection and approval on their children *regardless* of how they behave. When this aspect of parental positive regard becomes internalized, children develop an attitude of unconditional positive regard toward themselves and, thus, no need for self-development limiting defensiveness.

Helping children to develop an attitude of unconditional positive regard toward themselves does not require the

complete absence of restraints on their behavior. By using behavioral control techniques that do not depend on manipulating their children's sense of self-esteem, parents can encourage or discourage specific behaviors without at the same time establishing conditions of worth. During infancy and early childhood, for example, undesirable behaviors might be controlled by a combination of proper arrangement of the environment (e.g., removal of breakable objects from low-lying surfaces, placing plastic plugs in electrical outlets), distraction (removing an infant from the vicinity of the delicate stereo system and occupying it with an interesting toy), and simple physical restraint (placing a gate across the top of the stairs, fencing in the back yard). As children get older parents can begin to make a distinction between the worth of behaviors and the worth of the self: The worth of behaviors is conditional—some are appropriate, others are inappropriate. The worth of the self is unconditional—a person's self is not worth more sometimes and less other times, depending upon the person's behavior, and one person's self is not worth more or less than another's, depending upon their respective behavior. Children can gradually be brought to understand that the self exists outside the dimension of positive and negative evaluation, that each person's self is uniquely (not comparatively) worthwhile, simply by virtue of being itself.

Just as children should not be controlled by being made to feel less worthwhile for performing disapproved of actions, likewise they should not be made to feel more worthwhile for performing approved of actions. Either strategy implies conditions of worth. But, if parents can communicate to their children the distinction between the kind of worth that actions have and the kind of worth that the self has, then it is safe and appropriate for them to encourage their children to feel good (but not more *worthwhile*) when performing some actions (for example, being kind to others) and to feel bad (but not less *worthwhile*) when performing other actions (for example, being cruel to others).

Vipassana meditation as training for the task of rearing psychologically healthy children

Now we come to the critical question: How can the practice of vipassana meditation help us to be better parents? From Rogers' perspective, our success as parents depends upon our maintaining an attitude of unconditional positive regard toward our children. This, unfortunately, is easier said than done. To the extent that we have our own conditions of worth (which is all too great an extent for most of us), we will almost inevitably project them into our relationships with our children, feeling more worthwhile when they behave in some ways and less worthwhile when they behave in other ways. The problem for us, as parents, of seeing *our* own worth as being dependent upon the behavior and accomplishments of our children is that consistency then virtually requires that we see *their* own worth as being dependent upon their behavior and accomplishments. (It is, of course, natural and healthy to feel good—but not more worthwhile—when our children behave in some ways and bad—but not less worthwhile—when they behave in other ways.)

To the extent that we are able to meet our experiences with an attitude of equanimity (without craving or aversion) and with clarity of perception (without delusion), important things happen.

Rogers' analysis is easily translatable into the terminology of the Buddhist vipassana model of personality. In terms of that model, our relationships to our children tend to be deficient because our reactions to them are characterized by craving, aversion, and delusion. When our children do something which enhances our conditional positive self-regard, giving us self-centered pleasure, we react not with clear, precise awareness and an attitude of equanimity, but with craving. Our response is dominated by a clinging to the self-centered pleasure, and a desire to have more such pleasure in the future. If our children have not learned to make the critical distinction between the worth of one's behavior and the worth of one's self, then our response of craving is likely to communicate itself to them as a condition of worth. (E.g. "My parents' approval of me depends upon my getting good grades; I *need* to get good grades in order to be worthwhile.") Thus our children learn the mental habit of craving. Likewise, when our children do something which threatens our conditional positive self-regard, causing us self-centered pain, we react not with clear, precise awareness and an attitude of equanimity, but with aversion. Our response is dominated by a desire to end the pain and to keep it from coming back. Again our response is likely to communicate itself to our children as a condition of worth. ("My parents' affection for me depends upon my not getting angry at them; I *need* to not get angry at them in order to be worthwhile.") Thus our children learn the mental habit of aversion. And because our reactions to our children are dominated by craving and aversion we distort our experience of them. We delude ourselves about them and our relationship to them, and insist that they experience themselves in accordance with our delusions. Thus our children learn the mental habit of delusion. Of course, our relationship to our children is not made less healthy by the simple *experience* of pleasure and pain in response to their behavior. A wide range of emotional responses is normal and healthy in any close relationship. It is our *reaction* to the pleasure and pain that is the problem.

I believe that vipassana meditation offers us a powerful solution to this problem. The practice of vipassana meditation develops one's capacity to experience pleasure and pain without craving and aversion, and thus diminishes the need for self-delusion. Such a capacity leads directly to an attitude of unconditional positive regard, toward oneself and toward others, and, thus, can be seen as valuable training for the task of rearing psychologically healthy children.

(Now I'm going to show this to my children. They probably still won't want their friends to know what I'm *doing* in the linen closet, but I may at least have an easier time getting them to turn down the stereo while I'm doing it.)

Meditation: Opening the Door to True Education

by Linda Winkelried-Dobson

Today's conventional education is meaningful, but not significant. Meaning is of the mind; significance is of the spirit. This is what has drawn guardians of young minds together in a paradigm shift of the greatest magnitude—an expanding consciousness of the need to guide children to fulfill their potential.

But as we leave the comfortable, paved highway of the "normal" approach to education to clear the path for significance, we encounter the tangled clutter of bureaucracy, overgrown weeds of complacency, and the fallen, rotten logs of empiricism. And the further we trudge on through these obstacles, the more we realize how our own training has left us ill-prepared for the task at hand.

We can no longer depend on the obsolete methods we currently accept to uncover the treasure we seek. When did we turn the corner and totally ignore the original Latin meaning of educate, *to bring out that which is within?* This country's leading educationists decided to cash in on the empirical and statistical boom which was rapidly developing in academia at the turn of the century. John Dewey's insistence that a teacher acquire a working knowledge of philosophy, history of human thought and sociology, as well as of teaching, went virtually unheeded. Through "empiricism gone wild," educationists continued to compile and, more importantly, evaluate information by quantitative standards. Information was broken down into every conceivable subdivision in an effort to apply it. When ultimately estranged from the arts and self-understanding, teachers began to emerge from college as paper-shuffling technicians rather than intuitive, thinking guides of young minds.[1]

Obviously a new paradigm requires a new perspective, one that takes our attention away from normal curves, grades, standardized tests, indeed, all the tabulations devised to categorize and label children. Stripped of empiricism's cloak, we then expose the uniquely innocent questioning, observing, imagining, openness and creativity which already flourish within every child who enters a classroom.

Instead of assuming that each young mind exists as an empty vessel that needs to be filled with an accumulation of facts and figures, and accepting that this will somehow raise the neophyte to inspired brilliance, the whole child's needs can be addressed by cultivating his innate potential. This is not to say that children don't require basic skills. But they need a sense of purpose, a glue to bind together what often seems to be unrelated and irrelevant information.

Modern education, grounded in the empiricism of the Western industrial world view, fails to address the deeper levels of human consciousness. Meditation reveals that these levels are the true source of learning, creativity, and compassion. Meditation techniques are easily taught to children and have great value for them.

When one year in a suburban public school produced unhealthy changes in the mind, body and spirit of her oldest son, Linda Winkelried-Dobson opted for a rural life in New York's Adirondack Mountains. Home schooling immediately became an integral factor in a simplified, holistic approach to life, love and learning with her three children. Realizing meditation's importance in her own home school, she now offers classes to other children, guiding them to inner search and understanding.

Linda's writings have appeared in **Priority Parenting, New Dimensions,** *and* **Home Education Magazine,** *and will be included in two books scheduled for Fall release. She is presently at work on a book incorporating the "New Age" educational paradigm and the home schooling that puts it to use. Linda is also currently involved in the development of National Home Schoolers.*

Fortunately the light of integration is being shed on education by several leading organizations. The National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, in a preliminary version of its new policy statement, states that the current math curriculums "effectively separate students from mathematical reality, inquiry and intellectual growth."[2] A commission of the National Council for Teachers of English acknowledges that nearly ninety percent of grades K-6 in U.S. schools are dominated by outmoded theories of teaching with basal readers. Instead of resisting alternatives, they now recommend the use of genuine children's literature, i.e. real reading, to teach reading. Recent research has revealed that "reading, like all language, only develops easily and well in the context of its use."[3] The emerging educational paradigm reverses the long trend toward content and specifies an enlightened appreciation of context.

Even though these external changes hold much promise, they are only one small step toward truly holistic education. We not only need to rethink what we're pouring into children, but we must uncover the essence of the young lives we wish to guide. The very nature of the growing child demands increased independence, yet the rules and punishment of traditional education continue to provide the springboard from which they leap, not into order and responsibility, but into chaos and rebellion. How, then, can a teacher learn to become an understanding and guiding counselor while maintaining the necessary discipline?

Meditation and insight

Perhaps because I have not been socialized into the profession of teaching, I was able to seize the opportunity to use unorthodox teaching methods in my family's home-based classroom. It was not formal training, but ten years of practicing meditation which led me to realize that simply filling my three children wasn't enough. Their existing, natural intuition and its inherent qualities needed exercise, time and attention to develop. If "the real goal of education is seen to encompass nothing less than the fulfillment of the student,"[4] I possessed a key that could open the door to emotional and intellectual harmony.

Meditation, a method by which the student's mind is led from the gross level of experience to the deeper states of consciousness, awakens the Self-conscious which is the foundation, the stable component, of all knowledge. A student must first experience himself as the knower of knowledge. Meditation leads him beyond the self-imposed physical and linear boundaries of education. It allows the student to dip into the eternal well of creativity, contentment, and knowing that exists inside.

If we're going to leave society's paved highway of education, we must concern ourselves with elevating consciousness, not just the standard of living.

"Real meditation as translated from the Sanskrit means 'doing the wisdom' and involves the holistic integration of body, mind, feelings and internal energies, so the entire consciousness functions as a harmonious whole."[5] Typical schooling concentrates on the body and mind, with feelings and emotions most often left to parents to decipher. Internal energies, however, the very core of our existence, are dismissed by all. But since the development of the theory of dissipative structures, which won Ilya Prigogine the Nobel Prize in chemistry in 1977, the effects of internal energies can no longer be ignored. Nor can their implications regarding meditation's connection to our quest for fulfillment.

Simply stated, the theory commences with the continuous motion of energy patterns in matter. This energy exists in a closed system where there is no internal transformation of energy (inert), or in an open system known as a dissipative structure. Open systems (e.g. animals, trees, a town) constantly consume energy, thereby maintaining their form. These structures are highly organized (complex), and always in process, never at rest. The more complex a structure, the more energy is necessary to maintain its myriad connections, which renders it more vulnerable to internal fluctuations (unstable).

This very instability allows the structure to transform, because dissipation, or scattering, of energy creates the potential for sudden reordering. The system is not altered by minor fluctuations, but at a critical point there is a perturbance, a shake-up of the whole system. Original elements connect in new ways, thereby creating a new whole. And because nature constantly moves toward higher order, it becomes more and more likely that new transformations will occur. The new and increased connections ultimately require more energy which makes the structure additionally unstable.[6]

Meditation alters the fluctuation of energy in the brain, measured as EEG patterns. As human dissipative structures engage in this practice, the larger slower alpha and theta waves increase resulting in a larger fluctuation. When these fluctuations reach a critical stage they produce a reordering of the structure, yielding a whole which is more advanced than the sum of its parts. There is a permanent change, making each successive change more likely in an exciting journey toward higher levels of consciousness.

Physiological benefits

In addition to the positive effects in the brain's energy, medical studies of meditators reveal that respiration rate drops to about half that of the resting rate, leading to decreased oxygen consumption. Because the drop occurs as a result of a natural reduction in metabolic activity at the cellular level, cells consequently emit less carbon dioxide as well.

A twenty-five percent decrease in cardiac output with corresponding reduction of heart rate further confirms a state of metabolic rest greater and more rapid than that of normal sleep.[7]

Perhaps the most significant physiological (or as some term, psychophysiological) benefit of meditation relates to its effect in the nervous system. Practitioners of holistic medicine proceed from the base knowledge that the state of the nervous system, the connection

between mind, body and environment, determines the relative ease or dis-ease of the human organism. Nature maintains a rest-and-renewal response to help a nervous system cope with temporary, fleeting lassitude. But we now function in the technological age as members of a fast paced, "now" oriented society. If overnight mail delivery is too slow for our needs, we purchase a fax machine for home or office to insure immediate transmittal of our important information. Simultaneous with stock market fluctuations, a computer adjusts our portfolios. Mail order businesses thrive as they provide shopping at the press of a few buttons. Even fast food wasn't fast enough; enter the drive-in window. Now we only need to stop the car long enough to pay and grab the bag.

Due to over-stimulation, the nervous system naturally suffers, and we lose precious consciousness through fatigue. The battle between fatigue and rest is what we call stress.

Over-exposure to long-term stress interrupts the natural rhythm of activity/rest, and it's increasingly difficult to rebound between stresses. To make matters worse, Kenneth Pelletier, a psychologist at the University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco, says our bodies can't distinguish between real and imaginary stresses, so a nervous system suffers even when the stress is merely perceived.[8]

Meditators achieve the polar opposite of stress as the practice produces an immediate, natural state of deep rest for the autonomic nervous system. By alternating the nervous system's exposure between the experience of pure consciousness (the source of energy) and the experience of the waking state, it is able to release stress and rest, thereby allowing rejuvenation to occur spontaneously. By integrating the values of outer life and the inner spirituality, one experiences an integrated, or whole life. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, founder of the Science of Creative Intelligence (SCI), world renowned proponent of transcendental meditation, and author of *Transcendental Meditation*, compares this life to modern architecture. When a person enjoys the comfort of the indoors as well as the beauty of outdoors, he tears down the wall dividing the two and installs glass so "he can live in and out together at the same time."[9]

While meditation has been called the "non-medicinal tranquilizer," this is merely a side effect, not its purpose. Maharishi says, "The mind thinks as the nervous system behaves."[10] By bringing conscious mind into the thinking process, meditation allows one to transcend thought and tap its source: the energy that sends it and the intelligence that directs it. Meditation is a primary resource to "bring out that which is within" all students as we prepare them for life. Instead of building up stress because they are constantly required to increase productivity, they increase energy levels by dipping into their internal reservoirs and emerging with stress-free nervous systems.

The nature of the mind

What does this reveal to us as educators? Unfortunately we have been led to believe that it is through the child's mind that he will reach awareness. But just as rocks are collected and piled one atop the other until, as a group, they form a dam capable of restricting the natural flow of a raging river, thoughts (products of mind) hinder the rhythm of consciousness. They create an impasse, separating the force of energy and intelligence from the pool of "outer" life. In reality the mind impedes awareness. To relate this understanding to learning and the true meaning of education, we must examine the nature of the mind.

In our normal waking state all information the mind admits is perceived through the filter of our senses. From the first day of life, this information is understood only in relation to what has passed before. It remains unchanged, in the same order and the same relation with previous impressions, not as they necessarily were, but as they were perceived.[11]

Since the mind relies upon sensory data, it continually desires stimulation and constantly requires experience. In this attempt to satisfy itself, it seeks the most pleasurable experience available. So attention constantly drifts: our focus transfers to pleasant music while reading the newspaper, an attractive member of the opposite sex passes down the street and interrupts our thoughts, we watch the gym class exercising outside the window during math class. But the mind will never reach contentment in the ever-changing relative field because new experience is continually created and, therefore, desired. Thus we tend to lose consciousness in the object of perception. Through this process of identification, the mind becomes identified with the object and consciousness is overshadowed by the experience.

The object of experience fills the mind like a motion picture fills the screen at a theater. The pure whiteness of the screen (consciousness) is veiled in the changing motion of color (experience) produced by the camera (senses).

But for education to occur, one must know what remains as a *result* of the experience, *not the experience itself.* Learning, therefore, is the product of the union of the knower and the known. This union can only occur when pure consciousness remains unbound by the experience's impact on the mind. When mind exists on the stable foundation of Self-consciousness, it is in a state of contentment and capable of serving in its true capacity—the link between spirituality and material life, a bond between the relative and absolute states of being. True knowledge is structured in consciousness.[12]

Right answers do not a lesson make. By encouraging these children to utilize their inborn capacity to create, they are free to explore, clarify and extend thinking processess beyond the boundaries of any single right answer.

When a person whose consciousness is lost in experience attempts to learn, the lack of foundation becomes apparent. This is why a child who managed to receive an A on a test can no longer remember the facts two months

later. The information was merely an experience the mind perceived as opposed to a true fusion of the knower and the knowlege, the witness and the witnessed.

Imagine a three-year-old child's first experience with a car's engine as an example of a mind relying solely on sensory input. He sees a wonderful conglomeration of nuts, bolts and wires; something to touch and play with. When the conscious mind is brought into play, we have an auto mechanic who views a marvelously ordered, structured work of art. Both child and mechanic observe the same machinery but they acquire totally different perceptions because the mechanic's understanding transcends the experience of the engine.

Through this simple example we can clearly see how a person's programming, all impressions positive and negative, alter our perception of the world around us. Our layers of conditioning also change our perception of our selves. But without the slightest experience of higher consciousness, how can we or the children we tend possibly know that anything other than ordinary perception exists?

> The yogic science of consciousness lists three methods of validating knowledge. The first is knowledge of the knower or observer's limitations, leading to the study of ontology, the science of Being, which deals with the nature of perception. The second method deals with epistemology and is identical with what the West calls scientific method. The third method is transcendental knowing, which unites the previous two in the study of reason itself since, rationally, all effects must be traced to their causes, all perceptions traced to the perceiver, and all evidence examined from the point of view of the Universal Intelligence. This three-step validation enables the student of the knowing process to penetrate directly beyond the relative and comparative knowledge yielded by what we call the scientific method of validation.[13]

Until a person becomes involved in transcendental knowing, the subject of meditation remains esoteric because of our inability to verbalize or intellectualize an experience beyond the senses and relative world. But since all reality that we experience is created from aspects that occur in and around us, including learning, reality is only valid in relation to one's state of consciousness. This is the heart of holistic awareness from which all other branches of learning should stem.

Mediation with children

Just as there exist many psychotechnologies, or methods to expand consciousness, there are also different types of meditation: Transcendental, Kabalist, kundalini, Zen, Tibetan Buddhist, raja yoga and tantric yoga, among others. When dealing with children, though, it is not so much the method but the rhythm, gentleness and order of the actual process that counts.

After conducting various meditation groups that included over one hundred children during the past three years, my experiments have shed light on some of the basics that encourage both optimal attentiveness and rapid results with children between the ages of seven and sixteen. Many of my informal findings, particularly those regarding the ages at which different types of meditation are most effective, coincide with formal investigations concerning developmental levels of children's personalities and cognitive skills. Upon analyzing more than 8000 childhood studies, The Hewitt Research Foundation, Washougal, WA, concluded that the best age to begin formal schooling is between eight and ten "whether you look at the young child's senses, reasoning ability, brain development or coordination."[14] I've found that dividing the children into groups under or over ten years of age effectively narrows most developmental gaps.

The following procedures are far from absolute. Every group I've had the privilege of working with has proven unique—a marvelously diverse blend of creativity, ability to comprehend abstract notions and, of course, awareness of internal energies. Many times I prepared a class plan only to tear it up after tuning in to the children's needs on that particular day and moment in time. In other words, feel free to incorporate your personal knowledge of the youngsters you work with to discover all the intricacies that will best minister to their requirements.

As you participate in class meditations, you'll sense a slow but steady change emanating from within yourself that will affect your personal life as well as the group. The ideal remains "practice what you preach," creating the same psychological and consciousness changes in yourself that you provide for your students. When I first began incorporating two fifteen-minute sessions in my daily routine, long before I worked with children, I felt a day without meditation was like a day without sunshine. Again, the words and sensations of the material world may not adequately describe either the experience or the results. This is something every individual must approach, practice, and perceive for himself. As Buddha said, "There are many paths to the mountain's peak." Some types of meditation are steeper and more direct; others less arduous but time-consuming. The attention, energy and time we contribute to the journey is our choice as free-willed individuals. But if we're going to

Photo by Linda Winkelried-Dobson

leave society's paved highway of education, we must concern ourselves with elevating consciousness, not just the standard of living.

Although the subject of meditation differs depending on developmental level, the process remains much the same. Relaxation is key to effectiveness. Even the most institutionalized classroom atmosphere can change when the fluorescent lights go off and candles are placed effectively (and safely) around the room. Music works wonders; any soft, soothing instrumentals will do, but today's market abounds with records and cassettes produced specifically for use in meditative relaxation.[15] These include recordings of soothing sounds of nature, from rain showers to the call of a loon in a deep forest lake that youngsters particularly enjoy. A few, inexpensive incense holders and a variety of fragrant incense sticks or cones include the sense of smell in the total relaxation process.

All of the above trappings are beneficial, but certainly not essential should they present a problem with your local administration. Whether you use these methods or not, have everyone remove his shoes and sit or lie on the floor in a large circle to encourage informality.

Initiate each session, at least one hour after eating, with relaxation exercises similar to those now used for everything from childbirth to stress management. The rhythm found within all of nature is the first basic of which children need become aware, so begin with rhythmic tensing and relaxing of arms first, then legs, then the whole body, always guiding their awareness to the energy involved, the vibrations felt. Point out proper breathing techniques—energy and breath in through the nose during tension, release of energy and breath out through the mouth upon relaxation. As needed, the brief exercise period may include neck rotations, shoulder raising and lowering, and simple yoga postures that are not strenuous, but lead to greater awareness of the body's energy disposition.

The most important aspect of preparation is discipline in its true sense—instruction. Every individual in the group needs to focus energy in the same direction. Just one child out of a group of thirty harbors the potential to seriously disrupt your purpose if his energy remains scattered so, ideally, he would be asked to leave the room, assured that he may return at any time. Any disciplinary measure necessary should be explained in a harmless, assuring manner so that its real purpose is clearly understood. You allow a student free choice by asking his cooperation, not strict adherence to a classroom rule.

Although adding meditation to the standard curriculum is certainly a step in the right direction, our new awareness must be augmented by a change in our outdated approach to learning. Through self-awareness, teacher-guides will not teach, but rather allow learning to happen.

All of this may leave you with the impression that only a saint could pull this off; that a warm, loving atmosphere looms impossible amidst the variety of personalities assembled in your classroom. Any teacher or parent, however, may provide a positive, caring environment through his or her own discipline. It is the guide's discipline and energies that set the tone of the session. This requires that you be calm and centered, prepared to utilize your own inner guidance as the source of peace and love to share. Meditating alone before the actual group session leads to increased patience, understanding, and a sense of direction.

After exercises, the first step with children under ten leads them to increased awareness and greater concentration. These traits not only aid the children in scholastic pursuits but become essential to further spiritual awakening as they mature. This age group enjoys and benefits from practices which involve recognition and development of the senses, and observation and listening meditations.

When you feel they are ready, encourage the youngsters in personal expression of internal energies, i.e. discussions of emotions and individual responses to sensory experience. This serves to establish the solid, emotional foundation upon which the children live comfortably and openly in regard to these aspects of themselves.

Since cognitive skills blossom at approximately age ten, students can then proceed to discriminating between the internal energies. Now they are ready to study them in earnest by understanding a) how they work, b) the marvels of cause and effect and c) methods of control that help them realize they can create their own destiny. This understanding need not and should not be taught. "If he (teacher) is wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."[16] Allow the children the joy of discovery and true connection with knowledge that already exists inside but merely needs to be guided to the surface.

Meditations may now extend beyond pure observation and include more and more visualization, wonderful exercise in abstract thinking and creative problem solving, and training in the differences between fact and application of fact. Now history, science and social studies arise as meaningful pursuits for a student ready to make practical observations. He is able to understand the nature of consciousness as it relates to his existence and place in nature.

Dealing with children's stress

Unfortunately children who have never been exposed to purposeful relaxation and live with constant stress usually arrive at meditation sessions "wound up." Nichole, a particularly negative eight-year-old caught in the throes of her parents' separation, needs at least five minutes to rid her mind and feelings of all the ugliness she attracts and therefore perceives in the course of her day. The six other children in her group quickly latch on to the opportunity as well, eager to release their pent-up stress. Nine-year-old Eric feels cheated at the local skating competition. Sarah, also nine but going on thirty-five, worries that there isn't enough packaged macaroni and cheese in her house for her to prepare dinner for two younger sisters. Most of the problems

I've heard over the years, though, center around the school: fear of an upcoming test, humiliation in flunking same, "bad" report cards, shame at being reprimanded in front of the whole class, defeat in teacher-instigated class competition, etc., etc. As different children enter my groups, their problems continue to reflect a serious loss of self-esteem; indeed, school youngsters face a direct attack on it almost daily.

Allowing Nichole and the others the opportunity to vent their frustrations turns out to be time well spent. Although it requires me to lengthen our sessions by as much as half an hour, the release of emotional baggage makes room to be filled with positive self images.

With minds free of distraction, the children form a circle on the floor, sitting with straight backs and crossed-legged, hands on thighs with palms up, thumbs and forefingers touching. The circle provides a continuity of group energy, while the placement of hands and fingers insures the vitality of personal energy. We close our eyes and, as in the exercises, we breathe deeply to a quiet, steady count of four (breathe in to count of four, hold four, out four). Because all their attention is focused on their breath, it takes the children only five or six times to feel the calming effect. From here we proceed into the particular meditation of the day.

Deborah Rozman's *Meditating With Children* is an excellent source for initial meditations from which you can get myriad ideas for future sessions. During my family's home school sessions, it's been very easy and enjoyable to integrate the meditations with units of study. For example, the younger children can spend a few minutes examining one leaf of a plant, calm themselves with deep breathing, then proceed to a visualization exercise whereupon you verbally take them into the leaf itself. The children become energy traveling through the stem, then into one small vein of the leaf. Depending on their age, you can either point out the chlorophyll pigments or simply the lush green of their surroundings. Let the sun rise on them—guide them in feeling the warmth and energy the leaf receives. Help them to imagine a gentle rain—smell the damp earth—delight in the freshness.

Guide the children out of the meditation and into a related activity which serves to channel their energy into a constructive purpose. After this particular leaf meditation, try a short nature hike to observe plants in natural surroundings. And don't forget the variety of experience that crafts, music, theatrics, dance and art provide for youngsters. Plant seeds, play music of different tempos and allow the children to express themselves as leaves through dance, or provide material so they may paint what they saw in their visualization. I've seen children as young as five create pictures which included detail and imaginative use of color and form far beyond age expectation.

Just as our bodies work on a natural activity and rest system, so should the meditative process. Maintaining a consistent passive/active rhythm allows children to dip into internal energies (passive) and relate them to an external purpose (active). Children easily understand the process when you compare it to the rhythm of night and day, the seasons, or sleeping and waking.

Older children, too, can begin with visualization, but may be taken further into the realm of empathy and intuition. Charles, my ten-year-old son, and I witness an especially gruesome television account of the African drought and rampant starvation, so we decide to include the subject in the following group meditation. Through my verbal clues we travel into the dry, parched land, confined to weak bodies with swollen bellies, stumbling along a dusty highway to reach food some fifteen miles away. After "living" this harsh reality, we turn our energy and the problem over to our higher selves, void of thought. When I slowly prompt the end of the meditation by drawing everyone's attention back to their breath, the children take a few more deep breaths, then quietly begin to wiggle fingers, stretch necks, straighten out legs, or whatever their personal method of easing back into waking consciousness.

Photo by Linda Winkelried-Dobson

Mike, who for sixteen years has been a well-endowed receiver, finally speaks after five full minutes of silence. "I always figured people didn't have anything because they were losers. But these people can't help it—they're in the wrong place at the wrong time. If we don't give it (aid)," he continues, "they lay down in pain and die, man." The eight group members converse animatedly among themselves for some time while I marvel at their new-found awareness and the depth of their understanding.

The decision is unanimous. The children forego typical trick-or-treating this year and collect for UNICEF instead. The oldest members, Mike and Andrea, also sixteen, draft a compelling plea for help to our Senators which we all sign. Mike further decides he can survive without half of his liberal allowance and begins sending it to different relief organizations.

Higher level thinking

Right answers do not a lesson make. By encouraging these children to utilize their inborn capacity to create, they are free to explore, clarify and extend thinking processes beyond the boundaries of any single right answer. Just like seeds scattered on a farmer's field, only those thoughts that penetrate beyond the surface level take root and flourish. The rest are scattered in the wind, lost to their potential. Meditation's clarity provides the opportunity to jump the waking state's restricting fences—intuition furnishes the necessary map and compass to lead us in the right direction in our freedom.

Recently two fourteen-year-old neighborhood boys needed to borrow our encyclopedias for a report on the Pythagorean theorem. I ushered them into our Learning Room and told them to help themselves while I prepared dinner. Within moments they were on their way back out the door, mumbling that they just couldn't write the report as there was no mention of the theorem anywhere. When I questioned them, I discovered they had looked in the P volume, found nothing, and quit. Looking the theorem up under Geometry never occurred to them, and they were genuinely astonished when we found a full page devoted to the subject.

Modern technology makes empirical information instantly available via books, television, telephone and computer, yet we still require children to spend valuable time memorizing disjointed facts as if the information would be forever lost to them if they didn't.

If we spend just a small proportion of classroom time teaching students like my neighbors how to access all our accumulated data, we would virtually wipe out the need to memorize. We could then devote our attention to the very real needs of learning how to think and structuring the subsequent knowledge. But "fathers and mothers have lost the idea that the highest aspiration they might have for their children is for them to be wise—as priests, prophets, or philosophers are wise. Specialized competence and success are all that they can imagine.[17]

Modern educational practices are at once the cause of specialization's tunnel vision and its greatest supporters. As long as we insist on measuring the intangible quality of thought with grades, if we continue to ignore the scientific verification of ancient wisdom regarding the source and nature of thought, we will remain on the merry-go-round of specialized competence: thirsty for knowledge, every drop leading us to discover how much more there is to learn, increasingly parched by the very desire that leads us to the well.

A "back to basics" curriculum would present Africa to the children of my meditation group as boring facts and figures drawn from a sanitized geography text. The youngsters would pass or fail a test based on their ability to regurgitate the curriculum's requirements. If they pass, they're one step farther along the arbitrarily paved road that leads to professional school. If they fail, they still move on to study yet another continent of faceless people and misunderstood realities.

Fifteen minutes of meditation, however, transcended the thinking, intellectual level of study and reached the essence of each child. Free of the mind's process (thoughts related to previous input), the important, humane knowledge penetrated each child's pure consciousness. Let them look up Africa's population if, by some remote chance, their life's work utilizes that information. In the meantime, without threat of grade or a predetermined goal, they unleashed the power of world study that exists within their own consciousness. The answers were already there—the children only needed the key of meditation to unlock the door which separated abstract and concrete reality.

Although adding meditation to the standard curriculum is certainly a step in the right direction, our new awareness must be augmented by a change in our outdated approach to learning. Through self-awareness, teacher-guides will not teach, but rather allow learning to happen. A child must collect enormous amounts of sensory information—some helpful, much useless—in order to make sense of his world. He will not even be aware that there are questions to ask until enough experience provides adequate input to compose common sense judgments.[18]

We will be more effective if we view our jobs as guides along the children's path to maturity than if we think of ourselves merely as purveyors of the information necessary to pass from grade to grade, from school to job, from job to financial security. An education which encompasses the whole child—body, mind and spirit—will provide future generations with personal security from which all other security will naturally flow.

The benefits of meditation are immeasurable. The message rings clearly. Don't teach children how to answer questions, guide them to ask. Don't strive for the intellectual, allow intuition to unfold. Remove the focus from individual gain, and grant the children the ability to bring out that which is within.

Notes

1. Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 428-429.
2. "The Changing Face of Math Education," *Learning '88*, (February, 1988), p. 4.
3. "Alternatives to Basal Readers," *Learning '88*, (March, 1988), p. 6.
4. Paul H. Levine, "TM and the Science of Creative Intelligence," *Phi Delta Kappan*, (December, 1972), p. 231.
5. Deborah Rozman, *Meditating with Children* (Boulder Creek, CA: University of the Trees Press, 1975), p. 147.
6. Marilyn Ferguson, *The Aquarian Conspiracy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 163-165.
7. Harold H. Bloomfield, M.D., et al., *TM – Discovering Inner Energy and Overcoming Stress* (New York: Delacorte Press, 1975), pp. 63-90.
8. Ferguson, p. 251.
9. From a personal cassette recording of an address by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (source and origin unknown).
10. Ibid.
11. G. I. Gurdjieff, *Herald of the Coming Good* (Paris: no publisher given, 1933; reprinted, New York: Weiser, 1970), p. 30.
12. "True knowledge is structured in consciousness" is the motto of Maharishi European Research University (MERU).
13. Christopher Hills, *Nuclear Evolution* (Boulder Creek, CA: University of the Trees Press, 1977) p. 504.
14. Raymond Moore, "The Educated Beautiful," *Kappa Delta Pi Record*, (Summer, 1987), p. 124.
15. Local record stores, record clubs and New Age book stores are beginning to carry greater selections of meditative music. Artists and titles include, but are certainly not limited to, the following: Eliza Gilkyson, "Pilgrim"; Robbie Gass, "Om Namaha Shivaya"; Sal Rachele, "Infinite Peace"; Steven Halpern, "Spectrum Suite"; Daniel Kobialka, "Path of Joy"; Machu Picchu Impressions, "Amazon Song."
16. Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1976), p. 56.
17. Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1987), p. 58.
18. John Holt, *How Children Learn* (New York: Pitman Publishing Corp., 1967), pp. 48-51.

The Fasting Quest As a Modern Rite Of Passage

by Steven Foster and Meredith Little

I suspect it was . . . the old story of the implacable necessity of a man having honour within his own natural spirit. A man cannot live and temper his metal without such honour. There is deep in him a sense of heroic quest; and our modern way of life, with its emphasis on security, its distrust of the unknown and its elevation of abstract collective values has repressed the heroic impulse to a degree that may produce the most dangerous consequences.

—Laurens van der Post, *Heart of the Hunter*[1]

Rites of passage are an important source of moral & psychological support for individuals going through ... changes. They also reaffirm ... community's sense of meaning and revitalize a culture. The "Vision Quest" of Native American cultures is a powerful rite of passage that may be adapted to the needs of modern society.

Human growth is characterized by social change. We must pass from one life stage to the next. The mother-womb of infancy dies when we are weaned. Weaning brings us into the world of childhood. We pass from childhood to adolescence. Adulthood looms ahead, a seemingly impassable barrier. One way or another we become "adult," in society's eyes or in our own. We leave the single state when we marry or enter a committed relationship. Sometimes, we divorce, re-entering the single state at a later stage of growth. We make our way through the various passages of our middle aged and later years, facing predictable crises brought about by parenthood, aging, retirement, and death. Finally, we cross the last threshold and begin our sacred journey through the underworld of death.

In traditional cultures, changes in life station were celebrated by rites or ceremonies of passage. Everyone participated in these ceremonies. If they did not, they were denied entrance to the next stage of their lives. Without rites of passage, they could not have understood their life experiences, nor could they have been capable of assuming the social responsibilities and privileges required by their change in life station. Without orderly rites of passage, tribal units would have become unstable and ceased to survive.[2]

In modern times, the rise of technological science, the emergence of large nations and cities, the influence and omnipotence of the media, the thickening of the wall between humans and their natural environment, the dawn of the computer age, the threat of thermonuclear annihilation, the breakdown of the basic family social unit, the dehumanizing pressure of modern life, and many other factors, have

For almost twenty years Steven Foster and Meredith Little have guided individuals through the initiatory stage of wilderness passage rites. Among their books are* The Book of the Vision Quest: Personal Transformation in the Wilderness *(rev. ed., Prentice Hall, 1988);* Betwixt and Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation *(edited with Louise Mahdi, Open Court, 1987); and* The Roaring of the Sacred River: Modern Apprenticeship to Ancient Wilderness Passage Rites *(Prentice Hall, 1989). They are co-directors of The School of Lost Borders, Box 55, Big Pine, CA 93513, a training facility in initiatory forms and process. They are married and have two children.

contributed to the weakening of traditional values, including the various ceremonies of life passage. The careful, ritual footprints left by our ancestors have been paved over by the traffic of modern civilization. Because these changes have tended to drain contemporary life of its meaningful spiritual or mythical content, the absence of the "old ways" is glaringly apparent.

Consider, for example, the modern rites of passage from childhood to adulthood. On the long anticipated day, while their loved ones look on, graduating high school seniors march to solemn music. They find their place in rows and hear speeches made by school, civic, and student leaders. A religious official gives an interdenominational prayer. The moment finally comes to graduate from the childhood world of high school. As the music sounds triumphantly, the graduates switch their tassels to the other side of their mortar boards. Where is the experiential "ordeal of passage" in this modern rite? The fast on the sacred mountain has devolved into the switching of a tassel. What modern high school student would insist that commencement from high school is adequate, meaningful, "experienced proof" that he or she is ready to live as an adult?

Apparently, our culture only dimly recognizes the value of traditional rites of passage. Dismissing native, indigenous, or traditional ways as mere superstition, or of little relevance to our automated lives, large numbers of us suffer changes in life status like victims—burdens to ourselves and others. Lacking inner resources developed from living a meaningful life, we too often nurture negative pictures of ourselves as helpless pawns unable to escape the blows of fate or the manipulations of others. We think someone else must heal us because we cannot heal ourselves. Someone else must lead us because we cannot lead ourselves. Someone else must be the hero or the heroine for us because there is nothing we can do, we are but the helpless victims of meaningless life stories.

The sanest, healthiest models of human growth regard crises, accidents, changes, and life transitions as challenges and opportunities of the highest order. If we can "pass through" our personal difficulties, we find ourselves enlarged and renewed, with direction and purpose, on the other side. The *I Ching* proverb says: "A hundred times you lost your treasure—and must climb the nine hills" (Hexagram 51). If we refuse to climb, we do not grow. Indeed, the truest of human teaching tells us how necessary it is to climb the nine hills if we expect to fulfill the promise of our lives. How many times in our span of years will we be called upon to uproot and transplant, to let go of the old and embrace the new, to end it and go on, to plow under and plant the new seed, to cease being ignorant and find out?

The fast on the sacred mountain has devolved into the switching of a tassel. What modern high school student would insist that commencement from high school is adequate, meaningful, "experienced proof" that he or she is ready to live as an adult?

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the loss of meaningful rites of passage has crippled the growth of modern people through the impasses of their lives. The symptoms of crisis are seen everywhere. Panic, hysteria, shock, anxiety, uncertainty, anger, boredom, drug abuse, vague apprehension, guilt, self-hatred, twistedness, helplessness, and "psychosomatic" illnesses of all kinds attend the experience of a life crisis. How often are we able to resolve the crisis with our own inner strength and determination? How often do we resort to the medical and social service professionals for help? How often do we consult our minister, medium, medicine man, psychiatrist, healer, guru, astrologer, or psychic? How often do we need help and support? And how often do we "go it alone," finding within our own life and value system a way of surviving, and finding meaning in, our crisis experience?

What of those who do not have an adequate myth or value system? They fish in troubled waters, unable to turn away from the past and look to the healing future. They move from one locale to another, but something of them gets stuck in-between. They change their occupation but cannot make a go of the new job. They cannot get over the loss of a friend or the death of a loved one. They conceive, give birth to, miscarry, or abort a child, but are not prepared to live with the changes brought about by the event. Devastated by natural disaster or accident, they never quite seem to get back on their feet. They do violence or have violence done to them and cannot learn from the consequences. They become enslaved to the thralls of drugs or alcohol but cannot find medicine in themselves to shrug the demons from their back. They burn out on the job but cannot find adequate ways to renew themselves.

Those without a life story all too easily trap themselves in nets fashioned by others to ensnare them—or they swallow themselves in their own ignorant thrashings. Either way, they are "at risk" to themselves, others, and the Earth they live on. They need to be helped to see that they are not victims, that they possess the inner gumption to make meaning of the quandary they got themselves into, that they *do* have a life story. *Wouldn't it be more beneficial if they were helped to see that they did not need help?*

If you do not get it from yourself,
Where will you go for it?
—The Zenrin[3]

Modern prototypes of the wilderness fasting or Vision Quest

A wilderness rite of passage such as the "Vision Quest" takes life, concentrates it into a brief/eternal span of literal/allegorical time, composes a story with a real/symbolic meaning whose mortal/immortal protagonist undergoes an ordeal/epiphany in a bounded/limitless environment where ordinary/non-ordinary realities exist simultaneously. The story is both the stuff of action (rite) and the stuff of contemplation (myth). As the protagonist moves through the plot of the story (which he/she creates), he/she finds the

self in a double-meaninged universe. An animal is both animal and spirit. A mountain is a mountain and a quest. A star is a star and an angel. A direction walked is a trail and a Way. A dream is a dream and a divine visitation. A mosquito is a pest and a messenger.

The story is always different, depending on the life that is telling it. But no matter how stories differ, there is always a basic, underlying similarity, a kind of archetypal plot or dynamic. This dynamic energizes countless heroic myths, ancient and modern, and stands at the head of Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and many other religions. Joseph Campbell has identified it as the "mono-myth."[4]

The mono-myth is often phrased as a dragon battle, a dismemberment, a crucifixion, an abduction, a night-sea journey, ingestion by a monster, a herculean task, an entombment, a dream or spirit journey, a territorial passage, an ascent of a mountain, or a descent into the underworld. The hero(ine) undertakes the trial in a sacred, threshold world in order to be transformed for the benefit of the people. A king or savior elects to die so that the kingdom may be saved. A goddess is dismembered in the netherland so that she may ascend again in the spring corn. Prometheus journeys to the lair of the gods to bring back fire to his people. The Sacred Twins challenge the Lords of Death to a contest on the great ball-court and outplay them. The Ugly Duckling endures a hard, lonely winter before he inherits his beautiful adulthood. For the sake of Love, the fairy-tale princess leaves the protected zone of her childhood castle and enters the dark forest where dwarf-tricksters live and witches come prowling with poisoned apples for sale. Such allegories comprise the archetypal underpinnings of rites of passage and provide a physical/mythical landscape or process within which the candidate marks (confirms, celebrates, formalizes) his/her change in life station.

As in ancient times, modern candidates leave everything behind and go alone to the sacred river of Nature. There they are tried by monsters, often of their own making, and visited by their own versions of spectres, spirit guides, helping inner voices, guardian angels, animal totems, goddesses, or universal forces/spirits. Through a long, dark night of the soul, they are rewarded with wisdom, strength, insight, understanding, acceptance. They are revived; their inner eyes are opened; vision, in its many forms, is granted. But the main condition of the gift received is that they must return to their world, their people, with this healing vision.

A wilderness passage quest such as the Vision Quest is "enacted mono-myth," or "experienced allegory." The story must be reduced to a practical, functional form/process. The plot must be choreographed into a "script," scenario, or drama, and adapted to fit an environment (the 'wilderness theater') that suits and enhances the role that the protagonist will play. Every act and scene must glue ordinary (physical) and non-ordinary (spiritual) together into a coherent synthesis. The Sufis describe an "interworld," an immediate kingdom between spirit and body that combines the two into one state of being. The threshold phase of the vision fast is such an interworld.

Mono-mythic variations of the Vision Quest are endless and relative to cultures. Plot and setting are rendered into a myriad of different variations on the same theme. Among American Indians, there are countless different wilderness rites, or fasting quests, depending on who is conducting them. Though the Paiute version might differ from the Crow, or the Cheyenne from the Ojibway (or one medicine man's version from another of the same tribe), each model is but a variation of the mono-myth.

Perhaps the best and most effective vision fast guides are those who are most loyal to the mono-myth itself, who seek to sew fine stitches at the fold of bounded and limitless. They build models they can trust, that will faithfully contain and nurture the student's body and spirit. The most trustworthy prototypes are those which have traditionally (and safely) served others. Hence, the effective guide masters a traditional prototype of the mono-myth before he ever begins to experiment with versions of his own creation. The last thing he wants to do is manipulate his charges with a script that contains his own hidden agendas. He knows full well that his charges must find their own agenda, and that his task is to offer a reliable ritual framework within which they will do the finding.

Photo by Tom Gregory

Because the mono-myth always presents an ordeal, the vision quest prototype must contain an element of risk or trial. Without an ordeal, the activity cannot be properly called a rite of passage. Therefore, the guide must tread a fine line between severity and safety. The ordeal must be attuned to the capabilities of the candidate in such a way as to tax him/her to the breaking point, but not to destroy or harm him/her. There are many ways to try the candidate without overdoing it.

The prototypes we are familiar with are ordeals primarily involving fasting (without food and sometimes water), solitude (strict isolation), and exposure to the ways of Nature (with only minimal protection—knife, rope, water, tarp, sleeping bag, matches, bandanna, jacket, change of clothes, and a journal). Alone in the solitude and silence of a wilderness place, the candidate endures

hunger, privation, loneliness, and the onslaught of the elements, in order to earn a gift of insight for the people. While the candidate is in the wilderness phase of the rite, the guide watches over him/her to insure bodily safety. In case of emergencies, the guide is available and equipped with appropriate emergency supplies and procedures.[5]

When the period of fasting is complete (usually three or four days and nights), the candidate returns to the secular world with a story to tell. This story is his/her own variant of the mono-myth, and is treated as such by the guide, who hears this story clearly and points out its salient features to the candidate. The return of the "hero/ine" from the sacred mountain requires an integration of the candidate with the deepest meanings of the story. That is, the candidate "owns" the story.

Why do modern people quest?

In the years since we began, candidates came to us for diverse reasons. Some of these reasons may help identify those who genuinely benefit from the experience of fasting alone in a wilderness place.

In the beginning, the first who expressed interest were high school students. Unschooled in theories of social anthropology, they instinctively recognized the relevance of a traditional fasting quest to their life situation. They saw it as a means of confirming their passage to adulthood in a meaningful way. Because they wrestled with ideas of what it meant to be an "adult," they felt the Vision Quest in their gut. They experienced the same feeling when they contemplated living on their own in the wilderness of modern civilization. To them, the ceremony was an acceptable and meaningful alternative "graduation." Not surprisingly, a large number of adults have also participated because they had never meaningfully confirmed their passage from childhood to adulthood.

Separation, divorce, loss of fortune, death of a child or spouse, an "empty nest," visible aging, loss of potency, a serious illness, suicidal depression, and a change of vocation, were reasons why many middle-aged adults participated. They sought to put crises behind them and to initiate a new phase of growth in their lives. The ceremony spun them out of their habit-tracks and confirmed their own ability to initiate or accept growth-change. Sheltered by the absence of civilization, surrounded by the almost forgotten mirror-face of Nature, they drew apart from their lives and pondered the plot and purpose of their life story. When they returned, they often found open doors leading out of old rooms.

Some fasted because they faced the prospect of separation or divorce. The need was insistent to be alone and to make important decisions regarding their future life path. The ceremony provided them with a chance to take a meaningful step toward incorporation into the body of singlehood. Others wished to confirm a decision to marry. By participating, they marked the end of singlehood and the beginning of togetherness. Likewise, expecting parents formalized their attainment of parenthood.

The loss of an unborn child, through miscarriage, abortion, or complications at birth has moved women to utilize the ceremony as a means of healing their grief and deepening their understanding of the meaning of such events. Victims of violence, rape, and child abuse—and those dealing with their own tendencies to be violent—have also found the ceremony to be a means of symbolically putting an end to extended periods of grief, fear, self-pity, resentment, guilt, or self-loathing. Solitary fasting while living close to Mother Earth is an effective way to bind up old wounds or to open eyes closed to the promise of dawn.

The time of "retirement" often precipitates a crisis manifested by severe illness or death. A number of persons over the age of sixty participated as a means of coming to grips with their own aging. These "elders" had an opportunity to "practice their dying," to regard the long sweep of their lives from a distance, and to see how they could best utilize and enjoy their remaining years. Individuals facing life-threatening illness returned with a better understanding of their bodies, their illness, and the ways in which they could fight or accommodate the disease.

Individuals mourning the death or loss of someone close to them found the ceremony to be an effective way of signifying an end to the time of grieving. With the aid of self-initiated ceremony, the mourner incorporated the deceased into his/her life as a companion or guide. In the deepest misery of self-loathing, addicts also have been known to hear the call of a wilderness passage rite. If they can leave their habit behind, they stand a good chance of having a bracing conversation with themselves. Individuals undergoing sexual identity crises find that Mother Nature and her creatures do not make judgements regarding sexual preference.

They are revived; their inner eyes are opened; vision, in its many forms, is granted. But the main condition of the gift received is that they must return to their world, their people, with this healing vision.

The three phases of the wilderness passage quest

The basic dynamics of the wilderness fast are described by a formula that underlies all such passage ceremonies. First identified by the German anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep, this formula states that all rites and ceremonies have three phases: an end, a middle, and a beginning—in that order. In other words, a rite of passage begins with an ending and ends with a beginning:

To make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from.
—T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding"

This discussion is organized according to van Gennep's definition of these three phases: Severance (*séparation*), Threshold (*marge*), and Incorporation (*agrégation*). We use his classic formula because it aptly characterizes the adventures of the candidate. He/she began with an ending. What came before was

over. In order to do this he/she had to prepare to leave it all behind, to prepare to make the end—so that there could be a beginning. Next, the candidate encounters the middle stage of the ceremony. This stage we call "the threshold," the actual experience of the trial or ordeal of passage, the time spent alone in nature. When his threshold time was over, he/she "incorporated," i.e., ended the adventure with a beginning. He/she blended with the physical setting of a new life story by returning to civilization.

Solitary fasting while living close to Mother Earth is an effective way to bind up old wounds or to open eyes closed to the promise of dawn.

Note that van Gennep's ceremonial formula is quite the opposite of the flow of life as we tend to perceive it. Usually, we think of our birth as the beginning, our life as the middle, and our death as the end. But the rite of passage merely takes up where life ends—and death begins. We begin with death, we pass through the middle stage of death, and we end with birth. This "death journey" is the irreducible, adamantine, symbolic kernel of the wilderness passage quest. It is the formula for human transformation.

Although all three stages of a rite of passage are of equal import, the middle term, "threshold," invites further scrutiny. Social anthropologists often use the French word, *marge* ("margin") or the Latin word, *liminal* ("limit"), instead of "threshold." Nevertheless, "threshold," with its diversity of connotations, is the most useful word. It suggests a boundary, margin, border, limit, door, crossing, gate, or opening. In our way of seeing the ceremony, the threshold phase has two doors: an inlet and an outlet. These doors symbolically define the border or limit itself. Their existence establishes finiteness to the sacred time/space they lead into and out from. Without these two doors (one death, the other birth), the threshold would not exist. Which door is which? Are they not the same, yet totally opposite?

With very little effort, one may discern the end—middle—beginning formula in almost all that we do, whether or not it is an intentional ceremonial act. Driving off to work for instance, involves a severance (ending the life at home), a threshold trial (the passage through traffic), and an incorporation (beginning with the world of work). Leaving work and driving home involves the same formula. So does making love. We sever from the old world of separateness and cross the threshold into the sacred passage world of union. When our love making is complete, we incorporate again into the world of separateness, but at a new stage of awareness. Going on vacation, we sever from home, enter the threshold of the vacation, and return to incorporation at home. Climbing a mountain, we leave everything behind and go to the mountain, then enter the threshold door, the climb itself. We emerge from the sacred passage at the summit. Then we return, the mountain now within us. If we get very ill, we confirm our desire to end sickness by entering the threshold passage called "Hospital." When our journey through the "underworld" passage is complete, we make a new beginning as healed individuals—or we incorporate within the body of death.

Once a candidate is able to recognize this tri-partite formula in the events of his life, he/she can initiate and perform ceremonial actions that are useful. To this basic framework of action he/she can add the flesh and bones of a creed or value system. The formula will aid him/her to better understand his/her role within the larger ceremonial perspective of the Vision Quest. He/she will come to view life from a transformational point of view. He/she will see that there is never a beginning without first an ending, and then a passing through.

Candidates often raise the question: "How can I leave it all behind if I'm just coming back to it? How can I make a new beginning if I simply return to the old?" Such thoughts invariably occur to them before they go on the fasting quest—rarely after they return. For the answer lies in the return. One does not come back "to the same old thing." What we return to has changed because we ourselves have changed. Our perspective has been altered; the wheel of perceptions has been spun. We will not incorporate into the same body, status, or world that we left behind. As the Greek sage Heraclitus put it, "Into the same river we step and do not step" (Fragment 110). Yes, we return to the same river, but while we were gone, the river kept flowing. Now, from an altered perspective, we can see that it is not the same river.

Modern benefits of the wilderness Vision Quest

A civilized person's ability to transform him/herself through the modern fasting quest is directly proportionate to the intensity of the motivation to leave the past behind. In other words, you get out of it exactly what you put in. If we jump as high as we are able, we will reach more than if we decide not to sweat too much. Truly we have to *want* to change. No amount of fancy talk will bring about desired alterations. The fasting quest is not a "magical cure." The quester does not get something for nothing.

We have always insisted that the decision to fast alone in the wilderness should not be made lightly, or in the heat of romantic passion. The candidates should examine their motives. They should ask themselves: "Why do I want to do this?" They should look very carefully at their expectations. If, like Prometheus, they want to steal the fire from the sacred altar of vision, what they steal will die in their hearts. Do they hope to take a recreational dance through a phantasmagoria of altered states? If so, they will be unable to find a comfortable place to sit. Do they expect a "quickie" transformation, hoping not to have to work too hard? If so, they will return from the threshold feeling cheated, puzzled, no more prepared to serve their people than they were before. The ceremony is nothing but a circle drawn in the dust, an empty form that is filled with the values and perceptions of the candidates. It is a mirror in which they see themselves reflected.

The experience of the ceremony is heightened and focused, given meaning and direction by each quester. The experience will rarely be continually uplifting, mystical, or transcendental. Highs/lows, excitement/boredom, hope/despair, sacred/profane will mingle to compose a flow of experi-

enced events that also include times when the gears are in neutral or the engine has fallen asleep. The vision fast is no more a "prescriptive" answer than is life itself—and all the same laws of karma apply. If a prescription is to be written that will positively affect the candidate's health and well-being, then it must be written by him/herself, in collusion with Mother Nature, the teacher.

The mystery and beauty of the quest is that it calls out the best in us and reflects back precisely how high or far we have jumped and what we saw when we were airborne. No one else does the jumping for us. No one else sees how far we jump or sees what we see. Of course, we are not always alert enough to catch what is going on. Sometimes we will goof ourselves up with expectations of one kind or another. Sometimes we will return disappointed that we didn't have a "vision." We wanted angels and all we got was a violent thunderstorm. Sometimes we return so high you would swear we had taken kite medicine. But then we fall flat when we try to sail through the first crisis at home. Sometimes we crawl back to base camp, feebly protesting that we are not ready to return—only to become towers of strength the moment we hit home. We marvel at the diversity of the stories we hear about how high or far this person jumped, what he saw, and what he landed in. Through each story run the priceless threads of the mono-myth.

In every story there is the one constant—Grandmother Nature. She bestows her favors, her teachings, her moods, on everyone, regardless of how they perceive her. Some candidates are blinder than others. Some hear better than others. Some learn quicker than others—but to all she imparts the same information. She covers them all with the same dirt and showers them all with the same rain. What the candidates chose to see or hear is their business. If they care to, they can drink the dew of heaven, for Nature sends that too. Then again, they can try to drink tea, as the following woman wrote in her threshold journal:

> I had a hard time with the fire and was somewhat discouraged at the fact that all I wanted was one cup of hot tea. I couldn't find the spoon. While looking for it the fire went out. The water was kind of warm. I was going to settle for warm tea when the pot fell into the smoldering fire. I tried again, resorting to toilet paper (as tinder). The T.P. smoldered. . . .
>
> I am sitting up on this rock, drinking slightly warm instant tea, which is full of dirt, and there is a bug floating around in it. My hands will have to do in fishing it out. My spoon is still gone.

Needless to say, every person returns from the wilderness with a greater tolerance for dirt and sweat and a deeper appreciation for the animal functions of the body. No matter how bad the weather has been, they will wax poetic about the beauty of their place. They will speak of having an odd feeling at certain moments that Mother Earth was aware of them. They will begin speaking of "her" with a genuine affection. They might have spent the entire threshold time swatting mosquitoes, nursing blisters, or shivering in their sleeping bags, but their words are filled with gratitude and wonder at her "personalized" care for them. They may even shed tears when they have to leave. A young man, age 22, recorded such feelings during his threshold fast:

> As I sat on the rocks looking west toward the Sierra, my cry came to me. It went like this: 'Mother Earth, please be patient with infant man. We are young and have much to learn. Teach us.' That is not exactly what I said, word for word, but is close enough. All the while I got all choked up and began sobbing. Afterwards, I felt a mixture of feelings. The picture of this very old woman, who is very wise, patient, forgiving, sad, and lonely came to me. I think that is what made me cry.

A young Anglo-European woman, age 17, put it another way:

> I feel as if I really do belong out here. How can people who have never experienced nature see her as 'Mother?' I must have Indian spirit in me. I have a deep, passionate feeling for the Indians. The land was their mother—as I feel it is for me. Sometimes I wish to God I was an Indian.

"There is only one mother for all people everywhere!" chant the Northern Australian Aborigines in Rainbow Serpent ceremonies celebrating the magnanimous fertility of the earth. This same gift of love for the Great Mother was given to each candidate at birth. But he may need to go to her, to fast and be alone with her, before he fully recognizes her gifts:

> In our bones is the rock itself; in our blood is the river; our skin contains the shadow of every living thing we ever came across. This is what we brought with us long ago. . . .
> —Nancy Wood, "Ute Song"[6]

We prefer to think that modern individuals who participate in the Vision Quest ceremony are essentially no different from their ancestors. Though the cultural circumstances surrounding the modern wilderness fast have vastly changed, the experiential, human element has remained constant. We are still capable of hearing the roaring of the Sacred River. We are still capable of communicating with the Great Mother. One would be mistaken to assume that we live in a world too far removed from nature to fully benefit from jumping as high as we are able. From the beginning, the union of human and nature in passage quest ceremonies has brought forth a healing mythos for the collective woes of the people. We would be foolish to deny ourselves its legacy of self-healing power. We would be helpless indeed if we lost the ability to hear the roaring of the Sacred River—or if, in childish vexation with our brothers and sisters, we destroyed her—for we have no other Mother to "give us, each day, our daily bread."

"Mother Earth, please be patient with infant man. We are young and have much to learn. Teach us."

Notes

1. Laurens Van der Post, *The Heart of the Hunter* (London: Penguin Books, 1961).
2. Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).
3. Sohl and Carr (eds.), *Gospel According to Zen* (New York: New American Library, 1970).
4. Joseph Campbell, *Hero With a Thousand Faces* (New York: World Publishing, 1970).
5. Steven Foster and Meredith Little, *The Roaring of the Sacred River* (Big Pine, CA: Rites of Passage Press, 1987).
6. Nancy Wood, *War Cry on a Prayer Feather* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1979).

Running Wolf:
Vision Quest and the Inner Life of the Middle School Student

by Herbert L. Martin, Jr.

"Father, Oh father! I hear weeping. Is it my mother I leave in grief?" "Have Courage, my son . . . In your mother's womb you were conceived. From an individual human womb you were born to an individual human life. It was necessary, it was good. But individual human life is not sufficient to itself. It depends upon and is a part of life. So now another umbilical cord must be broken—that which binds you to your mother's affections, that which binds you to the individual life she gave you. For twelve years you have belonged to your lesser mother. Now you belong to your greater mother. And you return to her womb to emerge once again, as a man who knows himself not as an individual but a unit of his tribe and a part of all life which ever surrounds him."

—Frank Waters, *The Man Who Killed the Deer*[1]

. . . The Boy heard the extra rustling of the yellow and brown autumn leaves—a rustling that shouldn't have been there. But, he recognized it, nonetheless. Turning to steal a glance over his shoulder, he saw them, as usual. They came on in that ground-eating, tireless, lope of theirs. The Boy began to run, his fright no less for the situation being so familiar. He ran with a kind of controlled panic. His progress was agonizingly slow. He could feel the wolf pack gaining with every bound. Long gray bodies, with a kind of beauty in the way they moved, began easily to close the distance. Ahead of him, the Boy saw the House. He could just reach it in time! Now if he could only get the door open and closed before they engulfed him!

His hand closed over the door knob, threw open the door, and closed it just in time. Then he looked at the door! The door, in fact, was only half *a door, having only the* top *portion down to the door knob. Just as he was noticing this, the gray bodies of his pursuers came hurtling through the opening that seemed made just for them! . . .*

The Boy had this dream, on a reoccurring basis many times after his 11th year. He was in 6th grade in school. He became fascinated with wolves. His teacher must have come to expect his never-ending series of papers on wolves. He wrote poems, themes, limericks and even term papers on them. He became a childhood expert on the animal that simultaneously frightened, awed, and somehow *inspired* him. Gently, his teacher tried to suggest other topics, but to no avail. This creature was numinous to him.

Then, in the middle of his 12th or 13th year, he found The Book. His teacher always gave his family all the old books that they wouldn't use anymore, from primers to twelfth grade readers. The boy read them all hungrily. That is how he found

The young adolescent faces critical transition—a period metaphorical (and, all too often, literal) death and rebirth. The intense search f meaning by the young adolescent is completely neglected by modern education. Meaningful rites passage are desperately needed.

Herbert L. Martin, Jr., a native of Martinsville, Virginia, is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Teacher Education at California State Universi Sacramento. His specialty is World Cultural Mythologies and their application to multicultural education elementary education. He is currently pursuing a Humanities grant to study t pyramids in Peru. He has won awards teaching excellence at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge as well as a California State University, Sacrament Dr. Martin completed his graduate studies at the University of Wisconsin Madison in 1985.

the story that changed his life and gave it meaning. The story appeared in a 10th or 11th grade literature book. It was called "Running Wolf." It told the story, in beautiful fashion, of a Man from Michigan who went to Canada once a year for a solitary fishing expedition. His excuse was fishing, but he really went to this special, beautiful place for the sense of peace and serenity it gave him.

However, this year was different. When he settled down at night to cook his fresh catch, he had the disquieting feeling of being watched. He strained his eyes to see into the darkness surrounding his campfire. Finally, he was able to make out two burning eyes peering back at him. He was startled but figured that it was only some curious creature, like a raccoon, whose eyes were caught in the firelight. Soon the creature would lose interest and move away. Still the Man hardly slept that night. The next night was much the same, with a slight difference. His nocturnal visitor came earlier, at about twilight, and so was visible. The Man could now make out the ruggedly powerful frame of a huge timber wolf. It was the largest wolf the Man had ever seen! It must have weighed over 150 lbs! Its coat was coal black and its eyes glowed with an unearthly light. It came on and took up its position of the previous night to watch the Man.

Now, the Man was alarmed. The wolf seemed to **know** *that he was unarmed, as it sat on its powerful haunches not twenty yards away, staring at him. The Man tried to frighten it away by yelling. The wolf didn't even blink. Nor did it make a threatening move, not even a snarl. The Man then grabbed a glowing faggot from the fire and hurled it at the Wolf. The wolf watched the firebrand placidly until it almost reached him, and then stepped gracefully aside, but moved closer to the fire and resumed his steady watching. The Man was astounded, but also strangely relieved.*

He gave up trying to chase the wolf away and settled down to normal life. He came to expect the presence of his visitor each night and even addressed a few comical remarks in its direction. One alarming habit of the wolf was that occasionally it would seem to have appeared or disappeared suddenly. The Man accepted this as his imagination.

Finally, on the 7th or 8th night, the last night of the Man's fishing trip, the black wolf walked right up to the edge of the fire. In effect, he was actually sitting around the campfire with the Man. Strangely, now the Man was neither frightened nor surprised. A kind of rapport had been developed between the two. Even when the big wolf **spoke**, *this all seemed to fit. The Man sat in awe and wonder as the wolf told a beautiful story. He spoke of the land on which the Man did his fishing. He said it was the sacred burial ground of his tribe.*

Life, for all of us, is a Great Mystery. The Big questions like—What is the Universe? Where does it come from? Who really am I? What is my purpose?—are the questions we all come face to face with eventually.

The wolf, in his former life, had been known as "Running Wolf" and had been an important member of his Indian tribe, a Medicine Chief. He spoke of the beauty of the land and many secret wonders of the Universe (which the Boy can no longer remember). *As the wolf spoke of all these things in such a sincere and loving way, the Man's sense of peace and respect for this place deepened, although he really couldn't be sure he wasn't just dreaming the whole thing. When the Man fell asleep that night, he slept soundly. He did not remember the wolf leaving or even himself going to sleep. In fact, when he awakened the next morning, he was* **sure** *he had dreamed the whole thing. He looked for paw prints around the fire and found none. This confirmed his suspicions about it being a dream, until he looked over by where the wolf had sat and found an old medicine bag. The beadwork on the side of the deerskin was a wolf in full flight!*

When the Boy finished this story, he was sobbing brokenly. Something inside him had been touched in such a way as he had never known. He would read this story over and over throughout his teen years and always, always, it was a source of inspiration. He also would *always* cry. So he had to go off alone to read it. In fact, the story represented the Boy's initiation into the Great Mystery that is Life. Finding this story at that time in his life was fortuitous. Eventually, he was to learn much more about Native American cultures, and many others, but he never forgot this story. He even adopted the wolf as his "totem" animal, giving *himself* the name, "Running Wolf." It is he who is the author of this paper.

This true account is the perfect lead-in to the topic of this paper—the Middle School student and his "Inner life." Grave difficulties have been noted nationwide with this age group (11-14 yrs.). However, our curriculum developers have gone on their merry way in the social studies with approaches that mostly emphasize the physical attributes of culture—agricultural patterns, geography, the founding of civilizations, governments, and wars. This *outer* approach all but ignores the important *inner* stage or "threshold" that the Middle School student has just reached.

Along with the "normal" social studies offerings, a new and dynamic curriculum that pays attention to and even encourages this inner development, should be offered to all middle school students.

At this crucial stage of their lives, very important questions about their lives are beginning to be asked. This is often a time of great inner turmoil, even when no outward sign seems to manifest itself, as happens sometimes when poor grades, apathy or drug abuse point to a possible problem. Sometimes, without any previous warning, parents and teachers find out about a student's inner struggle too late—after he/she has committed suicide.

The suicide rate among youths aged 10-19 is alarming indeed. (Keep in mind that these figures do *not* factor in all the *attempted* suicides.) In a study done from 1954-1974 by child psychiatrist Leonard Magran, who was then Chairman of the Division of Child Development and Child Psychiatry at Albert Einstein Medical Center, Northern Division in Philadelphia, we find some numbing figures. In his study, Magran found that the number of suicides of youths aged 10-19 doubled—from 8,000 to 16,000—between 1954 and 1974.[2] He estimated that by the end of 1984, this number would have tripled. Why were young humans barely having had a chance to enjoy life and seemingly with long futures ahead, taking their lives in such ever-increasing numbers?

Magran cited the breakup of the nuclear family, because of the divorce rate, as a main cause. He said that all this coming "at the moment when support is needed the most—during puberty, when the young person is beginning the process of psychological disengagement from the family" is the major reason for the alarming increase in teen suicides. There is a real "sense of loss," Magran noted, that is felt as the child sheds the trappings of childhood to begin the difficult "quest" that characterizes adolescence.

What Magran fails to point out, however, is that the middle school aged-child (generally between the ages of 11-14) is especially susceptible to these pressures, even if the nuclear family is intact. In fact, in many traditional tribal cultures (and some even today), formal rituals existed for helping usher out one stage, such as childhood, and to initiate the person into the next. We seem to have once realized the psychic energy that is generated by the subject during this transitional phase, and built in a cultural vehicle to deal with the problem. However, as we have become more "civilized," many of these customs have been lost. Now such "exciting" milestones as getting a driver's license, getting a job, graduating from high school, turning 18 (no longer a "minor"), etc. are about all that are left for today's youth to look forward to. Looking at the above list, suicide must look mighty attractive.

Death and rebirth

But there is an even more profound reason for the concept of Death (suicide) to get mixed up in this transitional phase. Carl G. Jung (*Man and His Symbols*, 1964) has shown that the human psyche actually views such major transition periods (childhood-adolescence-adult) as Death and Rebirth—the symbolic death of the child and the symbolic rebirth of that child as an adolescent. Jung noted, in his studies of Australian Aborigines and in African tribes, the great care and importance that was attached to the initiation of the child as he stood at the threshold of manhood. The major problems are *inside*, and this was the area the initiation tried to reach. Therefore, when viewed from this Jungian point of view, it becomes easy to see why so many of our youth confuse this "symbolic" death urge with *natural* death. It also makes it quite clear to us, as educators, that we must teach students much more about what is actually meant by these strange tuggings and yearnings that have suddenly sprung up inside them. The struggles that are going on inside our youths today go largely unnoticed except for their *symptoms*, which we marvel at. We have forgotten how important what each person must face is, when it is confronted for the first time. Life, for *all* of us, is a Great Mystery. The Big questions like, What is the Universe? Where does it come from? Who *really* am I? What is my purpose?, are the questions we all come face to face with eventually. These questions seem to have been of Universal or *archetypal* importance judging from the similarity of the themes of hero/heroine myths around the world. Joseph Campbell discussed the importance of the hero myth in initiation ceremonies on a global basis in *The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (1970). In *Myth and Reality*, Mircea Eliade discussed the concept of initiation as Rites of Passage.

But the most novel and interesting idea that comes out of this whole initiation theme is the concept of "Vision Quest." Hyemeyohsts Storm, the Pueblo Indian author of *Seven Arrows* (1972) described this concept. On a mythical level, the Vision Quest is a story about a hero or heroine (in other words any one of *us*), who leaves everything behind, including the childhood home, and goes off alone to seek vision, insight or meaning. Alone, fasting, in a state of expanded awareness, the hero/ine endures through a long, dark night, facing the monsters of childhood. At the darkest time of night, supernatural power or the Great Spirit confers a gift or a boon on the seeker. Often this spirit or helper may come in the form of an animal, such as this author's Wolf totem. The gift is of great use to the seeker or hero and to his community. The hero/heroine returns to the community and "demonstrates the vision on earth for the people to see."[3]

An actual example of this idea at work is Black Elk, who was a great Medicine Chief of the Ogalala Sioux during the latter stages of the Indian Wars just prior to the tragedy at Wounded Knee in 1890. During his childhood, Black Elk had received a great vision, in which a great bay horse had led him up to the Sky People where he was shown the future of his tribe and the important role he was to play in it. He thought that he had simply had a dream about visiting the Sky People, until he returned (he thought) in his dream and saw his Mother and Father and the tribal doctor kneeling over his own body in the teepee and suddenly exclaiming, "The boy is coming to; you had better give him some water."[4] Black Elk at the age of 9, had been sick almost unto death for *twelve days*! He did eventually demonstrate his vision on earth to help his people. He had many other visions besides his great one, always accompanied by a kind of sickness just before. The great and sad irony of his life was that he felt that he had not been able to save his people—which he felt was his purpose. His final plea to the Six Grandfathers on Harney Peak was "Let my people live." Perhaps, by reintroducing this idea into the human consciousness, we can help Black Elk carry out his vision. For his vision was a vision for all people.

There are actually a few high school programs now that actually try to physically allow "graduating seniors" to choose and take a Vision Quest course. Dr. Steven Foster and Meredith Little wrote a Vision Quest handbook. It is titled *The Vision Quest: Passing from Childhood to Adulthood; A course Book for Graduating Seniors* (1983). Like many of our well-intentioned ideas, it, by concentrating on "graduating seniors," ignores a large portion of the population it could serve.

The problems, as stated earlier in this paper, beset our youth much earlier and *cannot* wait until they are ready to "graduate." If we try to wait, many of them won't be *around* to graduate. If not an actual *physical* Vision Quest, we can institute a kind of *mental* Vision Quest during the Middle School years. This can be done partially through the intensive study of hero/ine myths on a global basis (or as many cultures as possible). This will help the student to see that they are not "alone" in their struggles as many feel at this stage. Indeed, a kind of pride in their struggle can develop as they begin to compare the similarity of their plight with that of say, a young Arthur Pendragon (King Arthur), Moses, Siddhartha, or even Cinderella. Knowing the cultural meanings of these wonderful stories is important. This will help the students to translate this meaning into their own lives.

Besides the rich source of culture myths, there is also a rich, current crop

of movies of this genre that can augment such a curriculum. The very best of these include, of course, "Karate Kid I *and* II," "The Emerald Forest," "Windwalker," and "Legend."

In addition to movies and myths, the world of art is full of the cult of the hero/ine and should be included in a good, dynamic, Vision Quest-oriented curriculum.

Finally, and very importantly, what the human psyche seems to crave at the middle school age and into the late teens is an "other-worldly" experience. Turning to drugs, rebellion, and even suicide are all symptoms of this great need. Past cultures wisely dealt with this necessity by providing this other-worldly experience through rituals. As social studies educators, we can at least simulate these rituals by allowing our students to study, in addition to the myriad offerings on the *physical* attributes of culture, the far more significant *inner* life of cultures at this important transitional stage. We may save many headaches for middle school teachers, but more importantly, many *more* young lives.

Notes

1. Frank Waters, *The Man Who Killed the Deer* (New York: Washington Square Press/Pocket Books, 1972), pp. 79-80.
2. Magran's study has not been published.
3. John G. Neihardt, *Black Elk Speaks* (1932) (New York: Washington Square Press/Pocket Books, 1972), p. 173.
4. Neihardt, p. 39.

The Quest for Vision

an interview with Joseph Jastrab

by Ron Miller

We live now in a culture that doe not value and support people to q for vision. And that's one of the reasons, I think, why our culture i slowly dying . . .

Joseph Jastrab leads Vision Quest groups deep in the Adirondack Mountains of upstate New York. Although the Vision Quest is derived from traditional Native American rites of passage, Joseph is working to develop rituals "that speak to who we are now, in the twentieth century world, with a multi-cultural background." After receiving a B.S. in Earth Science, "I chose not to go to formal graduate school, because I felt that I needed to balance out my schooling with the education that comes from living in the woods—finding my relationship with Nature."

Joseph was chief instructor at the North American Wilderness Survival School, and taught at the state college in New Paltz, New York, where he introduced courses in "Mystical Ecology," "Nature and Self," and "The Wilderness Experience"—and guided a Vision Quest as a summer school course. "I got involved in this work from my own need, for personal rites of passage, and my own need to reclaim my native humanness," he told us.

Currently he works as a psychotherapist, and has founded the Earth Rise Foundation (70 Mountain Rest Rd., New Paltz, NY 12561) which, through educational activities and rites of passage, seeks "to help return people to the Earth as their home."

HER: Vision Quests and similar experiences are commonly referred to as "rites of passage." Do you use this term, and if so, what do you mean by it?

JJ: Yes, I do see the Vision Quest as a rite of passage, and a "rite of passage," for me, is a formal ritual structure that helps to support people in transition. I think that rites of passage are here to ensure that times of great change and transition be celebrated as times of great opportunity. And that's where the real value is, to alert us to the opportunities that are inherent in any change—whether it be the change from adolescence to adulthood, or midlife crisis, or the transitions that attend the dying process.

So the Vision Quest, as I see it, is a very generic rite of passage, and we'll have people participating who will not necessarily all be in a certain transition. For example, not everyone engaged in a Vision Quest will be undergoing a midlife transition. But the common denominator for the people who participate in Vision Quest is that there is a transition, a major transition, in their life. The specifics will differ. So what we work with in the Vision Quest would be looking for the transformational potential that is within the particular transition in someone's life.

HER: So you'd say that there's a universal significance to rites of passage for human development because all people, in any culture, go through these transitions.

JJ: I think so. I can't imagine human life without rites of passage. Or put it this way: I can't imagine a full human life without the significant transitions that we face being attended by rites that help encourage and enlighten us for the opportunities within the transitions. I think much of the alienation that we're suffering now, individually and collectively, has to do with the fact that we no longer have rites to guide our passages, and we are left alone as individuals searching for a context or a format to give these times of great change some meaning. And I don't think the individual is equipped to do that alone. There needs to be the witnessing, the support of community in order to help that process.

So I think what we find, then, is that the initiations, the transitions do occur within the individual, whether the culture is there to support them or not, and the individual then will take whatever he or she sees is available. I think a lot of the youth in the country are literally thrown out into the streets in order to create rites of passage for themselves—particularly boys, who need a certain testing and ordeal. They are looking for a context that challenges them, that calls forth some emerging strengths.

HER: Well, exactly where does the culture come in? How does the culture or the community support the individual in specific ways?

JJ: A very basic way is the culture or community would serve the purpose of witnessing an individual's transformation. A mirroring back to the individual what it sees the individual going through. And this helps to confirm within the individual this movement into a larger identity. The culture or community in one sense would form the crucible or the chalice that can hold the personal passage and give it some definition and some support. If you can imagine the individual in his or her passages is like flowing water; if there's no cup or container to hold that water and give it form, then there's a feeling within the individual of just total dispersion, and lack of confirmation. And confirmation literally means to make firm, to firm up something that is emerging. I feel it's very important that our personal stories are witnessed by others. The stories of our trials and tribulations, of our questing.

HER: You mentioned that today, we seem to have lost the practice of these rites of passage. Would you say in

general that "modern" societies place less emphasis on them than so-called "primitive" societies?

JJ: I think so. I think that in some way we've lost our souls in the industrial age. What's become more important is some mechanical version of the world and of ourselves. And within this viewpoint that the world is like a machine, that humans are like machines, there's really no need for rites of passage. All that's needed in that context is an educational system that instructs us in the basic facts of existence and corrects us when we're wrong, and brings us up with a vision of a well-functioning machine. So I definitely see that there's a lack in today's world. I think it's based on how we see ourselves.

Now, in former times, from what we know, people held a different vision of the individual and of the growth process. The soul of the individual was held in high regard, and life was thought to be a journey or a process. The attitude that life is a process is essential for a rite of passage. When life is a process, we see individuals going through their transitions. If a culture loses that attitude, there's no longer a need for rites of passage.

HER: With the recent discoveries in depth psychology, for example, we're learning more and more about what human development needs to be healthy. You would think that modern society would be coming to a greater awareness of the need for these kinds of experiences. Is that happening now?

Joseph Jastrab *Photo by Ron Miller*

JJ: I think it is, slowly. But surely. I hope it's happening fast enough to keep up with the urgencies of this time. But I think that it's easy to underestimate the power of the institutions that we've formed. Education has become institutionalized. And the institution of education as we see it in today's world, is, I feel, based on the view of the individual as machine. I'd put it that strongly. And given that, given the crystallization of that world view, this new input from depth psychology is beginning to circulate among that world view, but I think it's going to take some time before the institution softens. Institutions tend to be very firm and stubborn.

The key to that whole change process is for us to allow ourselves to experience the suffering that occurs when we become institutionalized—and when we, as educators, find ourselves perhaps falling into the trap of institutionalizing others. When people feel the suffering and the pain that comes from that, generally then there is a cry for a change. It's a very deep cry.

HER: Can traditional educational approaches accommodate the Vision Quest or rite of passage kind of experience, or does this mean a whole new model of how education would look?

JJ: I see no reason why they practically could not accommodate or incorporate a Vision Quest into the education system. I think at this point, for most institutionalized educators, the Vision Quest process is somewhat threatening. One example is the Vision Quest process is something that you cannot ever expect to grade. That's quite an understatement. Because the Vision Quest focus is on the process of becoming. It exists in a context where institutionalized educators would have a hard time determining for themselves its value. And therefore it might be threatening.

It's inconceivable to me how you could try to educate an adolescent who's coming into adulthood without simultaneously recognizing the incredible transition on a soul level that this individual is going through. To continue just to pour in information into this individual without the recognition of the deeper process is bound to fail and break down. So rites of passage would, as far as I can see, simply complement what's already occurring in education. And the two together would create marvelous results.

HER: Talk a little bit more about what exactly a Vision Quest is, and what you do when you're out there. And also, would that be a model that's appropriate for all people in our time and culture, or are there other kinds of rites of passage besides a Vision Quest?

JJ: Well, a Vision Quest is literally questing for vision, or searching for new insight, or new meaning, for one's life. It is typically held within a wilderness context, so I think that it would be appropriate for some people and not appropriate for others. I think there are rites of passage that could take place in city environments, that would serve the purpose just as well. I think there's a particular need for the Vision Quest because it does bring people back to the Earth, and asks people to recognize the Earth as their primary home, and to find once again their elemental relationship with the sources of life that give them life. I think it is important in that context.

What typically happens on a Vision Quest can best be described in a three-phase process. The first stage is known as severance or separation. That focuses on supporting the individual in separating from his or her known world, and entering a transitional phase. So the questions that we're concerned with at the severance phase are questions around "What has your life been like up until this moment? What's your history? What are some of the moments you recall as being important in terms of the formative process that has brought you to where you are?" Another important question would be, "Reflecting on where you are now, in what ways is your present life not adequate to who you are becoming? What do you find yourself longing for? In what ways do you feel the constriction of old forms, or old self-identities, or old knowledge? How is that felt, that constriction?"

I think that in some way we've lost our souls in the industrial age. What's become more important is some mechanical version of the world and of ourselves.

So this helps sensitize people to where they've been, and the existential experience of becoming larger than the old identity and the old form. And there are many rituals that attend this separation phase. One of the things that we do in our questing program is ask people to refrain from introducing themselves to other people in ways that they commonly would, such as: we ask them to refrain from telling people what their profession is, because that's one of the common ways we identify ourselves to others, and it usually limits us, and keeps us stuck in an old way of seeing ourselves. We ask people to refrain from sharing how old they are, because many times our idea of our age limits our possibilities. So the separation phase attempts to free us, in a sense, from the limitations of our personal history, of our past.

Upon successful negotiation of separation, we find ourselves in the middle phase of the Vision Quest process, which is known as the threshold or liminal phase. And that phase is marked by us walking, in a sense, to the edge of our known world, and taking one more step . . . going to the place where we can no longer describe our reality, where language no longer serves us—for instance, into an in-between state, living between two worlds.

The threshold phase is enacted on the Vision Quest most dramatically in terms of the time of solitude, typically three days and three nights where an individual will be in a wilderness setting by him or herself, and will have the opportunity to stand before Nature's integrity with the questions that are most meaningful for him or her, and experience both the crisis and opportunity of holding those questions. And it's in that threshold time often that a very important experience will come to the quester, something of symbolic value that is later brought back to the community, and through various ritual forms, the meaning of it is teased out of the experience.

The third phase of the Vision Quest is known as reincorporation or reintegration. And that speaks to the need of returning back from solitude to the community. The opportunity there for the individual is that the community can help the individual to process his or her experience, and to learn more of the meaning of it. And in turn, the community gets served by witnessing an individual who has stepped beyond the boundaries of his or her known world, gained new insight, and now is returning to the community as an expanded and enlarged being.

This is very important in terms of refreshing the community, and refreshing the culture. We live now in a culture that does not value and support vision questers. It does not value and support people to quest for vision. And that's one of the reasons, I think, why our culture is slowly dying—because there's no fresh blood, fresh insight, and ideas coming in. This new insight is vital to the growth of any culture. We have too many people in this culture just following the rules, and doing what's expected of them.

HER: So an educator who may be concerned about the culture and wants to help people find fresh vision—would they need to go outside the usual practices of the classroom to achieve that, or can you see any way that they could at least work in that direction within the structure of a school?

JJ: Good question (laughs). I speak not having much experience within the school system. I have taught college courses, which I know to be much freer than elementary and secondary environments. I think the possibilities would certainly vary according to the environment, school district and all. I think we need to think in terms of what we can do with what we've got to work with, and as far as I'm concerned, any educator who carries the attitude of seeing his or her student as a soul in process will automatically serve the rites of passage for that individual, knowingly or unknowingly. That's a key attitude right there.

In the school environment we can certainly encourage students to be attentive to the questions that they're carrying about themselves and the world, and get over our addiction as educators perhaps to having answers to all questions. I think that's one of the greatest shortcomings of contemporary education—this idea that all questions have answers. The most important questions in life should never be answered. They are there to keep us questing, keep us moving.

The institution of education as we see it in today's world is, I feel, based on the view of the individual as machine. I'd put it that strongly.

The focus on the meaning and value of questions can happen in any kind of a school environment. The most challenging aspect, though, would be creating a threshold or liminal phase experience within a classroom environment. The very nature of the threshold experience is one which requires the individual to be taken out of their known environment. A lot of creativity would be called for here.

HER: It's an attitude more than a technique. If the educator has an attitude of creativity and searching and respecting the soul of the child, then they're working in the right direction.

JJ: Right. And educators with that attitude can be initiators in very simple ways. Perhaps it may be important to speak of some of these ways that are often overlooked because of their simplicity. We can confirm students'—and that is, make firm—new ways of being, through simple remarks, through giving them feedback. If we hold the attitude of our students as souls in process and we see an individual exhibiting new or expanded behavior, it's very important for us to mention to that individual that we see them in this new light. And as we do that, we are now becoming initiators. And the student is the initiate. Through our simple statement—our willingness to see them in this new light—that new behavior is confirmed, made more firm in the student. I think that as educators become more familiar with the needs and structure of rites of passage, opportunities will emerge in our specific teaching environments. The first step is to recognize the need in our own lives for rites of passage.

HER: Finally, in the years that you've been offering Vision Quests, have you seen any change in the kind of people who have been coming to do them, or the feelings people have about doing them, or any change at all?

JJ: Yes, I've noticed some changes. In the early years almost everyone that attended was in their twenties and thirties, and they came with very liberal backgrounds and outlooks on life. And more recently we've had people coming from the various priesthoods, we've had bank vice presidents attend the Quest; we've experienced people from more diverse backgrounds attending. Which says to me that more and more people are recognizing the need for rites of passage. That's encouraging to see that. The age range, too, has opened up quite a bit. We've experienced a range from 16 to 62, for example, on a Quest.

But essentially, everyone's story is the same. It's the story of the hero's or heorine's journey. There may be a lot of diverse things in terms of specifics, but basically we're all journeying with the same story.

My Guardian Spirit:

A Guided Imagery Activity for Intermediate Students

by John Allan with Bill Brechin

My first experience with the concept of the Vision Quest was a visionary experience in its own right. Of all places, I was sitting in the large, beautiful lecture room at the C. G. Jung Institute on Lake Zurich, Kusnacht, Switzerland. I was spellbound listening to Louise Mahdi describe the Vision Quest experience of Wabose, a young Ojibway girl in 1826. Being a teacher of children and adolescents, as well as a counselor educator, I began to see how important these ancient **rites de passage** were and how, in a traditional sense, they are for the most part missing in our contemporary society. An effective young adolescent **rite de passage** not only helps the child with inner and outer identity issues but also provides a sense of change and renewal for significant others in the culture surrounding the child.

Hearing Louise talk and imagining Wabose leaving her village, finding a safe and protected space, fasting for six days, experiencing her visions and receiving her new name and "work" identity made me think of attempting to develop and write a guidance curriculum for transition. On returning to Canada I set about devising and implementing these programs in the regular public schools with the help of my graduate students.

Using class discussion formats and writing and art activities, we devised a twelve-session module on the Vision Quest that involved three major phases: Awareness, Understanding and Challenges. This material has been published elsewhere,[1] and this article focuses on one activity related to the Vision Quest: My Guardian Spirit.

One facet of the Vision Qu rite of passage is the discovery of one's "guardia spirit"—an archetypal representation of one's inne strength, courage, and sens purpose. For the young adolescent facing the trials and challenges of adulthoo this discovery of one's own inner resources is critical.

Preparation phase

The "Guardian Spirit" activity is often used as part of a unit in the transition curriculum or when studying Native American Indian cultures. The students read about the first North Americans and about the Northwest Coast and Plains Indians.[2] The topics of various spiritual beliefs, including vision quests and guardian spirits are introduced. Then the story of Nkwala is read with the students and various questions are raised. Nkwala is a young Salish Indian boy who, at the time of puberty, must make a solo journey to the mountains to strengthen his individual personality and to find his guardian spirit through the Vision Quest. The journey involves physical tests, self-discipline, fasting, visions, dreams and unique self expression through dance.[3]

John Allan is an Associate Professor Counseling Psychology in the Faculty Education at the University of Britis Columbia and a Jungian analyst in private practice. His new book, **Insca of the Child's World: Jungian Counseling in Schools and Clinics,** *published this Fall by Spring Publica of Dallas, TX.*

Bill Brechin has his Masters in Co ing Psychology and is interested in t use of guided imagery in the classroo Bill is currently teaching at the Junio Secondary level and is active in man extra curricular school activities.

In order to give the students a feeling of an authentic Vision Quest we read parts of Wabose's 1826 experience, as recorded by Henry Schoolcraft.[4] Wabose describes how, at the age of 13 years, with the onset of menstruation, early in a winter's morning she ran off as far as she could from her village. Later her mother found her and helped her make a small lodge with the branches of the spruce tree. Her mother told her to keep away from everyone, to fast and to "not even taste snow." Two days later her mother returned bringing no food but saying: "Now my daughter listen to me and try to obey. Blacken your face and fast really, that the Master of Life may have pity on you . . . and favor you with visions from the true Great Spirit. . . . If your visions are not good, reject them."[5] Wabose continued to fast until the sixth day when she fancied a voice called to her and said: "Poor child, I pity your condition, come you are invited this way." In her vision, Wabose saw a thin shiny path, which she followed until she saw a flame rising from the top of a new moon, and the Everlasting Standing Woman, who gave her a new name. She continued on until she met her guardian spirit, Bright Blue Sky, who gave her songs and gifts of life to help her endure life's difficulties. When her mother returned, Wabose related her visions to her. Her mother said it was good, took her home and made a feast in honor of her success and invited a great many guests.

(As this story is quite long and rich in imagery, teachers wishing to use it should read Schoolcraft's original version and then condense it and select appropriate parts for their students.)

Broadly speaking these **rites de passage** activities involve such psychological functions as: separating from the family of origin, purification of the body, overcoming childhood fears, death of the "old" childhood identity, learning new coping skills and the birth of new inner and outer identities. The outer identity is that of a competent young man or woman who can pass tests and challenges and survive. The inner identity occurs through receptivity to the dream or vision process where the initiate receives a sacred totem or personal guardian spirit that comes to them from the depth of their psyche. Often a new name is given that symbolizes and represents both their inner direction and their newly acquired adult status.

Imagery activity

The students are prepared for the guided imagery activity by practice in relaxation techniques and instruction in the imagery process itself. They are encouraged to place their heads down on their desks, close their eyes and to let their mind wander whereever it wants to go. In this relaxed state the teacher then prepares them for what to expect from guided imagery:

> This activity is like seeing pictures in your head. It's a bit like both dreaming and imagining at the same time. During this activity, on finding your Guardian Spirit, I will talk to you in short sentences and you can follow along in your mind. This experience may be part real and part fantasy (imaginative). It's okay for you to use places and pictures you've seen but also many children imagine pictures and places that they have never seen. At times you might be busy and active and at other times, quite quiet, sitting and waiting while things happen in front of you, like watching a movie that you are in. If something too scarey comes up (which seldom happens), you can look away, become involved in some other imagery activity or simply open your eyes. Okay why don't you open your eyes now after that little practice run and tell me where you were, what you saw, how you found it and any questions you may have.

Once questions have been asked the teacher can move into the actual imagery activity:

> Close your eyes and let your mind wander for a while. . . . Now imagine that you are living many, many years ago . . . long before white people came to this land . . . and it is approaching time for you to leave on your Vision Quest in search of your Guardian Spirit. Let's get you a home base first: Where are you living? On the Plains? By a lake? In the woods? Near a desert? . . . Who is in your family? . . . What does your lodge look like? . . . Where is your sleeping place in the lodge?
>
> Now imagine a dream and in the dream you become aware that it is time for you to leave your lodge and make your solo journey away from your home to find your Guardian Spirit. Imagine leaving and walking for a long, long time . . . away from your home into the unknown countryside . . . What do you see? . . . What is the weather like? . . . What do you hear? . . . What do you smell? . . . After walking for a long, long time you become aware that you are ready to begin your Vision Quest. To do this, you must find a safe and protected space. You look around . . . you search until you find a safe or sheltered area . . . if you can't find one, you now make one out of stones, rocks, branches and trees!
>
> You get settled in this safe place, you wait and you watch. What do you see? What do you hear? . . . You may drift off into a light sleep! Soon you begin dreaming or imagining . . . You're seeking a vision of your Guardian Spirit. Who comes to you? What is he, she or it like? Continue dreaming for a while . . . Picture the animal, person or thing closely. Notice the details . . . What noise does it make? What size and shape is it? What color is it? . . . Picture yourself and your Guardian Spirit. What is it doing? . . . What are you doing? How could this animal, creature or thing help you? . . . What actions or words does it have for you? . . . See if it leads you anywhere or shows or gives you anything . . . Do you have any questions of it? . . . Let yourself ask . . . Let him or her answer . . .
>
> Now it is time to say good-bye to your Guardian Spirit. Let him or her drift off, disappear or fade away. You are left alone in your safe and protected space. How do you feel? . . . What do you think about? . . . Now clean up your camp area, say good-

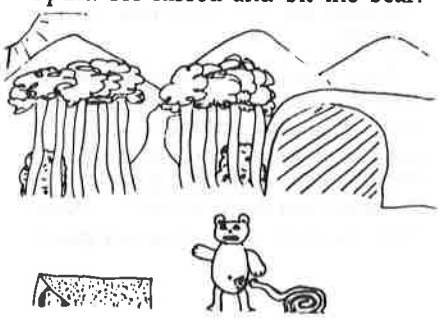
An effective young adolescent* rite de passage *not only helps the child with inner and outer identity issues but also provides a sense of change and renewal for significant others in the culture surrounding the child.

bye and start walking back to your tribe . . . As you walk think about your experience and your Guardian Spirit . . . Now you are approaching your village and your lodge. Your friends and relatives cluster around you. How do you feel? What do you tell them? . . . You notice you are a bit tired so you say you must go and rest. You go to your sleeping area and put your head down on your arms . . . Slowly you become aware that the dream is over and you are in this classroom now, in X School (i.e. name of your school). You push down with your head on your arms, slowly you open your eyes, and when you are ready lift your head and look around the room, seeing the teacher and the other students . . . Now I'd like you to draw your Guardian Spirit and a scene from your inner journey. Later we will write stories based on the experience.

Results

Most students thoroughly enjoy this guided imagery activity and are eager to present their stories and pictues. Several examples are now given. One unique way of starting the experience was described by a girl who imagined falling out of a tree and getting knocked unconscious. She woke up in a forest and followed a path where she then fell asleep and dreamt about her Guardian Spirit:

I was at my house and I was lonely, so I went out to play and I climbed a tree. But I fell out of the tree and got knocked out. When I woke up I found myself in a forest. There was a cave, some trees, and a nice bright sun, some berry trees, mountains, and a path. I wondered where the path led to but it was getting dark so I laid down my bedroll, ate some berries, and then I fell asleep. It was quiet until all of a sudden I hear a growl. I opened one eye to see what it was. A bear! I felt scared and remembered how good the berries tasted for my last meal. All of a sudden I saw a snake, my Guardian Spirit! He hissed and bit the bear.



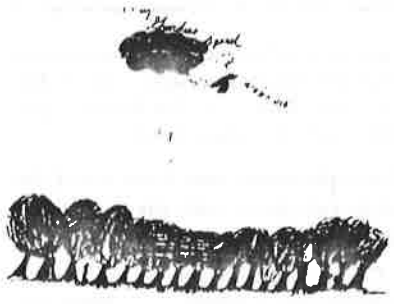
The next day I went on the path and found it led back home. What an adventure! I felt glad to be back home, but I wondered where I had been.

Another significant idea came from a student who ended his story by training his eagle Guardian Spirit to sit on his shoulder and to give him advice. When interviewed, this student said his Guardian Spirit gave him courage and a confident feeling when he was faced with difficult or trying situations.

A similar theme from another student was as follows:

My Guardian Spirit is an eagle, and it is going to save me from a bear that is about to attack me. The eagle is on my hand right now but later it would be flying overhead. It would swoop down and attack the bear. Finally when my Guardian Spirit was finished fighting off the bear I decided to put him in my backsack, so that he would be near by to protect me.

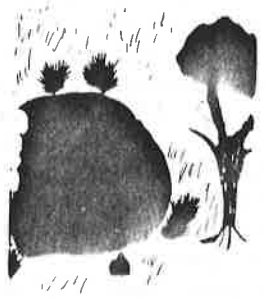
Another creative idea was from a boy who dreamed that his Guardian Spirit was a rain cloud. The cloud protected him from a dangerous hawk by throwing a thunder bolt at it.



My Guardian Spirit is a storm cloud. It scared away a hawk by throwing a thunder bolt at it. The storm cloud started to pour so I went under a tree. By the time it stopped I was drenched. Then I woke up and went back to my tribe to tell my story. Afterwards they called me "Storm."

Another unusual Guardian Spirit was a leprechaun who with magic made a bow and arrow appear so that Samantha could kill a lion who was attacking her. One boy used a turtle as his Guardian Spirit. When he was in danger he would crawl into the spaces in the turtle shell, the turtle would close the spaces and submerge itself in the pond to avoid being in jeopardy.

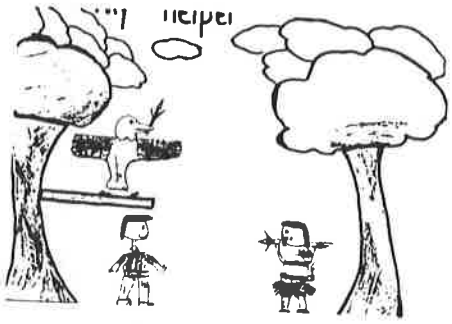
I was walking in a field and it was getting dark so I found a spot beside a pond and soon I was asleep. Ten minutes later I heard a rustling noise. I woke up and a tiger was there. Just then a turtle came over and said "Come here." So I went over to it. When I got there he inflated his shell and said: "Get in." When I got in all the openings closed. The tiger was about to pounce on us. We slid into the pond and we were safe. The next day when I got out and the shell went back to normal, I asked the turtle how he could talk and he said: "Doesn't everyone?" The he said: "I'm your Guardian Spirit and I will protect you forever.



The most common Guardian Spirit, which appeared in more than half the assignments, was a bird (i.e. eagle, hawk, raven or thunderbird). This may be due to the fact that many of the legends that were read in class contained these figures. It may also be that because birds can fly they are symbols of spirit power and therefore can offer greater protection. Mentioned in three or less stories were: wolves, ghosts, snakes and bigfoot. A common bird example is as follows:

My Helper is a raven. I was being chased and was trapped in the corner of a tree. I was terrified and frightened but then I remembered my raven. I called for his voice and he came down just in time because the attacker threw a wooden spear, and my raven caught it in his beak. My raven flew up on to a wooden platform stuck on a tree. I thanked the raven for saving my life. Then I tied

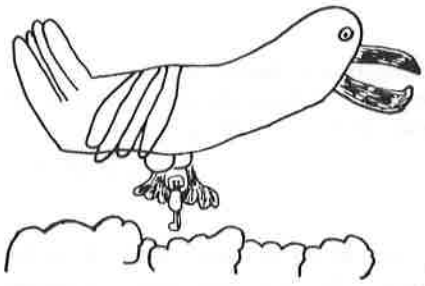
the guy to a tree and left him there. Then I left the village and went back home. I always remembered the raven, and when I needed help I'd call him and he would always be there. Never again will my raven leave me because he is now my helper.



In most cases the Guardian Spirit served the function of protection from attack from wild animals. This next student also brought back a part of the Guardian Spirit ("the feathers") to remind him of his helper:

It was time for me to find my Guardian Spirit. I had to venture outside my village to find it. First I had to pack my things and leave. I walked for a long time but made no contact. I fell asleep while I was walking and I had a dream. In my dream a bear was chasing me. Then I heard a screech. It was a hawk. It frightened the bear and then landed on my shoulder. Suddenly I woke up and saw the sun in my eyes. Then I saw some hawk feathers. I picked them up and ran back to the village. By then I was hungry so I ate some berries. Then I saw the bear. I jumped into the brush and the hawk came back and scratched the bear's neck so the bear ran away. I felt safe in the village because I had the feathers of a hawk, my Guardian Spirit.

This activity had a profound effect on most of the students, and enriched their experience of the didactic material presented on Northwest Coast and Plains Indians. There was obviously a lot of pleasure experienced in the imagery activity and the students enjoyed drawing and writing afterwards. One child got stuck in imaginary "mud" but the teacher took him back to the mud in his imagination, helped him get "unstuck" and he was then able to begin and complete his drawing. Many students commented how surprised they were to see a Guardian Spirit appear and to feel that they really had their own Guardian Spirit inside of themselves that they could call upon in their own lives when they needed to.



Summary

Puberty, and the two years following its onset, is frequently a time of turmoil as the conscious mind of the young adolescent struggles to deal with all of the emotions and images activated by hormonal changes. Often these changes result in a fascination with the inner world of dreams and symbols and themes of death and re-birth.

A central archetypal drive during this phase of development is that of separation from family of origin. One function of separation is to attain one's own unique identity. This is often painful for parents and teachers as students reject advice and affection and form new and stronger bonds with their peers. As one student said recently: "I have no choice. I must leave home. I want to prove I can live away from home with my friends."

Guided imagery activities, such as the one described above, are particularly relevant at this stage of development as they provide a safe and protected way of entering the inner world and of encountering one's own imagery and symbolism. This is important as students are striving to find not only their outer but also their separate inner identity—one that is not contaminated by parent or teacher demands or expectations. This search is what Jung called the "process of individuation" and reaches down to both the animal and vegetative layers of the human psyche.

As adolescents prepare to enter the adult world, it is helpful for them to find a sense of their own inner security and protection and to carry this feeling into the world. These imagery activities gave the students something tangible to hold on to: "I felt safe . . . because I had the feathers of a hawk, my Guardian Spirit"—and also helped them feel part of the world of nature. By nature, we mean, not only the world around us but the natural world of our biological, spiritual and psychological existence. Much of contemporary education, because of its heavy reliance on rationality and cognition, fails to help students experience and understand these other aspects of life.

In this activity the students' images (i.e. guardian spirits) gave form and shape to particular emotions and feelings that are relevant to them at this stage of life. Many of these feeling-toned symbols (animals or birds) open the student up to such emotions as strength and courage (i.e., the snake and hawk) and the experience of being protected (i.e. the turtle and the rain cloud) as well as beliefs in their own knowledge or wisdom ("My eagle sits on my shoulder and gives me good advice"). These inner experiences, when coupled with drawings and writing activities, can have a profoundly beneficial influence on the lives of students[6] and help them become anchored in the richness that lies within.

Notes

1. J. Allen & P. Dyck, "Transition: Childhood to Adolescence" *Elementary School Guidance & Counseling*, 18 (1984), pp. 277-286; Allan & Dyck, "Transition: Manual for a Developmental Guidance Curriculum for "Growing-up" (Vancouver, B.C.: Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 1985).

2. See M. W. Zieman, *The First North Americans: How People Learned to Live in North America* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973).

3. E. Sharp, *Nkwala* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1978).

4. H. Schoolcraft, *History, Condition and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo & Co., 1851).

5. Schoolcraft, *History . . . of the Indian Tribes*, p. 392.

6. J. Allan, *Inscapes of the Child's World: Jungian Counseling in Schools and Clinics* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1988).

Outward Bound:

An Adventure-based Pedagogy for Personal Growth

by Mitchell Sakofs, Ph.D.

"I regard it as the foremost task of education to insure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity of pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and, above all, compassion."

—Kurt Hahn

"I can't do it!" lamented the 17 year old young man who clung to a rock over seventy feet above the ground. His legs were shaking, palms sweaty, voice quivering and the climbing rope attached to his seat-harness did not allay his fears.

Words of encouragement from those who had gone before him and those who would follow rang clear through the air. Through the fear and fatigue a sense of determination emerged from within the youth, and through sheer courage and commitment, served by aching muscles and trust buoyed by the words of his new-found friends, the last thirty feet of the rock wall was climbed. At the top, he cried. At the top his sense of pride and accomplishment was amply rewarded by a dramatic view of a glacial valley and friends who warmly celebrated his accomplishment.

"We can't do it!" was the collective opinion of the group of ten corporate executives who faced a fifteen foot wall and the challenge to surmount it. No equipment was provided save for the helmets they wore. After several minutes of confusion and disbelief a plan was conceived, a strategy articulated, roles were assigned, and using nothing but their creativity, individual strengths and resourcefulness, in a matter of ten minutes each member of the group had surmounted the wall and a spontaneous celebration of individual and group initiative erupted.

Every day, events, similar to those described above, occur. They occur with regularity at any one of the thirty-nine Outward Bound Schools located throughout the world. They occur with adults and youth, men and women, rich and poor, physically disabled and non-disabled, victims of rape, incest, cancer, as well as people with no apparent limitations or problems at all. They occur, and thus define the reason why Outward Bound has grown into an international network of schools and evolved from a programming concept designed to instill a spiritual tenacity and will to survive in young British seaman, to a modern-day program for self-discovery, and group and personal development.

Outward Bound is a well-known model of experiential education—tha is, an education which challenges the student to interact creatively and dynamically with the phys as well as social environm The Outward Bound experience often serves as a rite of passage to adolesce as well as adults in transition.

Mitchell Sakofs is currently the Dire of Education and Research for Outw Bound USA. He is the former Execut Director of the Association for Exper tial Education and a former member the graduate faculty of the Universit Colorado at Boulder, where he receiv his Ph.D. and served as a research associate and coordinator of a reside teacher program for the University's School of Education. Mitchell receive M.S. Ed. from Northern Illinois University in 1978 and a B.S.E. from SUNY at Cortland in 1975. He holds black belt in the Japanese art of Ki-Aikido and is an avid student of natural history.

Historical roots

Outward Bound emerged out of the political and social upheavals of World War II. Its founder was Dr. Kurt Hahn, an educator of German ancestry who believed strongly in the need for values-oriented education which provided a complementary mix of academic study, physical activity and community/social service as part of a complete educational experience. He wrote, "I regard it as the foremost task of education to insure the survival of these qualities: an enterprising curiosity, an undefeatable spirit, tenacity of pursuit, readiness for sensible self-denial, and above all, compassion."

Fundamental to Hahn's vision of education was experience; "It is the sin of the soul," he wrote, "to force young people into opinions . . . but it is culpable neglect not to impel young people into experiences."

Upon these convictions, Hahn built the Gordonstoun School in Scotland, after being expelled from Germany for calling upon his students who had graduated from the Salem School to choose between the values articulated by their Alma Mater or the growing Nazi Party. While serving as the headmaster of the Gordonstoun School, Hahn was approached by Laurence Holt, head of the Blue Funnel Shipping Lines, to develop a program to address an observable phenomenon—that older, more experienced, yet, perhaps, less physically fit seaman, were surviving in much greater numbers after their ships had been torpedoed by German U-boats, than the younger, more physically fit seaman.

In 1941 Hahn established the first Outward Bound School in Aberdovey, Wales. This first Outward Bound School fostered, through a rigorous, four week course involving seamanship, technical rock climbing and community service through rescue preparedness, a greater sense of self-confidence in the participants, which was complemented by a sense of fellowship and commitment to the community. The result was a tremendous success—the loss of life for those seamen who participated in the Outward Bound training was considerably less than for those sailors who had not participated in Hahn's program.

Outward Bound today

Hahn's original vision and concepts are alive today in the more than thirty-nine Outward Bound Schools which exist worldwide.

Fundamentally, all Outward Bound programs are designed to impel students into value forming experiences which promote and enhance an individual's sense of self-worth, confidence and ability to work with others, while simultaneously fostering a deeper sense of compassion, commitment to service, and appreciation for the natural environment. These lofty goals are accomplished through programs which range from a few days to several months, and present challenges, such as rock climbing, canoeing, mountaineering, backpacking and rafting, in a manner which promotes such values through a sequencing of events which promotes competence, compassion and teamwork. This is the Outward Bound experience.

The Outward Bound experience is a complex experience which operates at both conscious and subconscious levels; thus it is a pedagogy with essential curricula elements as well as a process rich in metaphorical significance.

The metaphorical nature of Outward Bound

Participants in an Outward Bound course are likely to find themselves in a novel and alien environment, i.e., a wilderness setting, and confronted by challenges which not only seem extraordinary, e.g., the climbing of a 100 foot rock wall, but in addition, will require both individual initiative, tenacity and teamwork to ensure success.

Beyond the face value of the challenges presented, however, resides a hidden dimension steeped in the very best traditions of Jungian psychology and mythology.

The once-reluctant hero now stood atop the snow-covered peak and celebrated his conquest. The sacred prize had been returned to its rightful place, the powers of darkness had been vanquished and he had won the love of the princess. There was nothing left to do but go home.

The agony of the journey was behind him now, and safe passage to his homeland assured. As he stood his final watch and savored the taste of the salty brine carried to his lips by the stiff breeze which could only delay and not prevent his return, his mind wandered back to all that had happened—the reluctant first step into the unknown celebrated by friends yet punctuated with internal dread. The tests of strength and perseverance. The bond of camaraderie with fellow adventurers which had been forged by the intensity of emotions felt, and the pain, joy and beauty experienced.

Today, in modern societies entering the industrial age or transitioning into the post-industrial society, there is little room for adventure. In a word, our lives have been sanitized . . .

Legends of the hero's journey abound in virtually every culture. Greek and Roman myths of great adventurers who travel forth from their homeland to recapture some physical embodiment of power, e.g., the Golden Fleece or Holy Grail, represent man's quest for understanding self and the great mysteries of life, and are familiar and popular stories which many in western cultures know through classical literature as well as movies and television.

Today, in modern societies entering the industrial age or transitioning into the post-industrial society, there is little room for adventure. In a word, our lives have been sanitized—the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat have been trivialized or eliminated. Risk has been all but programmed out of our lives, and everywhere the demons have been vanquished. Generally speaking, our lives are safe and predictable, and what was once magic, unusual and fantastic—TV, space ships and medical "miracles"—is now commonplace. In fact, we have come to expect that science can solve all our problems; that science can cure all our ills; that technology can vanquish any demon—be it larger than life or microscopic.

In clear contrast to the risk-free and predictable world in which we live, stands the adventure of Outward Bound programming. In terms of an overarching metaphorical theme, the

acceptance of the challenge of Outward Bound stands as a modern-day example of the hero's journey, for those who accept the challenge, in essence go through the essential elements of every hero's journey: First there is the call to adventure, then trials of a seemingly insurmountable nature. These trials are in turn followed by the transformation, e.g., maturation, growth and empowerment of the hero as a result of meeting the challenges. Once transformed and empowered, the hero, then, returns to home-port with a renewed sense of self and commitment.

These stages of the hero's journey are embodied in the Outward Bound experience. For many Outward Bound students, friends and family-members alike marvel at the student's willingness to accept the challenge of Outward Bound. Then, there are the trials—tests of strength, stamina, will power and courage. As a natural extension of the successful completion of the trials presented, maturation occurs and thus the individual is empowered with confidence, which, in turn, provides insights for more effective living as well as for commitments for positive change. Then, upon the student's return to his/her "home-port," opportunities for enlightened action abound and change is mandated by the insights acquired while at Outward Bound.

Beyond the mythic themes which are tied to an Outward Bound experience, in more specific and concrete terms, the metaphorical nature of the Outward Bound experience can be seen in such challenges as surmounting the fifteen foot wall or technical rock climbing. For example, the challenge of the climb stands clearly as a physical challenge which one must surmount. In addition, however, it also serves as a concrete manifestation of the countless and often nameless obstacles which confront and block our easy attainment of any goal. Moreover, the encounter with the rock can more fundamentally be viewed as an encounter with The Self, and thus serve as a mechanism for self-examination, personal empowerment, as well as a vehicle to gain insight into the need for teamwork and compassion for self and others.

Clearly, the growth derived from the hero's journey and such challenges as rock climbing are predicated on an important premise, i.e., that the hero-student must evaluate their participation in the program as successful. To ensure this success-assessment, fundamental principles of experiential learning govern how and when information and challenges are presented. These essential elements of an Outward Bound experience are discussed next.

The pedagogy of Outward Bound

Conceptually, Outward Bound provides adventure-based experiential educational programming for people 14 years of age or older. The term experiential, here, defines a "doing" approach to both teaching and learning, and thus first-hand encounters with the world, i.e., concrete activities, are the foundation upon which an experiential educative endeavor is based. Yet, too, it is the transitioning, interplay and linkages between concrete educative activities and abstract undertakings which create a complete, whole experiential lesson.

Complementing the experiential pedagogy of Outward Bound programming is the concept of adventure. Adventure, here, means that there is an element of risk programmed into the curriculum structure. It should be noted, however, that within the context of an Outward Bound curriculum, the concept of adventure is broadly defined and thus includes activities with a high degree of actual risk (mountaineering), perceived risk (ropes course work), as well as the less obvious yet profoundly risky activities of self-disclosure, personal commitment, group interactions and the intellectual adventures of critical thought, reasoning and knowledge acquisition.

[The solo] is an opportunity to reflect on the past and consider the future. It is an opportunity to stand at a conscious crossroad in one's life, and choose a path to follow.

Beyond the theoretical nature of adventure-based experiential programming, there are certain key elements of an Outward Bound experience which define its unique pedagogy in educational circles.

Physical environment: First, there is the physical environment. In an Outward Bound experience the prescribed physical environment which will optimize the impact of the program is one which is unfamiliar to the learner. Thus for most of us, social beings living in urban or suburban environments, the ideal physical context for an Outward Bound experience is the wild outdoors. With this in mind, however, it should be noted that for others, a more powerful Outward Bound experience might be conducted in an urban environment e.g., New York City. The key here is that *the environment selected must stand in contrast to that which the participant is familiar and comfortable with.* In essence, the environment must serve as an equalizer, i.e., an environment which places all those who participate on equal and unfamiliar ground so that there is a shared insecurity, and thus they are compelled into searching for new areas of competence and security.

Social context: A second key element of an Outward Bound experience is the social context, i.e., a group. All Outward Bound experiences not only impel people into unfamiliar physical environments, but unfamiliar social environments as well. In many ways, the social environment complements the physical environment in that it too places participants on equal yet unfamiliar ground. Moreover, the demands of the physical environment, complemented by the challenges and activities presented during the course of an Outward Bound experience, brings to the forefront the need for individual initiative and group cooperation. In Outward Bound, the size of the group is of critical importance to the nature of the experience, for it must be large enough to allow for a diversity of personalities and skills to exist, yet small enough to function as a single entity. Traditionally, the ideal group size in an Outward Bound experience is ten people.

Activity: A third key element to an Outward Bound experience is that of activity. The activities in an Outward Bound experience must demand participation and cooperation by all, appear at first flush to be difficult if not impossible, yet too, must be activities

which can be mastered with skills training. In the Outward Bound experience, the activities, i.e., challenges which are presented to participants, are generally concrete, hold natural consequences for errors made or successes achieved, and the skills required to ensure success can be taught incrementally. Moreover, and as an essential part of the Outward Bound process, the skills to ensure success are taught prior to their required use and once taught, are almost immediately put to use by the students. Thus the skills taught have immediate utility to the students in addressing the challenges of the course, and it is this immediacy which proves to be an effective tool for prompting and accelerating participant competency in a host of endeavors.

Solo: A fourth key element of an Outward Bound program is that of a Solo. The Solo is an experience which stands in contrast to the social, environmental and activity challenges presented during an Outward Bound experience. In essence, the Solo is an opportunity for the individual to be completely alone with one's Self. It is an experience which removes the demands of the social context and provides the individual with time to reflect on the Outward Bound experience; however, it invariably becomes an opportunity for the individual to reflect back not only on the Outward Bound experience, but on one's life, one's way of being, one's values and activities. Moreover, it becomes an opportunity to reflect on the past and consider the future. It is an opportunity to stand at a conscious crossroad in one's life, and choose a path to follow.

Values: A fifth key element of an Outward Bound experience is an intangible, for it is an idea. It is, however, the idea which gives purpose and direction to the "doing" portion of the Outward Bound experience. The value which guides the Outward Bound experience is that of compassion–compassion for self and others. Clearly, the demanding nature of the prescribed physical environment in which an Outward Bound course is conducted, complemented by the challenging nature of the activities and social context, provide opportunities to gain insight into the need for compassion. Beyond, however, the daily opportunities which exist to gain and act upon such insights, all Outward Bound experiences incorporate a Service Project into the structure of the course. For example, in a wilderness Outward Bound experience students may train and be prepared for a mountain rescue operation, while an urban experience may find the students working in a shelter for the homeless. In other words, regardless of the context, opportunities for service are provided as an integral part of the Outward Bound experience.

Instructors: If the philosophy of Kurt Hahn is the soul of Outward Bound programming, and the key elements previously discussed constitute its body, then it is the instructor who serves as the heart of the program. The instructor is the heart of the program for s/he must draw upon his/her vast array of skills, e.g., outdoor technical, communication, group development, leadership and counseling, to create and co-create with the students and the environment a meaningful and educative experience, while simultaneously ensuring the participants' safety, teaching skills, monitoring and guiding the psychosocial dynamics of the group, and preserving the philosophical integrity of the experience. Thus it is the instructor who must breathe life into the Outward Bound experience and transform the philosophy of Kurt Hahn into a meaningful program.

Conclusion

Over the course of the last twenty-five years, Outward Bound in the United States has grown from one school first located in Colorado, to five schools and two centers located in seven states. Today, Outward Bound offers courses in over fifteen states, enjoys a growing public enrollment, conducts courses for special populations, e.g., adjudicated youth, substance abusers and corporate executives, in both wilderness and urban environments.

The growing popularity of Outward Bound speaks to its fundamental appeal–the appeal of adventure, challenge and personal growth. However, beyond this appeal its value and efficacy can, perhaps, be best illustrated by the words of an Outward Bound graduate. He wrote: *"We are better than we know. If we can be made to see it, perhaps for the rest of our lives we will be unwilling to settle for less."*

Ontological Emancipation

The Spiritual Foundation of Experiential Education

by Jean-Pierre Quintal

To educate is to change. To educate well is to promote change that encourages growth. The experiential education movement, with its roots in the works of Dewey, James, and Hahn, has attempted to promote such change by calling for education to become more active, interactive, and intra-active. As its name suggests, the movement strives to emphasize the methods of experimentation and experience in education in order to promote growth of the whole person. In these ways, experiential education has been a reaction against the narrow definitions of growth that have become the focus of the education system: the accumulation of cognitive knowledge and technical skills.

The fact that many feel "a strange panicky sense that all is coming apart at the seams" indicates that such a reaction is warranted.[1] An examination of current statistics of suicides, murders, rapes, and robberies reinforces this view. A cursory review of the writings of contemporary social workers, psychologists, counselors, educators, and others in people-centerd professions not only confirms the existence of these problems, but also gives vivid and disturbing life to these otherwise innocuous, impersonal statistics. If this is accepted as evidence of the educational system's failure to assist students adequately to grow in such a way that will prepare them to live happily and in health of mind and body, then a re-examination of the goals and methods of education is necessary. The writings which constitute the "spiritual foundation of experiential education" not only provide this re-examination, but when properly interpreted, clearly outline the response, both theoretical and practical, which E. E. endeavours to furnish. These writings offer a response which can potentially promote and sustain that change which encourages growth.

A deeper analysis of our societal dilemma reveals that its roots lie in the loss of meaningful contact—that is, alienation. According to Fox, our "culture has drifted in a schizoid direction," having retreated from "feelings and relationships into individuation and abstract thinking."[2] Breeding comments upon a "lost sense of connectedness," though in his focus upon a spiritual crisis, he fails to define what is disconnected.[3] Jolene Unsoeld, on the other hand, in speaking on behalf of her

Modern society is leading increasing alienation; we losing our sense of connect to nature and to the sacre and connections between e other as well. Experiential education seeks to re-integ the individual and reincorporate the person in the community and the cosmos.

Jean-Pierre Quintal received a Bachel Degree in Psychology and Religious Studies at St. Jerome's College at the University of Waterloo, where he wo for two years as a member of the chaplaincy team. At Queen's Univers (Kingston, Ontario), he studied Education—and was strongly influen by the teachers (Bert Horwood and J Raffan) and courses in the Experimer Education Department—and then tur to the study of law. He received his L.L.B. this year and is presently completing his Articles with a small criminal law firm in Kingston. He ha continued to take Master's level cour in Experimental Education and teach and assists at outdoor and experime education activities. He spends the remainder of his time canoeing, rock-climbing and cycling.

husband Willi in "Education at its Peak," makes poignantly clear that

> We [are] alienated from our emotions. . . . We are alienated from each other . . . alienated from nature . . .[4]

Pendleton concurs with this analysis of the problem as one of alienation, but is more focussed with respect to the object of this alienation:

> Cut off from nature, we have lost a sense of sacred reality, we reject spiritual values and neglect our own and others' spiritual needs.[5]

Many others have similarly commented on this dilemma, including Buber, Buscaglia, Frankl, Friere, Fromm, La Chapelle, May, Miller, and Rogers. If one is to accept their critique, we have become an alienated culture: alienated perhaps from ourselves, our thoughts, feelings, bodies, or spirits; alienated perhaps from those around us or perhaps from that which surrounds us. Somehow, though, the meaningful interconnectedness that allows us as a culture to "embrace life without reserve" has been lost.[6]

The source of this alienation is as difficult to define as its particular objects. Some find the roots of this dilemma in the lack of "effort made to allow the sacred to be reconciled with the physical reality."[7] Others claim that the objectification of our whole experience has caused this alienation. Still others blame "over-emphasis on abstract thinking." The confusion is further increased in that some of these "causes" are interpreted by others to be "effects" or "symptoms."

What soon becomes clear is that the solutions advocated by these diverse writers require an acceptance of their particular analysis of the problem. The difficulty is that the solution then perpetuates more problems similar in nature. If, in placing the emphasis upon the reintegration of one alienated aspect of the individual or society (e.g. the spiritual), another equally important aspect (e.g. the physical) is ignored, then, the reintegration of one results in the alienation of the other.

An integrated approach

Should the foundational literature of E.E. be accepted in this way, there is the danger of its proponents accepting each particular perspective and program on its face as infallible doctrine which they then dogmatically attempt to implement. To do this is to lose the essence of what has been written, the inevitable result of which will be to lose the potentially beneficial aspects of E.E., thus rendering it part of the problem rather than the solution. To prevent such an event from occurring, an integrated and eclectic approach is necessary.

Fundamental to such an approach is the realization that neither the source nor the object of alienation are particularly important. Rather, it is the loss of the ability to form meaningful connections which is crucial. No doubt, society and individuals are more alienated from certain objects than others. These provide a good and necessary place to begin learning and teaching how to make such connections. The starting point though, like the content, must not be permitted to obscure the importance of the process of learning how to create these necessary connections.

The spiritual foundations of experiential education contain a number of themes which require synthesis and integration. The first such theme is that education should encourage change which is fundamental to the person, which involves some form of integration of the individual. For change to promote balanced growth, it must affect all aspects of the person. Thus, there is need for experience where the whole of the person is involved. As well, this emphasizes the need for an eclectic approach so one aspect of the individual is not addressed at the expense of another. Such a change is best identified as an *ontological* change as it goes to the whole of the being.

Here the similarities between the E.E. writings and descriptions of religious experiences become apparent. An ontological change of this sort is strikingly similar to the experience of conversion as explained by William James, one of the moving forces in experiential education.[8] The emphasis on this type of change distinguishes E.E. from other forms of education. If this movement is to remain a major force, it must recognize this form of change.

Openness is a prerequisite for ontological change. The belief that there is or may be "a better way" opens the door to the possibility of change. Those individuals who percieve that they hold the truth are rarely open to the possibility of finding a better way. Those who have allowed psychological defenses such as denial to become their reality, rather than a means of dealing with reality, have similarly precluded positive changes. This points to the value of planned and controlled crises in E.E. The opportunity of such crises is to reveal effectively to individuals the extent to which their truths and defenses have become dysfunctional and consequently the need to be open to change and growth.

Education should encourage change which is fundamental to the person, which involves some form of integration of the individual. For change to promote balanced growth, it must affect all aspects of the person.

Openness alone will not produce deep changes. An element of *risk* is always involved. If one is to let go of what one presently is, one must risk losing the known and certain for that which is unknown and uncertain. One may be open and prepared to risk, but rarely will the process be complete unless there is some belief that the risk is worthwhile. The *faith* in the good of people and in change will produce a positive outcome that allows the process to come to fruition.

The emphasis on change and its three constituent elements—openness, risk, and faith—forms the spiritual foundation of experiential education. This encourages growth and integration. Yet, to terminate the discussion at this point would be tantamount to saying that discrete change experiences are what E.E. is about. Though E.E. is often accused or promulgating just this, it simply is not so. There is much more.

The individual in community

What experiential education recognizes is the importance of *community* for the sustained growth of the individual. An integral aspect of EE.'s view is its understanding of leadership. Jolene Unsoeld succinctly outlines the movement's definition of leadership in stating that

> You are educators not only for what you tell your students and what you get them to experience but, probably more importantly for the example, the role model . . . you provide.[9]

It is in this vision of the teacher as role model who simultaneously journeys with and leads his or her students that the values of democracy and equality so important to a growing community are most evident.[10] The growing community is one which fosters an interdependence whose fulfillment is in shared leadership.

Contrary to the view of F. Earle Fox, this does not require a community in which members are required to become dependent again. Rather, the community which is fundamental to experiential education is one which fosters development of the individual from dependence through independence into interdependence. The interdependent community encourages the expression of one's individuality within a community of others who are similarly expressing their individuality. Unlike the previous dependent stage, members are expected to contribute to the community when able. In turn, they receive its support throughout the pains which are a natural part of growth and are encouraged to continue in the process. Such a sense of community, one which is akin to pilgrims on a growth process, provides the necessary environment for education.

The final requirement to sustain this form of education is the expression or *celebration* of growth. This must be particular to the growth which has occurred. In some cases, this celebration will consist of a creation process which may be practical or artistic. In some instances, these celebrations will be festivals. In others, it will involve active participation in social issues. Its form is secondary to its existence.[11]

These "rituals" are participatory. Individuals participate in the event and the event participates and precipitates the further growth of the individual. The fullness or importance of the event cannot be defined. Neither can the importance of the experience of growth being expressed be fully defined by the individual. Yet, it is such events which express this growth.

Conclusion

Experiential education is not offering anything which is actually new. The themes within the material which provides the foundation of the movement—*change*, openness, risk and faith, *community* and *celebration*—are the same as can be found in many movements. They are the same themes as those used to express religious experiences: conversion, ecclesiology, and ritual. Though apparently new to the education scene, these are actually time-honored themes which are being rediscovered in a new context.

The continual recurrence of these themes attests to their importance. One question remains to be answered: why must they be continually rediscovered? Perhaps this is because movements become complacent. An answer which is accepted becomes dogma. A definition for the final goal is established. Change becomes no longer as acceptable as it once was.

Experiential education has the opportunity to escape from this trap by continuing to advocate change which encourages growth. It is this commitment to reconversion, communities which are dynamic and constantly growing and expressing that growth that will ensure the continued value of experiential education. It must strive not to revolutionize education: that is to overthrow one despot for another. Rather, it must strive to emancipate—to free institutions and individuals from the traps which hinder continual growth in a positive direction. Experiential education at its best must strive towards ontological emancipation.

Notes

1. F. E. Fox, "The Spiritual Core of Experiential Education" in R. J. Kraft and M. Sakofs (eds.), *The Theory of Experiential Education* (Boulder, CO: The Association for Experiential Education, 1985), pp. 99-102.
2. Fox, "The Spiritual Core of Experiential Education."
3. J. Breeding, "Hope for the People and the Planet: Truly Powerful Survivors" in Kraft and Sakofs, *Theory of Experiential Education*, pp. 123-128.
4. Jolene Unsoeld, "Education at its Peak" in Kraft and Sakofs, *Theory of Experiential Education*, pp. 108-122.
5. S. Pendleton, "The Norwegian Nature Life Approach" in Kraft and Sakofs, *Theory of Experiential Education*, pp. 102-107.
6. J. Breeding, "Hope for the People . . ."
7. S. Pendleton, "The Norwegian Nature Life Approach."
8. W. James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: New American Library, 1958).
9. J. Unsoeld, "Education at its Peak."
10. J. Vanier, *Community and Growth* (Toronto: Griffin House, 1979).
11. S. Pendleton, "The Norwegian Nature Life Approach"; D. La Chappelle, *Earth Wisdom* (Silverton, CO: Finn Hill Arts, 1977) and *Earth Festivals* (same publisher, 1978); J. Unsoeld, "Education at its Peak."

Letters to the Review

Dear editors,

I would appreciate your help in locating innovative and far-sighted organizations who are (or who might consider) sharing information for maximizing human potential nationally and/or internationally.

They would:

1. use mass media to honestly and factually ACCELERATE public awareness (daily/weekly) of compatible resources for enhancing learning (working or playing), e.g.: documentary television series, or
2. quickly increase local and global AVAILABILITY & Accessibility of those compatible resources, or
3. use those compatible resources to help MAXIMIZE learning (of any subject), or
4. expand the ADAPTATION, Application & Utilization of those compatible resources to other areas/purposes, such as work, play, etc.

I shall welcome your suggestions and/or the names and addresses of individuals or organizations that might be of some help in my quest.

Andy Pallant
2081 LaFevre Road
Geneva, Ohio 44041

Dear editors,

Congratulations on launching H.E.R.! I read with interest your paper "Two Hundred Years of Holistic Education" and would like to add some observations about your presentation of John Holt and his work.

While John Holt is often lumped together with Kohl, Kozol, and so on, his ideas about children, learning, and education did not begin and end with the "romantic" (what an unflattering pigeon-hole term that is!) school reform movement in the sixties. Looking at John's work one can see how he developed his ideas and awareness about children and learning based on his many years of school teaching (*How Children Fail, How Children Learn*); then moved on to his rejection of traditional schools as the best places for learning (*The Underachieving School* marks this); to his development as an advocate of children's rights, especially in regard to more autonomy in what they choose to think and be curious about (*Escape from Childhood, Freedom and Beyond*); then to his recognition that we need to stop separating learning from life and create not more alternative schools, but alternatives to school (*Instead of Education*); and then to his strong advocacy of homeschooling as the most hopeful path for education since it can be an alternative to school that puts children and their parents back into the community, instead of in compulsory schools and corporations (*Teach Your Own*). This isn't even a listing of all John's books. Where would this thinking have gone had he continued to live? John's life and work shows us how learning is a life-long process done largely outside of school, and requires us only to be observant, thoughtful and trusting of our own thinking and eyes. John was adamant that his work not be viewed as completed and set in stone, and that we who choose to continue his work should challenge and if necessary change *Growing Without Schooling* as we, in turn, develop.

I don't want to be perceived as totally negative towards your article or any of the other articles in H.E.R. It's wonderful and refreshing to see a new education publication that is open to and accepting of homeschooling and other non-mainstream approaches to education—I encourage you and your work to flourish. However your ambitious paper presents us only with John Holt as a "romantic school reformer of the sixties" (which is how *Time* magazine referred to him in its obituary). I like to think that a Holistic view of Holt, Steiner, Montessori, or for that matter anyone, will go beyond journalistic and educational cliches and strive to present readers with a fuller, more human exposition of people and ideas than we get from typical education journalism.

Best wishes,
Patrick Farenga
President, Holt Associates
Managing Editor,
Growing Without Schooling

Editor's response:

It was not our intention to dismiss Holt as a sentimental romantic; we tried to indicate that the romantic world view is a "legitimate opposition" to the materialism of the industrial age. The article sought to place Holt's educational ideas in this larger tradition.

Of course, you are correct that a couple paragraphs cannot do justice to Holt's ideas (nor to Montessori's, Steiner's, or any of the others included in the article). This is why we encourage our readers to write more comprehensive articles on any of the holistic ideas and approaches with which you are familiar. We certainly intend to go beyond journalistic cliches to explore holistic education in depth.

Dear editors,

"I've never been invited to a birthday party. I'm nobody's best friend. I don't fit in this class very well. I don't have any friends," Kevin's words to me one day. He had asked earlier in the day if he might stay after school and help me. Knowing that Kevin was lonely and feeling isolated, I encouraged him to stay.

Kevin is not alone; lots of children find themselves in Kevin's situation. Many of these students are victims of rejection by classmates; others are ignored.

As educators we have long been sensitive to the problems of children without friends. These children are sometimes victims of their own social behavior. However, as educators

we must also find fault with first our own teachers as they were our models, and now with ourselves.

As I look back I remember many times when a teacher made me afraid I would fail. It is frightening to wonder how many teachers today are doing just the opposite of what they need to do; giving the child a feeling that he will succeed.

I am a classroom teacher. I know the time constraints of a classroom teacher. At what point during the course of a busy day will I find quiet moments in which to think over what I am doing and why? At what time do I work on fostering self-worth and encouraging successes? It is the Kevins in my classes that make me realize that there is no right time. This encouragement and fostering must happen all the time.

It is also the Kevins and others like him that cause me to recall what my motives were for choosing this vocation. I still remember the promise I made to myself when I was in college. When I began teaching I would always try to teach with a sense of humor, humanistic firmness, and above all, sympathetic understanding for those I would spend so much of my day with.

Now that I am a seasoned teacher, I realize how easy it is to become bogged down in the press of classroom life. I also realize that the Kevins have once again helped me to see my goals of promoting intelligent thinking and fostering self-worth.

I can make a difference. I can help the Kevins develop self-worth and find an identity within a peer group. How do I do this? It must be through modeling and a bit of coaching. Is it not easy to model listening, touching, responding and caring? Is it not easy to coach a child in group participation, communicating, and peer support? Sure it is. We do it everyday with those strong self-concepts in our classrooms. What a good time to shift these coaching and modeling techniques to those that need us most, the Kevins.

Rogene Brennan-Peak
College of Education
University of Wyoming
Laramie, Wyoming

CLASSIFIED ADS

(Rates for classified ads are .25 per word.)

Book Reviews

Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation
Edited by Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little
Open Court Publishing Co. (P.O. Box 599, Peru, IL 61354), 1987. 498 pages.

Reviewed by Ron Miller

Quite simply, this book is an immediate classic. Because of its extremely broad scope and highly relevant contents, it is now the premier work on the subject of rites of passage. The editors have brought together a fascinating group of anthropologists, psychologists, theologians, educators (including John Allan—see p. 44 of this issue), essayists, poets, and Vision Quest leaders (editors Foster & Little—see page 30), who address rites of passage from their various perspectives.* Most of the psychologists, like editor Mahdi, draw upon Carl Jung's stimulating insights into archetypes, individuation, and spirituality.

In fact, the book has a distinctly spiritual orientation—although only two of the thirty-one chapters are explicitly theological. Spiritual development is directly addressed in many chapters and looms in the background of most of the others. These writers believe that rites of passage are particularly important rituals, for individuals as well as cultures, because times of transition in our lives are opportunities for opening to larger meaning. The *liminal* periods of development—the phases that are "betwixt and between" established social identities—are times for heightened searching and reflection. Thus it is a great loss that modern Western civilization, in becoming narrowly materialistic, has discarded meaningful rites of passage.

> For thousands of years rites of initiation have been teaching rebirth from the spirit, yet man has forgotten the meaning of divine initiatory procreation in our times. This forgetfulness causes him to suffer a loss of soul, a condition which sadly is everywhere present today.
> (Jungian analyst Anne Maguire, M.D., in "Jung's First Dream," p. 61)

Without rites of initiation, we are cut off from the deeper sources of our being, from our ultimate connection to the cosmos. We end up as isolated individuals in a difficult—and inevitably futile—struggle to attain security. Psychologist Dr. Tom Pinkson, in an insightful and deeply moving chapter, argues that the human journey through life into death is a process of growing from separateness toward connectedness. (He quotes anthropologist Virginia Hine, who, writing about her husband's death, said "It is quite possible that a gradual spiritualization of consciousness is what life is all about.") Rites of passage, he thinks, enable us to overcome our isolation by "surrendering ego control to the mysterious unknown." But that is precisely what our culture fears.

> For many people nowadays, there is little, if any, room for notions of soul, spirit, or the transcendent. We have lost touch with the numinous ground of our deeper being which is something more than the sum of the physical properties of the body. . . . Modern western society, with its emphasis on technological power and material riches, has become impoverished in spiritual riches, which are all that count when death comes to call. . . Peace comes only from seeing and knowing our relationship and oneness with the universe and all its powers. . . .
> (" 'Do They Celebrate Christmas in Heaven?': Teachings From Children With Life-threatening Illnesses," pp. 357-370.)

Young people—especially young adolescents—desperately need rites of passage today. Modern education is failing our children, according to several of the writers.

> No cohesive forms of instruction or initiation into the adult world exist in our culture except certain academic expectations and the development of work skills. The deep, natural instinctive and spiritual changes which give meaning to the passage of our lives are generally ignored. Many of the religious forms have lost their significance in favor of materialistic values and this potential opening to deeper meaning in life finds little cultural support either within the family or the educational system.
> (Edith Sullwold, Ph.D., Jungian analyst, in "The Ritual-maker Within at Adolescence," p. 116.)

It is suggested that this absence of meaningful rites of passage is one factor in the phenomenon of teen suicide.

Several of the writers believe that Western culture itself is undergoing a profound struggle to grow, for which we collectively will need some kind of initiation rite to give a sense of meaning, a sense of direction, to our evolution. Rites of passage, it is frequently noted, not only help the individual in his or her development, but serve the existential needs of the entire community as well. There is an implicit warning that if Western culture continues to grope blindly for technological solutions to its problems—which are essentially spiritual—we may face suicide on a global scale. *Betwixt and Between* is an urgent call for our civilization to reclaim a spiritual foundation.

---

* Almost all of these articles are readable and should interest any educator or parent—but because the first article, by anthropologist Victor Turner, is quite dry and difficult to read, I put the book aside for months before picking it up again! It is an important article, to be sure, but I think it was a mistake to open the book with it.

A related (and also minor) complaint is that the chapters cover so much ground, the transitions between chapters are sometimes too abrupt. For example, a journalistic account of youth suicide is followed by a chapter on Jung's first dream, which is then followed by an interpretation of *Huckleberry Finn*. The variety is important—it shows that the issues are universal—but this almost random placement, without enough editorial introduction, is at times dizzying.

Experiential Education in High School: Life in the Walkabout Program,
by Bert Horwood.
Association for Experiential Education (Box 249-CU, Boulder, CO 80309), 1987. 103 pages.

Reviewed by Mary Ellen Sweeney

Bert Horwood heads the Outdoor and Experiental Education Program at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He spent part of a sabbatical year (1981-1982) visiting and observing Jefferson County Open High School in Evergreen, Colorado, a school that bases its curricula on Walkabout, a revolutionary idea of high school as a rite of passage from adolescence to adulthood. Walkabout is the journey into the wilderness by Aborigine adolescents as they prepare for the responsibilities of adulthood. In the JCOHS Walkabout program, students propose and complete personally challenging projects in six areas.

The reform studies that have dominated the 1980's call for many of the program components long in place at JCOHS, detailed with a special touch and insight by Horwood in his descriptive study. Students' and staffs' philosophies of education are lived out at JCOHS. The processes by which the program exists and changes as needed are discussed.

The daily routine and school climate are presented with uncanny insight. At staff meetings, school policy is questioned and re-examined against its original intent when necessary. School policies are continually compared to the school values. Teachers and students are equally empowered in goal and policy setting and reviewing processes of the school. For these reasons and others Horwood utilizes the theoretical works of C. Argyris and D. Schon (*Theory in practice: Increasing professional effectiveness.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1974) to demonstrate and describe how JCOHS professionals utilize a model that does not maintain the existing order (as in many conventional school settings). Horwood explains: "The assumptions of professionals who act under this model are: first, action should be based on valid information; second, people are able to make effective choices and decisions; third, people behave most effectively according to their internal commitments." (p. 82)

The author does not paint a totally rosy picture of JCOHS but enumerates some of the dark side or problems of the program. For example, the program is designed to have the social and motivational problems of students surface. One of the strengths of the program, on the other hand, is that the advisory system, the all-school governance system, and the close and small number of school community members, in part, is designed to support students in need. A central JCOHS goal is that students will act independently and responsibly. The program components aid in this student development and do not merely set students free to do their own thing.

Horwood waits until the end of his discourse and description of JCOHS to draw conclusions about the positive and higher level model undertaken in his study. I wish he would have further developed the exploration of the Argyris and Schon models of professional effectiveness. Horwood has made a significant contribution to the growing body of alternative and experiential education literature. His study depicts the inner workings of one progressive secondary schooling organization that utilizes many of the recommended reform measures.

A Mathematical Mystery Tour: Higher-Thinking Math Tasks
by Mark Wahl.
Published by Zephyr Press (430 S. Essex Lane, Tucson, AZ 85711), 1988.

Reviewed by Mary Ellen Sweeney

Teachers and students (ages 10-18) will enjoy many of the interdisciplinary, small group and cooperative learning techniques utilized in this book. Students with math hang-ups based on negative experiences will be able to uncover and discover the interconnectedness of mathematical order patterned in nature as they are guided through the activities in this book.

Activities are of high interest, although there are some problems with certain activities. To begin with, the activities require a teacher's direction. For example, the computer activity is for a program that is dictated so children may get a "feel" for the patterning of the concept presented. Students might want to be challenged to explore programming of their own for higher level thinking and decision-making skills.

Furthermore, while the author does incorporate subject areas, he could have included more language activities such as playwriting, creative writing, and drama to further emphasize the interconnectedness and interrelatedness of learning math concepts. That is, after building pyramids, students could act out one scene from a day in the life of King Tut.

The author could strengthen his content by placing more emphasis on the importance of students mastering basic math facts. But as a whole, this book is a good resource for numerous enjoyable activities.

In Their Own Way by Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D.
Published by J. P. Tarcher (9110 Sunset Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069), 1987. 211 pp.

Reviewed by Bill Farkas

How much can one learn from a book? How much do you want to learn? Whether your are a parent or a teaching practitioner, in *In Their Own Way*, Thomas Armstrong has compiled an orientation and resource text that offers a wealth of ideas for aiding students to make the most of their learning and growing.

In relatively brief and quite precise fashion, psychologist and learning specialist Armstrong outlines his approach to assisting all students in their growth, based substantially on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. He builds his case that the majority of children in traditional public education systems have potential that is missed because of teaching that is aimed at the "average" student and done mainly in a visual/intellectual mode. Quite familiar with coding and classifying systems, he decries their abuse when they cause unique strengths to be seen as liabilities. "Nowhere in this litany of deficit, disability, and disease is there the recognition that these children may learn very well in their own way," he states.

Armstrong then details how to take advantage of different learning styles—the "seven ways to bloom": linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences. I found the descriptions of these intelligences fun to read, like horoscopes (but more grounded)—for therein I kept seeing myself. Previous to this, I had never really pinpointed my own major personal styles of learning.

It is very helpful that the author speaks from the perspective of having been a classroom practitioner. His points are well-illustrated and believable because from them you can picture a child—even your child—reaching out to understand the world and being responded to in some less-than-appropriate way. Armstrong discusses this "Disteachia" and has many very practical and possible avenues to suggest as ways to alleviate or avoid its effect on your child.

It is difficult to place Armstrong either into a "consumerist" or a "practicing professional" camp. This is just as well, for this educator puts forth ideas that could lead to improvements from both within and outside of the teaching field. Although I winced (as a school administrator) when reading "Five Options for Schooling Your Child" (picturing parents "bouncing" their child from program to program), I agree with Armstrong that the proper match of child and format of schooling is essential to the realization of their greatest learning.

The concerns I have about this book are foreshadowed in this review's opening line. The text assumes that an understanding of holistic education can be fostered in books and that the reader (if a parent) is ready and willing to take great responsibility for his/her child's education. Based upon these assumptions, there are outlines of solid ideas and practices to look for and establish. For the homeschooler this precondition is met; what the already over-extended urban parent may well find here is greater frustration.

I would hope that parents will invest the time and use this information to supplement what their child is getting from a program or to reassess the format of program to which they send their child. Otherwise, I could see this rather accurate critique being used to add yet another pressure to teachers—both the concerned *and* the less-than-thoughtful ones.

Its best use may be as a beginning consciousness-raising tool that school can be more; that there are some incremental as well as some fundamental ways to make changes. For example, the chapter "Bodywise" details some excellent ways to "put the body back into learning" that can help academic learning take place in a more kinesthetic manner, settling and focusing the child.

To discover your child's personal learning style might just make an essential connection for you about why you do or do not get through to your child consistently.

In a similar manner, reading "How you and your child can teach each other" may increase one's awareness of the feelings of a child, and how we all have a need for success in what we do, such as in aiding a child with their homework.

"The Alchemy of Expectation" may likewise be worth its weight in gold towards seeing each of the child's individualities of style as strengths.

For the teacher, there is meat (shall we say, "protein"?) here, too. The "Unified Senses Theory" (synaesthesia) was new to me, as was the concept of "Physiognomic perception." This term is used to describe when sensory input is highly fused with feeling, such as when the colors of a painting immediately evoke a mood sometimes independently of its subject matter.

Chapter 13, "The Ecology of Learning: Providing Your Child With a Nurturing Environment" is worthy of distribution to an entire teaching staff for examination—it touches all the bases (such as lighting and environmental allergies) and is a brief and concise piece.

Twenty pages of resources, organized into "Publications" and "Organizations" by type of multiple intelligence could well prove invaluable to the inquiring practitioner.

Again, I found Armstrong's to be a useful and practical book, inspiring me to read his *The Radiant Child* for more of a picture of his (educational) world view. And this is my caveat: that this text not be used as a prescription or accepted upon face value; it represents a certain holistic way of looking at children and learning that can only come from observation, interaction, and experimentation. To the extent that one can learn from a book, do that from *In Their Own Way*. Then, get out there and substantiate it!

Bill Farkas is a Montessori teacher, administrator and consultant.

RESOURCES IN HOLISTIC EDUCATION

(This listing includes resources known to us at this time. We invite readers to send in information about other groups and publications.)

Networks and Organizations

Association for Childhood Education International
11141 Georgia Ave., Suite 200
Wheaton, MD 20902

A professional association advocating developmentally-appropriate curriculum materials. Offers a variety of publications on educational topics. Recently published *Learning Opportunities Beyond the School*, a comprehensive resource guide for parents, teachers, and other child care givers that contains practical ideas for facilitating learning in multiple settings.

Association for Humanistic Education
P.O. Box 923
Carrollton, GA 30117

Sponsors annual conferences, journal and newsletter. Members include public school educators and others with a broad interest in human relations & human potential issues.

Association of Waldorf Schools of North America
17 Hemlock Hill
Great Barrington, MA 01230

Directory of Waldorf schools and teacher training.

Elementary School Center
2 East 103 St.
New York, NY 10029

Supporting the elementary school as "the locus of advocacy for all children." Sponsors and disseminates research and discussion of issues facing elementary schools and their importance in the life of the child. Conferences and publications.

International Reading Association
P.O. Box 8139
Newark, DE 19714-8139

Publishes research and professional journals on the teaching and learning of reading skills; offers an extensive catalog of books. Also, an informative newsletter and active organization to support the teaching of reading to all ages.

The National Association for Core Curriculum, Inc.
404 White Hall
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Promotes interdisciplinary, unified, integrated, "block-time" studies in the secondary curriculum. Conferences, publications, and films.

The National Association for Mediation in Educatio
425 Amity St.
Amherst, MA 01002

Promotes the teaching of conflict resolution skills, pr grams for peer mediation. A national clearing hou for publications, curriculum guides, and informati on conflict resolution programs already in actio Publishes bibliography and directory, newslett reports.

National Coalition of Alternative Community Schoo
c/o Jerry Mintz
417 Roslyn Rd.
Roslyn Heights, NY 11577

A network of parent cooperatives, free school homeschoolers. Facilitates student exchanges ar travel. Sponsors annual and regional conferences, journal (*Skole*) and newsletter. Has published a dire tory of member schools with a resource listing.

New Horizons for Learning
4649 Sunnyside North
Seattle, WA 98115

Publishes *On the Beam*, describing the latest resear in learning and thinking skills; also a clearinghouse f seminars, workshops and ideas for applying the findings. Sponsors extraordinary conferences.

Publications for educators and parents

Center for Teaching and Learning
Box 8158
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND 58202

Publishes journals on progressive and open classroo approaches, as well as a series of research papers.

Changing Schools
Teachers College 918
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306

A newsletter/journal on alternative schools, includi public school programs.

Childhood – The Waldorf Perspective
Nancy Aldrich
Rt. 2 Box 2675
Westford, VT 05494

Quarterly journal covering Waldorf and other holistic forms of parenting, schooling, and homeschooling. Includes information on philosophy, kindergarten, nature study, curriculums, arts, music, craft projects from natural materials, festivals, resources, and networking information.

Consortium for Whole Brain Learning
3632 13th Avenue South
Minneapolis, MN 55407

A small newsletter, published four times during the school year, with ideas and resources for addressing the various learning styles. $6/yr.

Creation
P.O. Box 19216
Oakland, CA 94619

A bimonthly magazine bringing together art, science, and the spiritual/mystical tradition in a stimulating holistic paradigm for the revisioning of our culture. Edited by Matthew Fox, author of *Original Blessing.*

Family Reader Magazine
P.O. Box 534
Onalaska, WI 54650-0534

An alternative parenting digest which reprints exceptional articles from over forty newsletters and magazines. Regular coverage of homeschooling and alternative schooling is included. $15/year for six issues. $3 for sample copy.

For Parents
3011 Schoolview Rd.
Eden, NY 14057

A newsletter published five times a year "to improve family communication and moral development." Sample copy $1.

Green Teacher
c/o Lisa Glick, Lifelab
809 Bay Ave.
Capitola, CA 95010

Published in Britain by the Centre for Alternative Technology. Focuses on environmental education, organic & ecological principles, renewable energy, peace education.

Individual Education Bulletin
c/o William Kiskaddon
4404 242nd SW
Mountlake Terrace, WA 98043

A quarterly newsletter about the Corsini Four-R schools (see this issue, p. 4). Two-year subscription, $16.

New Families
NextStep Publications
P.O. Box 41108
Fayetteville, NC 28309

Calling itself "a journal of transitions," this quarterly magazine explores family lifestyles in the post-industrial age, with sensitive and comprehensive coverage of the connections between family and work, expanding roles of motherhood and fatherhood, self-sufficiency and home-based work and education, and much more. $15/year.

Mothering
P.O. Box 1690
Santa Fe, NM 87504

Probably the leading publication on holistic approaches to parenting. Comprehensive coverage and handsome graphics. Available in many bookstores.

Publications for children

KidsArt News
P.O. Box 274
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067

A lively newsletter filled with creative activities for elementary-age children, informative features on important artists and art styles, and contributions and responses from kids themselves. Includes folk art from many cultures. Published quarterly, $8.00 year.

Merlyn's Pen
P.O. Box 1058
East Greenwich, RI 02818

A magazine of childrens' creative and serious writing and poetry.

Book Publishers (Offering catalogs filled with resources for holistic educators and parents.)

Anthroposophic Press
Bell's Pond, Star Route
Hudson, NY 12534

The most complete selection of books on Rudolf Steiner's philosophy and the Waldorf education approach.

Bergin & Garvey
670 Amherst Rd.
South Hadley, MA 01075

Paulo Freire's works, including *The Politics of Education* and others, also *The Moral & Spiritual Crisis in Education; Education & the American Dream;* and other social-political studies of education, as well as anthropological approaches to childbirth, and other subjects.

Jalmar Press
45 Hitching Post Dr. Bldg. 25
Rolling Hills Estates, CA 90274-4297

Resources for teachers, parents and children on nurturing self-esteem, peace, and creative (integrating right and left brain) learning and thinking. Catalog includes important works by Jack Canfield, Barbara Meister Vitale, and Bob Samples.

New Society Publishers
Box H
4527 Springfield Ave.
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Books on peace and nonviolent social change, including serveral titles for educators and young people. (See ad on inside front cover of this issue.)

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
252 Bloor Street West
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5S 1V6

Titles include *The Holistic Curriculum* by John P. Miller; *Sharing the World—A Prospect for Global Learning; Learning and Loving It;* and many works on Canadian education, French (and English) as a second language, and classroom activities. OISE also publishes several educational journals.

Open Court Publishing Company
315 Fifth St.
Peru, IL 61354

Publishers of *Cricket* magazine and many books for young readers as well as educators. Recently published the *Open Court Reading and Writing* program for the elementary grades, designed by leading educational researchers to integrate reading, writing and language skills.

Teachers College Press
Teachers College, Columbia University
1234 Amsterdam Ave.
New York, NY 10027

A long list of titles includes books by Douglas Sloan, an important writer in holistic education.

University of the Trees Press
Box 66
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

Learning materials for teaching the whole child, including step-by-step books full of photos and illustrations, and tapes which teach children visualization and meditation. Newest book, *The Ultimate Kid*, was said by East West Journal to be "among the most enlightening of the new teaching books."

Zephyr Press
430 South Essex Lane, Dept. N7B
Tucson, AZ 85711

Bi-annual newsletter on issues "at the forefront c education and learning." Lists many relevant books an curriculum guides for sale, and includes networkin information.

Home schooling

Holt Associates
729 Boylston St.
Boston, MA 02116

National network, resource center. Publishes *Growin Without Schooling* newsletter.

Home Education Magazine
P.O. Box 1083
Tonasket, WA 98855

Comprehensive coverage of social and philosophic issues in the home schooling movement, plus practic ideas and resources available to parents, and activit pages for kids. Bi-monthly: $24/yr.

National Home Schoolers
P.O. Box 167
Rodeo, NM 88056

A network that is currently forming to serve the need of home schoolers.

Environmental education

Institute for Earth Education
Box 288
Warrenville, IL 60555

Curriculum ideas, workshops and conference Publishes *Talking Leaves* newsletter, and books suc as *The Earth Speaks.*

National Audubon Society Expedition Institute
Northeast Audubon Center
Sharon, CT 06069

Wilderness programs for high school and colleg students and adults. Students form a cooperativ travelling community for year-long, semester, and sum mer expeditions. Academics, arts, and ecology ar learned through this experiential, holistic approach Also offers B.S. and M.S. degrees in Environment Education in conjunction with Lesley College.

Vermont Institute of Natural Science
Woodstock, VT 05091

Publishes *Hands-on Nature: Information and Ac tivities for Exploring the Environment with Children*

Global education/peace education

Association for Humanistic Psychology
325 Ninth St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

Sponsors exchanges of American and Soviet educators and psychologists.

Center for Cross-cultural Education
College of Education
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303-3083

Has published seven volumes on educational issues from an international perspective. The most recent volume examines educational reform movements in five countries, including the U.S. and U.S.S.R.

Children's Creative Response to Conflict
Box 271
Nyack, NY 10960-0271

Offers activities, publications, workshops, and courses to help teachers as well as children learn skills of cooperation, communication, affirmation, conflict resolution and mediation. A holistic, experiential approach dealing with the roots of conflict. Affiliated with Fellowship of Reconciliation, has related programs in several places in North America.

Educators for Social Responsibility
23 Garden St.
Cambridge, MA 02138

Curriculum materials on nuclear issues, conflict resolution. Sponsors teacher workshops.
(ESR Metro New York Office offers additional materials, including an information packet on the model peace education program in community school district 15. Write ESR Metro, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10027.)

Global Education Associates
475 Riverside Dr. Suite 456
New York, NY 10115

Produces an extensive list of books, monographs ("The Whole Earth Papers"), filmstrips, audio and video cassettes, as well as the excellent magazine *Breakthrough*. Explores alternative solutions to international conflicts and advocates cross-cultural understanding.

Peace Links
747 8th St. SE
Washington, D.C. 20003

Dedicated to public education about peace and nuclear issues. Has put together information and resource kits for parents, educators and young people on "Celebrate Peace," "Reach for Peace," "Understanding the Soviets," and "Global Awareness." Publishes "Student Action Update" and *Connection* newsletters, sponsors exchanges and other programs.

Youth Ambassadors of America
P.O. Box 5273
Bellingham, WA 98227

Sponsors exchanges of American and Soviet children and educators.

Other resources and consultants

The BONGO Program
Middle College High School
31-10 Thomson Ave.
Long Island City, NY 11101

The BONGO Workbook, a 195-page manual for designing an interdisciplinary, team-teaching, student-directed, project-oriented high school program that has achieved proven results—$12. The directors of the program are also available to run training and start-up workshops.

National Women's History Project
P.O. Box 3716
Santa Rosa, CA 95402

Offers a catalog of resources and materials on women's history, in-service workshops and summer conferences.

Ed Clark Associates
29 W. 112 Morris Court
Warrenville, IL 60555
(312) 393-2177

CONTEXTUAL THINKING, an in-service program enabling teachers to design an integrated, interesting, provocative and relevant curriculum, incorporating creative thinking skills.

Peak Performance Center
Ronald R. Hering, Ph.D.
610 Fremont St.
Lake Mills, WI 53551
(414) 648-8597

Workshops and staff training on Mastering Change and Chaos, Brain/Mind Expansion, Peak Performance/Improve Productivity Under Pressure, Creativity—The Winning Edge, Mastering Stress, and more.

Experiential Education

Association for Experiential Education
Box 249-CU
Boulder, CO 80309

Outward Bound USA
384 Field Point Rd.
Greenwich, CT 06830

From the editors

Volume 2, Number 1 of *Holistic Education Review* (Spring, 1989) will focus on "A New Professionalism: Empowering Teachers in Holistic Settings."

Teachers are the heart of any educational enterprise. Yet in many traditional settings, they do not have professional autonomy in making educational decisions for their students. Teachers often exist in isolation in their classrooms, often guessing at their own effectiveness with few or no meaningful evaluation processes with students, parents, peers or administrators.

Holistic educators need to be empowered with decision-making rights that are equal to all other members of their school community. They must be involved from the start, in formulating the mission statements of their programs and in creating, assessing and improving the various program components and instructional strategies implemented to affect students' learning. We are seeking articles on these issues from holistic teachers and administrators—as well as a homeschooler's perspective. The deadline for this issue is December 30.

MARY ELLEN SWEENEY

Last issue I wrote a book review of *Phases of Childhood*, an account of the anthroposophic (Rudolf Steiner/Waldorf education) understanding of human development. In the article I questioned the book's absence of references to other important observers of child development, and warned that an approach "based on special insight tends to become estranged from developments in other fields of thought." I invited Waldorf educators and students of anthroposophy to respond to this concern.

As this issue goes to press, I have received two letters—neither intended for publication—which did respond to this question. These writers pointed out that Rudolf Steiner himself was very much in contact with intellectual developments in other fields, and that his teachings emphasize the importance of open-minded investigation. Both writers suggested that I was unfairly criticizing Steiner's thought.

Let me clarify my intention. In my review I did not criticize Steiner or his teachings. In fact I called his work "extremely valuable," and as I study his work (I am currently reading *The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity*) I am deeply impressed by his insight. I would love to see the anthroposophic world view attain more influence and importance in our materialistic culture, and I offer the pages of the *Review* as one small means for achieving that. Again, I invite Waldorf educators to share more of their ideas with our readers.

My concern is simply that *any* movement led by a powerful visionary figure runs the risk of becoming estranged or isolated from discoveries and ideas that do not exactly fit its scheme; I do not mean to single out Steiner—the same applies to the Montessori movement, psychoanalysis, and many of the human potential and "new age" groups. It is up to the followers and students of any movement, if they want to give their ideas clarity, relevance, and meaning for the community as a whole to engage in dialogue with other points of view. In the sixty years since Steiner's death, a number of very astute and very important observers of human development—among them Piaget, Jung, Maslow, and Kohlberg—have added a great deal to our understanding. For a book on child development to utterly ignore their insights is to isolate itself from contemporary thought.

It is not that new developments necessarily supercede previous insights. I am not saying that Steiner's ideas must compromise with Montessori or Piaget. In fact, I would guess that developmental psychology *confirms* most of anthroposophy's insights. But I think Steiner's more esoteric language, where he talks about the inhabitants of the spirit world and so forth, is not the sort of approach that is going to make sense to most people. Is it not possible to translate his essential insights by engaging in a sincere dialogue with other thinkers?

The readers of *Holistic Education Review*, I would guess, are very interested in learning more about Waldorf education and anthroposophy. The majority of them are trained in other disciplines, and use other methods and terminology—but they could certainly appreciate the essence of the Waldorf approach. Is it not worthwhile to reach out to them, to try to find a common language and common understanding? That is the purpose of this journal: to give all holistic approaches the opportunity to engage in dialogue with other educators, with parents, with academic scholars—to demonstrate how the *principles* of holistic education are universally valid.

RON MILLER

HOLISTIC EDUCATION READING LIST

Books on rites of passage, experiential education, and vision questing

Stephen Bacon:
The Conscious Use of Metaphor in Outward Bound; 1983, Colorado Outward Bound School.
Joseph Campbell:
Hero With a Thousand Faces; 1968, Princeton Univ. Press.
Mircea Eliade:
Rites and Symbols of Initiation; (1958) 1975, Harper & Row.
Steven Foster & Meredith Little:
The Book of the Vision Quest; 1988, Prentice Hall.
The Roaring of the Sacred River; 1989, Prentice Hall.
Arnold van Gennep:
The Rites of Passage; 1960, Univ. of Chicago Press.
R. Godfrey:
Outward Bound: Schools of the Possible; 1980, Anchor Press.
D. Hawkins:
The Informed Vision; University of Colorado Mountainview Center.
J. L. Henderson:
Thresholds of Initiation; 1967, Wesleyan Univ. Press.
T. James:
Education at the Edge; Colorado Outward Bound School.
J. L. Kraft and M. Sakofs (eds.):
The Theory of Experiential Education; 1985, Assn. for Experiential Education.
D. La Chappelle:
Earth Wisdom; 1977, Finn Hill Arts.
Earth Festivals; 1978, Finn Hill Arts.
Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster & Meredith Little (eds.):
Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation; 1987, Open Court (Reviewed in this issue on page 57.)
Tom Pinkson:
A Quest for Vision; 1976, Free Person Press.
Hyemeyohsts Storm:
Seven Arrows; 1973, Ballantine Books.
Song of Heyoehkah; 1983, Ballantine Books.

Educational Conference—Fall, 1988

October 20-23; Norfolk, Virginia
The Third Annual Common Wealth in Education

An international symposium offering a fresh look at learners, learning capacities, learning places, and the learning process. Presenters include Thomas Armstrong, Teresa Benzwie, John Bransford, Judy Codding, Dee Dickinson, Elliot Eisner, David Feldman, Robert Garfias, John Goodlad, Kay Gore, Richard Restak, Gabrielle Rico, and Mark Wahl. They will address learning styles, skills, and strategies, focusing on the whole person—body and spirit as well as mind—as the learning instrument in the process of enhancing joyful, creative, productive thinking and living. The value of music, art, dance, drama and athletics in the learning process will be explored.

Contact: Patty Masterson, Coordinator, The Common Wealth in Education, Norfolk Academy, 1585 Wesleyan Drive, Norfolk, VA 23502 (804) 461-6236.

HOLISTIC TEACHER EDUCATION

(We would like this to become a comprehensive listing of innovative teacher training programs, and invite you to send information about yours.)

Montessori Teacher Training

There is a great demand for trained Montessori teachers, especially at the elementary level (age 6-12). It is not necessary to have a background or degree in education to enter Montessori teacher training programs.

In the U.S., there are three main organizations that supervise teacher training and the accreditation of schools:

Association Montessori Internationale (AMI)
1095 Market St.
San Francisco, CA 94103

AMI has about twenty training centers in North America (as well as others around the world). The training lasts one academic year, from August or September until May or June, with student teaching during the last several weeks. AMI was founded by Dr. Maria Montessori in 1929, and AMI training tends to be the most careful in maintaining Montessori's original methods. AMI-accredited schools accept only AMI-trained teachers.

American Montessori Society (AMS)
150 Fifth Ave.
New York, NY 10011

AMS sponsors about thirty-five training centers. The course takes place over two summers with a year of practice teaching in between. AMS, founded in 1960, has attempted in some ways to adapt the Montessori method to contemporary trends in education. Most AMS-accredited schools will hire AMI as well as AMS teachers.

International Montessori Society (IMS)
912 Thayer Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910

IMS advocates a "new education" based on Montessori's principles rather than a fixed Montessori method. IMS training aims to promote "a continual process of 'inner preparation' throughout one's entire life." The training is an independent study course through mail correspondence with a designated IMS evaluator.

Holistic Education Review
P.O. Box 1476
Greenfield, MA 01302

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Amherst, MA
Permit No. 85

"By nature, we mean, not only the world around us but the natural world of our biological, spiritual, and psychological existence. Much of contemporary education, because of its heavy reliance on rationality and cognition, fails to help students experience and understand these other aspects of life." **(p. 47)**
