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Special Issue: Education and Love

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Editorial

Love as Educational Reality

This issue of *Holistic Education Review* is devoted to Love — to exploring the nature and significance of love in educating children. While love is one of the defining elements and aspects of our lives, it remains forever on the fringe of educational thought. It is treated as a tangential psychological factor that may be thrown into a mix of concerns that may affect the way children learn and behave in the classroom. The topic is confidently marginalized as something that vaguely appeals to our sensibilities but is the virtual symbol of subjectivism.

Modern academic communities base their claims of knowledge in a concept of objectivity. Knowledge is thought to begin with an object, whether it be a subatomic particle or a literary masterpiece. The object is distinctive, having its own unique characteristics and boundaries. While a few voices such as David Bohm, Michael Polanyi, Gregory Bateson, and Rudolf Steiner have challenged this centerpiece of modern epistemological orthodoxy, the vast majority of thinkers and researchers prefer objectivism, with its intellectual analysis in a public domain, over a model of knowledge inclusive of personal insights communicable only to those with the imagination to see for themselves. The point here is not to disparage "Reason" but to suggest that the intellectual comfort one may derive from the public confirmation of claims of knowledge comes with a price. The price is that the grandeur and complexity of the world is reduced to those things we can objectify and analyze. The price is that we limit not only our understanding of the world but of ourselves.

So it is as we address the nature and meaning of love. Objectivism focuses on objects and on the "mathematics" of their interaction. However, love is not about objects but about relation itself, about the attitude and posture one assumes in meeting others, nature, and the divine. In order to understand love, we need to understand the nature of that relation; we need to understand how the very essence of our being flows into the world.

Our general tendency to avoid the topic stems not from the assumption that love is unimportant but rather from the assumption that it is central to our lives yet quite beyond the comfortable confines of our thinking. On a personal level, love is basic to our relations with others and to our sense of well being. For some, it gives life purpose beyond personal gain. For others, its absence, despite personal gain, leaves them with a sense of pointlessness.

On a more fundamental level, beyond what we experience individually in our emotions, love flows directly out of the mystery of our existence and flows directly to us from out of the mystery of all existence. Although love is rarely discussed in educational literature, it is basic to the mystery of our existence. It can be a source of communion where we recognize that separateness is illusion; in the absence of love, though surrounded by others, we see only that we are alone. Of course, we can be fooled by power, wealth, and sexual gratification, but in our quiet moments, we realize that we, all the more, have become like the objects we study -- devoid of relation and purpose.

Love animates and weaves through us much as inner experience gives rise to a piece of music. Each vibration of the musician's string is shaped physically by the qualities of the instrument producing it. However, it is infused with a life beyond the physics of sound by the sense of meaning coursing through the soul of the musician. The creative force within and beyond the music is not a separate object but the source of each note and for all notes in their relation. Such creative force, the fluid movement of meaning, cannot be frozen in place, made into an object and dissected; it is not reducible to an abstract concept that may be publically displayed and understood through intellectual analysis.

Love is the creativity of being flowing through creation. It is the creative in the created. We are able to understand it only to the degree that our thinking becomes vital, fluid. Static objects may be examined analytically, but creative energy may be understood only if we ourselves experience it as it flows within us. In order to understand love and its meaning in education, we need first to bring life and imagination to our thinking.

Our capacity to understand love also suffers from the common misconception that it is driven by need and realized in the satisfaction of desire. In this context, love is nothing more than gratification of the ego. Following this assumption, my love for another

human being differs not in kind but in degree from my enjoyment of, let us say, chocolate ice cream. In this case, George Orwell's suggestion that we may restructure language with words such as "like," "double like," "triple like," and so forth to eventually replace a word such as "love" may be more apt than ironic. Orwell's intention was to demonstrate how the manipulation of language can control a thought, but in the case of love, the limitations of our assumptions preclude a higher vision of ourselves.

On a physical level, we indeed have desires, including a sexual impulse that drive us toward others. These instincts are equivalent to the instrument producing the music in our analogy above. They play an important part in shaping how we think, feel, and act, but they are qualities of the instrument not the musician. To the extent our instincts are gratified, we may be said to "like" something, to "relish" and to "revel" in it. To the extent we love, we master our instincts and we transcend ourselves to encounter others and/or the world without the bias of self-interest.

Love arises from a dimension of our being where wanting and self-satisfaction have no place. At this deeper level, love is a sacrifice of these lower dimensions of our selfhood. To love is to give with no intention for or calculation of personal gain. Were love rewarded, it would be sought as a means to an end; each act of love would be an expression of self-interest. Love is pure giving and the purest expression of our being. It does not derive from a need to express or a desire to overcome our own sense of isolation; it is an openness of being, a readiness of being, a willingness of being, to give to another or to the world as we are asked. Love is the balance to egoism.

When we love, we do not deny ourselves; we do not deny the "I am" at the very center of our being. Rather, when we love, we are most fundamentally ourselves, and the "I am" is freed to commune, is freed to live an unfettered relation. In Martin Buber's terms, love is an "inclusive" relationship where the "I am" neither loses its identity nor prefers self-interest over the interest of others. The "I" and the "Thou" are distinct and equal. In such a relationship, an individual responds as he is addressed. Buber says simply, "Love is the responsibility of an I for a Thou." Responsibility implies that one has the ability to respond, that one has achieved a level of selfhood and selflessness to act as one is asked. Ultimately, action born of love is the one and only manifestation of human freedom. Personal gain has no place; one's motive does not suffer from bias.

A loving teacher is one who acts as the child asks. A loving teacher approaches his/her task with the question, "What do these children ask of me?" He or she is not guided by sentiment or by particular wants or interests of a child. Such a teacher is guided by a disciplined sense of responsibility to the child as a human being evolving in the world. He or she will feel great warmth just as a string will vibrate when plucked by the musician, but such expressions of affection should not be mistaken for love itself. Love may require we show rocklike discipline while maintaining an emotional distance. A loving teacher is present and responsive with his/her full humanity. This is not to suggest that we must achieve perfection but rather that we must have vision in our striving. Our capacity to serve as loving teachers will grow insofar as we learn to live our lives and address the world as loving human beings, no more, no less. Our growth in this respect is not a function of our relations with particular persons or tasks; we develop the capacity to love to the degree we live the totality of our lives giving of ourselves.

Pedagogical technique, however refined or spiritually inspired, cannot of itself help children develop the capacity for love or find love in the world. A teacher learning to encounter the world with love will begin to see it coming forth from the world. Just as human love is a pure gift radiating from the center of one's being, so is the world a pure gift radiating from divine being. As we learn to lovingly encounter, we find the divine seeking such meeting.

When teachers open the world to children and children to the world and loving encounter, the children are nourished inwardly so that they may grow. With each lesson such children are not only informed but educated — given the sustenance necessary to Become. They will learn to transcend self-interest in deference to the wonder of which they are part, to receive the world with gratitude and to act with a sense of responsibility beyond self-interest. The point here is not that love in education will undo all the evils in the world and transform each child into an angel without human foible. Rather, love can help us educate children so that they have the courage, the strength, and the wisdom to receive the gifts they are given and to grapple with the great tasks of their lives.

— Jeffrey Kane

Education as Love

Bob Samples

How we teach and how genuinely we respond to our students reflects our personalities and the way we characteristically respond to stress: authoritarian, anti-authoritarian, dependency/manipulative, or intrinsic.

"You start by loving the subject."

This was the reply of E. O. Wilson when asked what serves most in making an original contribution in a field of study. I must admit that I was startled by his words when I first read them in his brilliant 1985 book, *Biophilia*. Partly my reaction was because it was such a heartfelt and candid reply from a person whose academic work would seem to distance itself from the concept of love.

Wilson is credited as the 'father' of sociobiology, a field seemingly far too objective to include love in its methodologies. Yet the phrase *a love of learning* has been part of educational rhetoric for years so why my surprise? I suppose that his comment broke through some barrier in my mind. I realized that the word *love* was seldom used openly in conversations about education, research, and scholarship in general.

Of all the conditions we as humans experience, love is perhaps the most involving and lasting. It may well be the foremost of our life experiences, one we seek and try to nourish throughout our lives. Love is sorely missed when it is not present. I recall a study having to do with orphaned infants who were not afforded physical contact and affection in the days immediately following birth. Their mortality rate was far higher than other children. Their deaths could not be traced to nutritional loss or factors associated with basic needs. Instead they seemed to suffer a loss of "life force," attributed to their isolation. Infancy may well have its own demands in regard to love. Yet it seems that there are also requirements for love throughout life that are closely tied to a sense of fulfillment and well being.

Anyone who has taught or parented is aware of the importance of love in providing spiritual fulfillment. A child who experiences a healthy kind of love from parents and teachers tends to develop a sense of courage and fearlessness that nourishes learning. Unhealthy love encourages timidity and fear to become the foundation for learning. Fear is a strange and unwelcome partner to love. Fearing to love and fearing to be loved are dominant pathologies of our time.

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I suppose it should be made clear that the kind of love I will explore in these pages excludes erotic love. Erotic love is a special case of intimate relationship that appropriately awaits another forum. The qualities of love related to education that I wish to address are: (1) love of self, (2) love of that which is studied, and (3) love of the world in which we live.

Motivation Stress and Love

For nearly three decades I have worked with a motivational model first suggested by psychologist O. J. Harvey at the University of Colorado. His career was embedded in the era of behaviorism. Harvey's contributions were looked upon with much suspicion as he firmly challenged behaviorism's orthodoxy. Simply put, Harvey thought that, psychologically, motivation was far more important than behavior—he strove to understand what went on in the minds of people *before* they went into action. He learned early on that under stress, people behaved more consistently than nonstressed subjects. As his experience grew, Harvey discovered that teaching is a high-stress profession. Because teachers *want* children to succeed, they try to create environments where children learn and grow. This requires emotional investment that, in turn, creates stress. Adding to the stress, education is a target profession for tumultuous criticism from a society wanting guidance in determining what its own future should be.

Harvey described four basic stress resolution patterns, which he labeled Systems 1, 2, 3, and 4. In a more narrative vein, I use the words *authoritarian* when referring to System 1, *anti-authoritarian* for 2, *dependency/manipulative* for 3, and *intrinsic* for system 4. Each of these systems characterizes motivational reactions to stress. Harvey discovered that when stress occurs, people seek a psychological "survival" response in order to reduce stress. When stress floods consciousness, it is difficult to respond in creative and unique ways. Instead most people drop back into behavior that worked in the past. Many of these choices reflect the reflexive influence of personal history. In those rare times that personal history is transcended and a unique response to stress takes place, we grow—and increase our psychological options in regard to stress. Harvey discovered that we could learn to exercise choice in response to stress. Each of us could begin to respond to stress from a position of choice rather than reflex.

To clarify how Harvey's systems apply to the concept of love in classrooms, consider the following. As stated earlier, teaching is a high-stress profession. This stress contaminates the efforts that teachers put forth to authentically support student learning. Similarly, love is difficult to establish in high-stress environments. It is clear that to foster both learning and love, we must promote an environment of safety, stimulation, and respect. Our relationship with the students must be grounded in authenticity, honesty, and integrity. The respect that grows in such settings honors both strength and vulnerability common to both love and learning. I am convinced that it is only in such environments that both learning and love can co-exist.

Now to explore the qualities of the motivation that characterize our behavioral responses to stress.

Authoritarian response

Authoritarians respond to stress by enforcing socially accepted codes of appropriate behavior. Authoritarians "live by the book." When they experience stress, they quote the law, the bible, a policy manual, or some other external source of authority. They seek objective authority from sources outside themselves to resolve stress. In love, they love by the rules and these rules are made explicit by institutional power. For example, among the majority of world religions, there are explicit rules of behavior for women and men in regard to the concept of love. Women are expected to express love through servitude to their husbands and men enforce that servitude. Similar rules apply to children as well. Consider the following.

> In a physics class a student worn thin with disenchantment burst out with *"What has this shit got to do with my life?"* The teacher looked momentarily bewildered and confused. After all, who had the right to speak to her in such a fashion? Such vulgarity, such arrogance, such *ignorance*! Her authority was in question. In an instant the steel came back into the teacher's delivery and with all the Newtonian principles of force and action, the student was impaled. The teacher spat her answer at the student. " I couldn't expect that you were in any way capable of understanding the mind that created these equations. Nor should I expect that your little MTV-decimated brain could see anything beyond your next bout with acne." Filled with the power of authority, content, and status, she pointed to the door and said, " Out—I will see you in the office when class is over." (Journal Notes)

The authoritarian claims conventional power in society—power that follows codes of conduct. These codes may be established by custom or law. Appropriateness is expressed by behavior that is consistent

with convention. Love is expressed through obedience and conformity.

Anti-authoritarian response

Harvey's second response pattern is the anti-authoritarian. It is a mirror image of the authoritarian. People in this system are stressed by the *existence* of accepted rules of conduct. They take as a personal threat any formal definition of how they are expected to behave. As self-styled revolutionaries, the anti-authoritarians express their response to stress by reflexively rejecting authority. Further, they demand that others reject authority as well. They are rebellious reactionaries who enact change by converting conventional authority to their own nonconventional forms. Love for the anti-authoritarian takes the form of conversion—with new, contrary authority replacing the old.

> The bulletin board in the classroom is filled with posters, news clippings, brochures, and articles all devoted to the evils of pollution. The materials all possessed a definite anti-corporate, anti-business bias. All assignments in this classroom were explorations of the teacher's point of view. Invited speakers were all activists espousing actions to be taken against the "enemy," the corporate polluters. The teacher had, in the past, been criticized by many in the community for his indoctrination of the students. Debate was not discourse and discussion; it was indoctrination. It was unacceptable to disagree with the teacher's radical and somewhat extreme views. By the teacher's own assessment, you were either with him or against him. Convert, conform, or be tossed aside. (Journal Notes)

Both the authoritarian and the anti-authoritarian see themselves as carriers of the truth and protectors of the particular moral order they accept. The authoritarian requires a closed-minded obedience consistent with convention while the anti-authoritarian demands closed-minded opposition to convention. Both require love to be expressed by unquestioned obedience to the dogma they espouse. Love is forced to conform to two sets of closed system rules. One set blindly enforces convention—the other blindly disrupts convention. Both are seen as externally true in regard to love. Love cannot survive truths that are contrived for the purpose of control.

Dependency/manipulative response

Love among the dependency/manipulatives is an exercise in coercion. However, the coercion is linked to emotions and feelings rather than the truth and rule of the authoritarian types. While authoritarians and anti-authoritarians are enmeshed in *external dogma and ideology*—dependency types emotionally manipulate themselves and other people. Stress for a dependency/manipulative is linked to how successfully they emotionally control others. Whatever their experience, giving or receiving, they clearly take things personally. Consider the following.

> The teacher kneeled before the girl. With her hands on the child's shoulders the teacher asked quietly, " Why the tears?" The sobbing continued. The girl shook her head each time she tried to answer. Again the teacher pleaded for an explanation. Suddenly, as though she found her last shred of courage, the child virtually shouted out so the whole class could hear, "I hate my mother!" Instantly the teacher rose and pushed the child away. "What a terrible thing to say." The room was dead silent. "You don't know how lucky you are to have a mother." The teacher went on, "You probably say hateful things about me when my back is turned. I may never be able to trust you again." By now the teacher was standing and, with her hands on her hips, she told the child to return to her seat and admonished her to think long and hard about uttering such "horrible" thoughts. As it turned out, the teacher's mother died when the teacher was four. In her personal anguish she demanded others show the same respect as she felt in regard to her loss. (Journal notes)

Although the teacher first expressed caring and concern, her reaction changed in a flash when the teacher disapproved of the child's disclosure. This was a classic double-bind experience. Part of the deceptiveness of the dependency/manipulative is that while they respond from emotions and feelings, they may well pretend that dogma. Dependency/manipulatives take things personally. If you question, doubt, or disapprove of their stand, they conclude that you are questioning their status as a person. They immediately conclude that you do not love them. An example of this is couched in the statement, "If you really loved me you would see things as I do." For the dependency/manipulative, love is rote conformity to their emotional belief system. Dependency/manipulatives are stressed nearly all the time.

A short review before continuing. The three personality types described above border on the pathological when they influence both learning and love. Authoritarian and anti-authoritarian are devoted to dogmatic control. The authoritarian controls through conventional authority and the anti-authoritarian through the overthrow of convention. Both create the illusion of an objective reality, each with its own systems of truth and moral weight.

The dependency/manipulatives are devoted to subjective methods of control. Their media for en-

forcing that control are emotions and feeling. Instead of outright power, they often function through fabricated deception.

Intrinsic response

The last of Harvey's four types is characterized as intrinsic. A basic tenet in the motivational patterns of the intrinsic is a strong tendency to accept responsibility for one's belief system. This means they tend to respect the point of view of others while being clear about their own. If intrinsics are challenged about their beliefs, they separate their beliefs from their selves. When the intrinsics feel stress, they know it is stress of their own making. Authoritarians and dependency types cannot make this separation. For them the source of stress is *always* external.

Intrinsics tend to hold their own beliefs without unduly projecting their choices and expectations onto others. When intrinsics share, their interest is in communication rather than coercion. There is very little tendency to enforce absolutes, dogma, and coercion. For them love is experienced with little or no expectation or judgment. Consider the following.

> The teacher called across the room to David and asked him to bring a jar of purple paint to where others were painting. David was excited with the responsibility and his hands stretched wide to encircle the plastic jar. He hurried across the room and the unthinkable happened. His hands slipped—the jar fell—the lid popped free. A slash of purple paint lay like a shawl of color across the tiled floor. The room filled with "Ooohs—" and then silence. David was mortified. In an instant the teacher was at David's side. With a brush she held, she began to fashion the paint into a many-footed centipede complete with eyes and antennae. She asked others to join in and complete the image while she sought the materials necessary to clean up when they were finished. (Journal Entry)

In the example above, the teacher accepted the responsibility for her request that David carry the paint across the room. In doing so, she also accepted responsibility that he might or might not drop it. When he did, she also accepted the responsibility for how she would respond. Her response was classically intrinsic. Intrinsic teachers internalize responsibility. For them teaching, learning, and loving are simultaneous conditions in life. For the intrinsic, love is increasing options in living and learning. There is nothing Pollyanna-like about this — intrinsics realistically recognize their own limits, they make mistakes as surely as other types. Yet the way they respond is what sets them apart. When they err, they can process the experience without blame or blaming. When they process experience, they tend to grow rather than becoming debilitated. David may not have been able to articulate the love that he experienced that day, yet my guess is that in his future he did.

I offer two more intrinsic typologies in this discussion: the trans-intrinsic and pan-intrinsic. Cheryl Charles and I have modified Harvey's list to include these additional dimensions. These extensions were looked upon with encouragement by Harvey.

Trans-intrinsic response

Trans-intrinsic people engage with others from the base of a well-established belief and motivational system. Their tendency is to not judge others. They express and experience love by helping others achieve fulfillment. They possess a firm foundation of inner security. Their sense of self-worth is established by the integrity and authenticity they express when serving themselves and others. In other words, they are ideal parents, teachers, and role models — they are here to serve and are willing to step aside when they sense the learner accepting personal responsibility for learning. Carl Rogers called this unconditional positive regard — it could be called unconditional love as well.

Pan-intrinsic response

Pan-intrinsic people are authentic with the present but also seem to be motivated toward the breadth of all experience. They explore *agape* — the capacity to love all things. These are people who bring fulfillment to the entire world through ideas, art, and contributions that infuse and extend the options of humankind. They possess the capacity to love the world and all that is in it. Examples of such people might include Christ, Gandhi, Mother Theresa, and Harriet Tubman. Each increases our perspectives of love in the world.

Classroom Domains of Love

The purpose of exploring these personality types should be clear. As we are—so we teach. If my personal motivational posture is to communicate an immutable truth, or invoke the evils of this world, or coerce others for my own fulfillment, then it is likely that I will teach in a fashion that will model my choices. What I do in the act of teaching inevitably affects my students. I must be responsible for that. The motivational-personality models we have explored can provide guidance for the ecology for success that I set up in the classroom.

In today's world, it is vital that students be given the freedom, skills, and courage to face the demands of an uncertain future with minds and souls unencumbered by the pathologies of closed-mindedness and coercion. Closed-mindedness destroys the conditions in which both love and learning are able to flourish. Thus it becomes a mandate that I as a teacher must assess the characteristics and qualities of my own personality. Then I must address those characteristics and qualities authentically. Noted educator Paul Brandwein once said, "What you are speaks so loudly that people cannot hear what you say." The truth of this statement has never been more vivid.

Recent findings in the neurosciences confirm that in the human mind, reason, emotion, and feelings cannot exist apart from each other without the emergence of pathologies. The same can be said for love and learning as approached in the classroom. Yet many educators work excessively hard to suppress the affective qualities of education. Whether we like it or not, each student brings his or her emotions and feelings to school. Each student brings their personal experiences with love and each assesses how it applies to what they experience in school.

Most often these students are taught from curricula and textbooks that intentionally purge emotions and feelings from the experiences they nurture. Some courageous, well-meaning teachers address self-esteem and self-worth. Many students find that the teachers link these conditions to how well they do in classwork — meaning that if you do good work you are praised and supposedly your self-esteem and self-worth are raised. In other settings, *techniques* of elevating self-worth and self-esteem are used virtually exclusively and overwhelm the experience. In such approaches, content and rigor are lost, instilling in students a sense of betrayal related to learning. In many interviews with students over the years, it is clear they sense the lack of wholeness and completeness in their experience. Since self-esteem and self-worth are largely framed in the domain of emotions and feelings, they become important at this juncture. The maturation of students' emotions and feelings should be as central a concern in contemporary education as academic maturation. When self-esteem and self-worth are constructed from hollow experience, the conditions for fulfillment cannot exist. Love and learning and the love of learning is sorely damaged.

Kinds of Love in Education

The love teachers and learner have for themselves

Only intrinsics can truly love themselves. Authoritarians and anti-authoritarians are committed to an external dogma (or the overthrow of it). They require that you adopt and obey or overthrow the chosen truth. Your worth is judged on how completely you comply. If you do not conform, you are simply thrown away like a useless integer in some closed-system calculation.

Dependency/manipulatives are in love with what they can turn others into. They are the potters and the student the clay. It isn't truth that guides them but the power of manipulation. They are not above pouting, whimpering, pleading, begging, and ridiculing — anything goes until they get their way. They are devastated when students do not conform — they take it personally. For dependency/manipulatives, *self* becomes an exploited context. If they are *selfish* they exploit others for purposes of control and power. Their requests of others often take this form, "Trust me, do as I say, and you will thank me later." If they are *selfless*, they exploit *self* to control others. They often tell you how much they sacrifice themselves to serve your needs.

Intrinsics explore the love of self. The love of self is not selfish. Yet because intrinsics freely choose the beliefs by which they live, they are not slaves to dogma or coercion. Intrinsics, while representing their personal choices with zeal and passion, will, in the end, respect the rights of others to choose from their own hearts and minds.

To learn to love one's self requires mastery of complex skills and content. The mastery I speak of here is a mastery of both school skills and life skills. A superficial self cannot be loved in the fulfilling ways described above. One of the greatest travesties in education has been when teachers settle for trivial success, rewarding superficial accomplishment on the part of the students. Strangely, both the authoritarians and the dependency/manipulatives nurture trivial accomplishment through rote recall and mimicry.

Education with love must create realistic understandings of learning styles, learning modalities, multiple intelligences, and creativity. Students, in the end, must possess emotional options as well as intellectual substance and rigor. Without substance and rigor, there is nothing for creativity to transform.

Substance supports the courage to invent and transform knowledge and tradition.

The love of what is being taught

There is an aesthetic that emerges when one loves the content being studied. In an almost transcendent fashion, connections emerge where there once was doubt. Relationships leap forth. Nothing is left standing in isolation. Students are aware of a teacher's love for what is being taught and even if they, the students, are less than enraptured, they still feel included.

Often critics of such ideas complain that such perspectives dilute the value of the content and skills being taught. I challenge this. The intrinsic teacher and the intrinsic student see clearly the service of the mind through content, feelings, and skills. Jerome Bruner once said that there is little purpose in learning about history save that it adds richness to life. Without richness, the aesthetic of learning escapes us, growth and connection escape us. Knowledge and technique are means and not ends. The *end* provided by what we learn is the array of options that offer us new journeys.

The love for the world in which we live

The moment when the boundary between teacher and student disappears, there is a tangible experience of unity. This is a moment in time when both are connected. Teacher and student caught at the core of an experienced unity share a moment of the infinite. Their stage might have been science, mathematics, or poetry but their roles were those of humankind. When student and teacher experience the unity of understanding, the act becomes art. Aesthetics prevail. A teacher can learn to fully sense that unity when it happens. By doing so the teacher inevitably increases the frequency of the condition and thereby insures that it becomes part of what the teacher learns. When students see teachers immerse completely in what they teach, these students witness the unity of reason, emotion, and feelings. They see what education is about.

The pan-intrinsic described earlier is a condition when wholes claim our consciousness and fragmentation fades. We begin to sense the way the universe works—with an awesome complexity promising to lure us forward to simplicity. If there is love in education then every act is an act of learning, and every act is an act of teaching.

The Secret Place

There is a place I long to be
A place where I talk about my problems and me
A place where I share my feelings and thoughts
A place where I sit and I listen a lot
This is a place of darkness and coldness
where my dreams and feelings are shared then fought
I go to this place to get away
from the problems and crimes that are going on today
This is a place where skies are gray
but I belong to this place and I go day after day.

— Jen Heinz

Conclusion

We have no choice but to honor love in the classroom. The terrifying alternative is to deny it being there. When love is excised from education, we create a legacy in which we learn to fear love. To fear love is to mass-produce the nutrients for authoritarianism and manipulative coercion. In fear, war and deceit provide the ultimate currency of communication.

Clearly my bias rings through here. I seriously doubt that the forms of control and manipulation found at the core of authoritarian, anti-authoritarian, and dependency/manipulative practices can rightfully support any kind of healthy love. Instead, I am convinced that tyranny, revolution, and coercion characterize their core motives. The love they create is likely pathological. I suspect that healthy love lies in the domain of the intrinsic perspectives. It embraces honesty, authenticity, and integrity. Honesty, authenticity, and integrity are not techniques, they are the outcomes of learning and teaching imbued with honor and respect.

A word not yet used in this argument is appropriate here — empathy. As love increases, so too does empathy and vice-versa. Both teacher and learner join in experiences and dreams leading not only to knowledge but wisdom as well. Honesty, authenticity, and integrity create ethical and moral maps for us to follow on our quest to learn and teach.

Returning to E. O. Wilson's statement at the opening of this article, it is clear that many of those who achieve greatness in their fields of study are often enriched by the love of their journey. When the human mind becomes whole, it expresses love. When the mind is whole, it conceives our relationship with the world to be born of reason, love, and connectedness. The issue we face is whether or not we as

teachers, administrators, and parents have the courage to create schools that infuse learning with love, teaching with authenticity, and a world filled with the promise of balance and sustainable continuity.

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Recovering the Aesthetics of Love

Teacher-as-Loving-Artist

Phoebe M. Levine

The heart of a loving classroom makes room for the humanness of our nature. It accepts our fragility and has faith in the resiliency of our spirit. The beat of its rhythm is strong enough to keep the life of teachers and students alive regardless of the nature of its form and content. Teachers who welcome and work with the day-to-day design of relationships within the space of their classrooms are our faithful artists and lifelines of caring and love.

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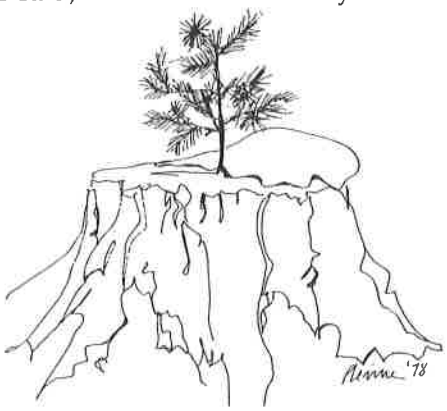
It was our first meeting last summer in ART 367, *Child Art and Teaching*. As I greeted my new students, I could sense their expectancy and uncertainty about being able to measure up as "artists" in this class. I had designed my art education course to help future elementary education teachers experience a very positive and active relationship with the art-making process both as a creative form of expression and as an integral tool for learning across the curriculum. I chose to quiet all of our anxious selves by reading from Martin Buber's (1950/1966) book, *The Way of Man*:

> Every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique.... It is the duty of every man [sic] ... to know and consider that he is unique in the world ... and that there has never been anyone like him in the world, for if there had been someone like him, there would have been no need for him to be in the world.... Every man's foremost task is the actualization of his unique, unprecedented, and never-recurring potentialities, and not the repetition of something that another, and be it even the greatest, has already achieved. (p. 16)

I gave each student a bookmark bearing an image of recovery and growth. I told them the story of this pen and ink drawing that revealed the remarkable sight of a baby pine tree emerging from the flat, cracked surface of a seemingly lifeless tree stump. And then I said, "This bookmark is your daily re-



minder that each of you has an artist within you; my mission and joy as a teacher is to help you awaken, celebrate, and share with others that unique part of your creative self."

Over the next five weeks, my elementary education students experimented with a variety of art media. They met and listened to their artist within and awakened potentialities that had been sleeping silently since their early childhood. One student wrote in her journal, "It was almost as if we were kids again in elementary school, and that brought back lots of warm memories. After class I felt especially pleased with my work, but I'm not really sure why" (Borden, personal communication, 1994). This student was experiencing a reawakening of her self-as-artist. The recovery process was stirring the dust of her old, ordinary self and revealing glimpses of new, extraordinary possibilities. Dewey (1934) says that "the conscious adjustment of the new and old *is* imagination" (p. 272).

In our 25 meetings that summer I did not tell my students anything they didn't already know. I supplied a meeting ground whose surface welcomed and embraced the spreading out of ourselves. M. C. Richards (1964) says:

> We receive only what we already have! We become only what we already are! We can learn only what we already know! It is a matter of realizing potentialities. It is not a matter of adding to but of developing or evolving. We contain within ourselves a world of capacities, of possibilities. Perhaps this is why we learn most about ourselves through devotion to others. (p. 37)

Did my open passion about my former teaching experiences with young children and art making create safe ground for my college student to "discover her original self" (London 1989, p. 48)? Rod Taylor (1986) says that if "teacher[s] communicate [their] own fascination, [they] build upon students' fascination and allow [their] students freedom to move from outside to inside" (p. 62) . This same student of mine added in her journal, "it is really important to allow our students the freedom to answer their questions in their own voice. You can see how different people think and see the world through their art" (Borden, personal communication, June 1994).

Throughout the semester, my students continued to recover parts of themselves as they engaged freely with the art media and revealed personal truths that placed "the emphasis on the spirit rather than the semblance" (Cane 1951, p. 130) of that within and around them. I encouraged them to enter into dialectic relationship with their media, welcoming the spaces where they could hear the rhythm of its voice within their own. My students were returning again and again to themselves to lovingly recover and draw fuller meaning into their experiences. Their personal voices were being heard and celebrated. I listened as a *mother* to another (student) *mother* telling me that she never thought of herself as an artist ... until now.

> When I was growing up, my brother who is two years older was thought of as being really smart and artistic. His drawings looked exactly like what they represented. Now that I reflect on the past, I suppose that I was conditioned to think that I was not artistic because I was not able to draw with precise accuracy as my brother. I developed the habit of saying that I can't draw. As the years have passed I more or less accepted the fact that I didn't have a talent for drawing and painting. Until now I had begun to believe that the part of my brain that controls spatial, holistic, and pictorial forms was not as developed as my brother's. This class has been an enlightening experience and has clarified some confusion regarding my artistic capabilities. I now realize that exact representations as perceived by others as "correct" may limit one's creativity such as myself. The heart of all created endeavors is expressed by its meaning. (Wilson, personal communication, June 1994)

Vera's past-lived experience in the shadows of her "artistic" brother was much like a piece of clay in the hands of a potter shaping and forming her present and future. When she reached the crossroads of the art class, she witnessed this "juncture of the new and the old" (Dewey 1934, p. 60) in her thinking. She was able to recover and recreate her self out from behind her brother's shadow. She was able to hear a loving voice that had been muffled inside her self-conscious tapes for many years.

I encouraged my students to heighten their senses. "Follow your roving eye. Listen for the strange voice. Notice the texture and color, the pattern of the art-making process around you." Rollo May (1975) calls it "[creative] receptivity ... the artist holding him- or herself alive and open to hear what being may speak" (p. 80). In my classroom I work to create a living space that welcomes and nurtures this receptivity of aesthetic meetings.

> Listening is love.... Listening, like engagement with a text, effects a dissolution of the boundaries of self, as does love. Simultaneously frightening and exhilarating, it allows the "outside" "inside," opening up channels of possibility, sharing languages, inspiring action. (Edgerton, cited in Castenell and Pinar 1993, p. 65)

In her book, *Children's Arts from Deep Down Inside*, Natalie Cole (1966) talks about her experiences of

teaching art to a group of minority children at California Street School in Los Angeles in the 1960s. She made her classroom a safe place for her students to tell personal stories through their art making. One day she shared with her students a secret story that she had stored inside herself ever since a day in kindergarten when she felt the shame of being ashamed of her mother. She reached in and drew out this embarrassing moment from "deep down inside" (p. 152).

> When I was in kindergarten my mother brought a great beautiful birthday cake. Because it was my birthday I envisioned for myself quite a generous piece of the cake. The teachers cut the cake into the tiniest slivers you ever saw and I got only one of those slivers. That wasn't what hurt. My mother was much older than other mothers and the teachers thought she was my *grandmother*. My mother was more interested in reading than she was in how she looked. Although dresses in those days came away down to the floor, my mother's ruffled black sateen petticoat trailed several inches beyond. In those days there were always two kindergarten teachers working together and I could see them giving each other long meaningful looks. I never have forgotten that unhappy day. I didn't want to feel ashamed of my mother but I did. (p. 153)

And then one student lovingly responded, "Mrs. Cole, you weren't the only one" (cited in Cole 1966, p. 153). Here lies the "stuff of art and life" (London 1989, p. 37) — meeting-as-listening-as-communion. Within the space of my meetings can I reach out and shake the hand of my own personal truth? Can I bare my*self* to share my whispers with loving listeners?

Here lies the soil of creative listening that requires me to move from isolated edges, cross restricted boundaries, and come to center with others and myself. In Quaker meetings of worship, the condition of centering creates "a feeling of flowing toward a common center" (Richards 1973, p. 55). A painting has a center of interest or a focal point, a common ground that beholds the meeting of the eye and the canvas. M. C. Richards (1973) tells me that the word "focus" means warmth or hearth. Its root grows out of a "*sound* meaning to shine and to speak" (p. 131). She describes the art of centering on her potters' wheel as "potter and clay press[ing] against each other. The firm, tender, sensitive pressure that yields as much as it asserts. It is like a handclasp between two living hands, receiving the greeting at the very moment that they give it" (Richards 1964, p. 9). Here artist and media listen and respond to one another. They receive one another. Here lies the ground for listening as aesthetic meeting-with-self and the meeting-with-others.

I Won't Forget

I remember when I was sick,
The nurse called you and you came.
We would go home,
and you would give me Orangina.
Then we would watch TV,
Usually Mr. Rogers or the Partridge Family.
I remember when everyone else thought we were crazy,
when we smelled rain coming,
or spring or snow.
From now on whenever I see a pussy willow,
I will think of you.
I remember the teeter-totter you made me,
and when I cried because I had no one to use it with,
you found a cinder block that became my friend.
I won't forget you,
I promise.

— Curri Neily

All real life is meeting

When I met and began teaching 900 elementary children in 1980, I received the rich and freely given gifts of the creative spirits that came from within these young, energetic bodies. And the following summer, when I created pottery, my art making became a flow of their energies within me. My clay pieces were an aesthetic blend of the spirit of the clay and my enriched experience of self-in-relation to all these little people. My Raku pots delicately held the dialectic relationship we shared. I could hear the voices of my students mingling within the nurturing walls of my bowls.

In my teaching, I cannot speak solely of my artist-within without brushing up against the otherness in my life. I cannot speak solely of art making without running into and through all the other dimensions of my life. My invisible voice touches those who stand ready to listen. My art making, my imagery, my self-within bears the markings of my meetings with others. I must be willing to reach in and draw out my self from "deep down inside" and wait for the voice of another to respond, "You weren't the only one" (Cole 1966, p. 153).

No matter how quietly we stand

Last summer I had the opportunity to sit and write at a table made from a three-inch slice of the bottom of a white oak tree. This oak tree lived and grew for 227 years along the banks of Goose Creek, West Vir-

ginia. As I rested my elbows on its flat, broad surface that openly revealed its center and its life, I tried to imagine it as a tiny acorn in 1767. Its rippling rings told the experts about its first cutting in 1896, the drought of 1930, and the late frost of 1966. M. C. Richards (1964) tells us that "we are a real and radiating presence in the environment, no matter how quietly we may stand" (p. 110).

As I stood among my art education students each day this summer, I could sense the energy and tension that filled the spaces between us. It reminded me of Richards speaking as a potter. "The pot gives off something. It gives off its innerness, that which holds but which cannot be seen" (1964, p. 20). I image our classroom as a communal vessel. We hold and nurture the parts of ourselves that we are willing to bring to this space each day. "A painter does not approach a scene with an empty mind, but with a background of experiences" (Dewey 1934, p. 87). As the teacher, I prepare the groundwork for our daily classroom meetings as I place parts of myself in the vessel each day. I initiate what London (1994) calls "aesthetic community — a pattern of interaction" (p. ix). And then I watch how my students begin to draw out and weave themselves within the openness of our "innerness" much like Rollo May's (1975) dialectic process:

> World is interrelated with the person at every moment. A continual dialectic process goes on between world and self and self and world; one implies the other, and neither can be understood if we omit the other. This is why one can never localize creativity as a subjective phenomenon. One can never study it simply in terms of what goes on within the person. The pole of the world is an inseparable part of the creativity of an individual. What occurs is always a *process*, a *doing* — specifically a process of interrelating the person and his or her world. (p. 50)

As a teacher and an artist, I must reveal myself to my students. We grow from one another. "Any class may feel how it benefits by the presence of all. Everyone has something to give the others" (Richards 1964, p. 108). My students and I must openly mingle our truths as we hold one another within our personal spaces. "He [sic] who gives himself to it may withhold nothing of himself" (Buber 1958, p. 10). My relationship with my students helps me witness that the "big art is our life" (Richards 1964, p. 41). I welcome the meeting ground of our lives where we take a "chunk of ourselves" (London 1989, p. 61), "breaking out of the solitariness and silence of one dimension ... and making contact with the 'other'" (London 1989, p. 74).

Art making cannot confine itself to a private, solitary space. The process unfolds as I draw from within and become willing to spread the fabric of myself like this three-inch slab of a 200-year-old oak tree or mingle my experiences with others within the sacred, communal vessels of our classrooms.

It is in these open spaces of conversation and sharing where teachers-as-artists, like dedicated seamstresses, can begin to piece together the remnants of their classroom, lovingly hand-stitching the adjoining pieces, recovering and co-creating with their students an emergent wholeness of new and used energies.

Classroom as a sacred canvas

Both the aesthetic and the spiritual composition of our meetings is rooted in the everydayness of our lives and reflects the measure of how much of ourselves we bring with us to the canvas of our classrooms each day. The classroom-as-composition can become Buber's sacred meeting ground where all the elements of the learning experience come together to make a picture of community.

The *classroom-as-a-painting* pictures so much more than the images on its surface. Heidegger speaks of the wonder of a painting by Van Gogh:

> A pair of rough peasant shoes. Nothing else. Actually the painting represents nothing. But as to what *is* in that picture? What is here? The canvas? The brushstrokes? The spots of color? All these things we name are there. But the existential presentness of the painting, the part that reaches into our being cannot be adequately defined. We feel, we know, that there is something else there, something utterly decisive. When we seek to articulate it, it is always as though we were reaching into a void. (cited in Steiner 1989, p. 42)

This void that Heidegger speaks of is filled with expectancy. Its ineffable nature can be felt but not touched, heard but not spoken in words, whole but never complete. It stands ready to welcome our truths. The openness of its form holds promises of infinite possibilities and "not yets." Like Richards' (1964) pot, it "gives off its innerness" (p. 20). Like the quiet whisper, it calls to us in the midst of the pregnant pause. Like Grumet's line across the page, it beckons us to "follow ... without knowing where it leads" (cited in Pinar 1988, p. 458). Like the Raku firing ritual, it asks me to let go of my pot to experience the possibility of the fullness of life. When we bring and hold loving, trusting relationships into the expectant voids of our lives, we let go of our*selves*,

making room to receive the fullness and joy of life much like the wonderful legend in Jewish Hasidism:

> When God poured out his grace, man could not stand firm before the fullness, and the vessels broke and sparks fell out of them into all things. And shells formed around them. By our hallowing, we help free the sparks. They lie everywhere — in our tools, food, clothes — a kind of radiance, emanation, a freedom, something that fills our hearts with joy and gratitude. There is something within man [sic] that seeks joy. (cited in Richards 1964, p. 12)

I am using the phenomena of art making to speak of and recover my portrait of the classroom as a sacred canvas. Without the elements of human nurture, this room can become a standardized assembly line of lifeless products. When I paint in my life drawing class, the paint, the brushes, the canvas, and the subject (really) matter to each other, as we join together to create an image that has not yet been. Every material has its own voice. Charcoal speaks of the subject in a different way than pencil, ink, or paint. Newsprint, drawing papers, and canvas respond differently, depending on the drawing and painting tools or the touch of human hands. I must give myself to my media and my subject in order to hear and to answer. I am only one part of this creative process. The fullness of the image will reveal itself as I work in loving relationship with all the other parts of this art-making experience. Knowing the outcome is as deadly as it sounds. The something within us that seeks joy atrophies in many of the predictable, regimented settings of our classrooms.

The kind of classroom that I speak of as sacred canvas welcomes our hallowing. When we bring ourselves to this kind of gathering, we enter a space, an opening, a void that beholds a covenant between those of us ready to stretch beyond the edges of our knowing. Heidegger says that "man [sic] *is* to the extent that he stands open to being in what Wordsworth would have called a wise passiveness" (cited in Steiner 1989, p. 129).

I want to draw out the threads of aesthetics and spirituality as I weave them over and under the fabric of the classroom. These threads "can be as limber as breath ... [or] as tough as a wild grape vine...." (Richards 1964, p. 6) as they run through and support the living and working design of the classroom. Spirituality is the energy that breathes life into the conversation of our aesthetic spaces.

I define the meaning of what I call aesthetic spirituality as a condition of being-in-relation. "No one knows alone" (Grumet 1993, p. 207). Martin Buber (1958) reminds us that "all real living is meeting" (p. 11). Matthew Fox (1991) tells us "the spirit is life, *ruah*, breath, wind. To be spiritual is to be alive, filled with *ruah*, breathing deeply, in touch with the wind" (p. 11). He speaks of taking a spiritual and mystical journey where "the path is *the way itself*" (p. 12), and Buber (1950/1966) says that every "man must find his own way" (p. 18). It is in the design of this perceptual middle space of beholder and beheld that the beauty of communion breathes. Here lies the soil of art making and the aesthetic spirituality in all areas of our lives.

They can begin

"Where two or three are gathered together, they can begin" (Richards 1973, p. 146). It's interesting that I, too, have been drawn to this message spoken to us through the Gospel of Matthew: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18: 19-20).

I believe that we are talking here about co-creation and the aesthetic, spiritual design of a classroom that works to draw out the real and diverse nature of its members. When two or more come together, we can begin co-creating loving community portraits. Within the frame of this aesthetic canvas, we must remind ourselves that teaching is a living form of art and that "an artist is not a special kind of person, but [that] every person is a special kind of artist" (Richards 1973, p. 92). In 1980 I began a very special journey in the company of young, eager children inside the elementary schools of four small towns in southwestern Maine. By the end of the first week in September, I had met almost all of my 900 young students with whom I would be sharing the magic of art making for the school year. By the end of that first month, I knew instinctively that our weekly meetings held some kind of extraordinary energy. My art cart was carrying much more than paint, paper, scissors, and glue to these 27 classrooms. Even the crowded spaces of my tightly stacked blocks of "art times" seemed always to find room for our hallowing, as we set free the sparks of ourselves in these makeshift conditions of art making. Throughout the school year, I received the rich and freely given gifts of the creative spirits that come with these young, energetic bodies. And the following summer, when I created pottery, my own art making became a flow of their energies within me. My clay pieces were an aesthetic blend of the spirit of the clay and my en-

riched experience of myself in relation to all those little people.

What was it about this spiritual blend of children and art making? How did these two elements come together and make so much more than the sum of their parts? It reminds me of when I blend and knead my bread-making ingredients together and return a couple hours later to find a bowl that is overflowing with the internal energy of its own transformed self. Flour, sugar, salt, honey, raisins, yeast, milk, and eggs — such simple, everyday goods that sit quietly on the shelves, packaged and self-contained until I break each *one* open and join *all* of them together to create this ancient but fresh form of human nourishment called bread.

This spiritual blend of art making and children held an abundance of personal goods that the students brought freely to the experience. The children were coming together to join and celebrate themselves as artists in a spiritual community of co-creation. No one makes art alone. We always have others with us even if only in our minds and hearts. Unlike older students and adults, my young students had little difficulty remembering and recovering themselves as divine creators made in the image of God. Matthew Fox (1979) reminds us that

> When the Creator made us, God "breathed a portion of His breath into us. Each of us has a share in that breath. Each of us is a 'portion of the divine from on high.' Every soul is joined to every other soul by its origin in the Creator of all souls" It is the "truth of truths" ... that every man is our brother, that we are all children of one Father, all sheep of one Shepherd, all creations of one Creator, all parts of one infinite, gracious spirit that pervades and sustains all of mankind. (Rabbi Dressner cited in Fox, p. 30)

When we came together each week for art in those 27 different classrooms, a flow and overflow of joy and awe, like the yeasted dough, awakened and moved throughout the spaces as my students seemed to breathe life and energy into their art creations just as God, our Supreme Creator, breathed life into all creatures of our universe.

These past two semesters I've read a piece of my life to my college students to lay the groundwork for an autobiographical assignment. I can still recall how intently they listened. I could feel the receptivity in the room. What is it about truth that connects, that draws and holds our attention so fully? I was honest. I was sharing an important part of me. I was giving something of myself freely to my students. I experienced a powerful space where the *giving is the receiving*. It is in this awesome space of "two or more gathered together" that we can feel the touch of Jesus' promise: "there am I in the midst of them" (Mt. 18:19). It is at this kind of aesthetic, spiritual gathering where we can relive the New Testament story of the loaves and fishes and experience a loving space that welcomes and accommodates an infinite supply of reciprocity and nourishment.

This is the kind of spiritual and aesthetic condition that I hope to recover in the spaces of our classrooms. I am looking for an energy that lives and grows between the students and their teacher as they work together to recover a relationship grounded in the material of the class. Authentic encounters and experiences can only happen within an aesthetic, loving community. This is why young students often create spiritual spaces whenever they gather to make art. They know how to lose themselves to the joy of the process. They know how to turn over exclusive ownership and need for control to the life of the art-making experience. They welcome opportunities to see everything anew. Heschel (1962) reminds us that "he who thinks that we can see the same object twice has never seen" (p. xii).

Creativity as compassion

I cannot move on in my writing without holding Matthew Fox's carefully woven fibers of "creativity as compassion" (1979) up to the light of my thinking. Fox contemplates that "perhaps compassion and creativity are in fact the same energy. For both seem to operate at the deep level of interconnections! Compassion is seeing, recognizing, tasting the interconnections; creativity is about *making the connections*" (1979, p. 127). The words of Fox are like a rich assortment of different puzzle pieces that reveal glimpses of my tacit understanding of the art of teaching. The individual pieces need my human touch to interlock with one another and make a whole picture as I find their fit in the different spaces of this chapter.

Fox (1979) reminds us that compassion is a *verb* that actively *loves* rather than a *noun* that passively *pities* in our relationship with others. It is an integral way of life, an attitude of hope and faith coming from within rather than from without in the form of an exterior, generic label. It is something "real and active, [not] just words or mere talk" (p. 7). Fox tells us that "God's compassion points the way to humanity's compassion as a spirituality which becomes the art of walking in God's way" (p. 27).

Fox carefully braids the threads of compassion and creativity together for us so that we can hold tightly and take the leap away from the predetermined certainties in our lives. "The creative person, then, depends wholeheartedly on living in order to break through this fear of life" (Fox 1979, p. 119). I want to pause and take a closer look at these two words: "*in order.*" The artist and the teacher-as-artist both must maintain a sense of order in this creative process of learning. "The artist ... gives form, order, style, interpretation, and arrangement to the matter" (1979, p. 127). But this order is not mandated in a traditional, mechanical way. "Often images come in the process of working. The material, his hands — together they beget" (p. 127). The artist allows the divine plan, the design of the classroom to happen in its own order. This order evolves from the energy of creativity and compassion and creates an organic structure in which all members of this aesthetic, spiritual community are given the space they need for their own freedom. Some students, some materials, and some subjects need more space or a different kind of dimension than others. "The 'product' of creativity is energy" (p. 126) — a living community of energy that frees the sparks of our God-given fullness and joy.

Juggling Jeffery Jefferson

Juggling Jeffery Jefferson. Didn't know what to make of him.
He was unlike any other boy he'd known, only six
But fully grown.
He was six foot two,
A size ten shoe,
A voice as deep as Dad's.
At school the children laughed at him.
OOh that made him mad!
Until one day he found a way to stop from being mad.
He began to juggle with Jeffery Jefferson
And Oh that made him glad.

— Sarah Blackburn

Classrooms are like framed pictures. They hold the community together while still giving open space for its members to struggle for interpersonal truths within the firmness of its boundaries. As a teacher I cannot fix or solve my students' problems, but I can love them and hold them steady as they piece together the joyful and the painful parts of their puzzles.

Fox (1979) helps me make the connection between classroom and art studio here: "Where does the creator or artist enter into this equation? The materials appear already given, whether clay for the potter, pigments for the painter, bodies for the dancer, ideas for the writer. But not entirely. For the creator must select which materials to employ and which to leave unused" (p. 127). The techniques, the subject matter, the materials, whether in the studio or classroom, are my boundaries that allow me the joyful but fearful freedom to follow my own truth.

Each new class for a teacher-as-artist is like a fresh piece of canvas being stretched out to life. The first class meetings of every semester are filled with the primordial energy of newness and a sense of fragility — the coming together of *two or more* on this clean, white surface. What kinds of movement, rhythm, and balance will be set in motion by this particular combination of colors, textures, and shapes? The class meetings become like potluck suppers where each member brings something of him- or herself to share with the rest of the community. Teachers-as-artists are the hosts who welcome and receive their guests, hoping everyone will quickly feel at home in this new learning space. Classrooms-as-studios "need to be hospitable not to make learning painless but to make painful things possible, things without which no learning can occur" (Palmer 1993, p. 74).

The heart of relationship

When I discuss the phenomena of young children and art making with my future teachers, I feel the presence of my passion. As I speak about and remember special moments of teaching, I feel myself swaying to the rhythm of my voice. My hands cannot hold still. They stretch and gesture, orchestrating the emotions that cannot be released with mere words. Hegel tells me that "this arousing of all feelings in us, this drawing of the heart through all the circumstances of life ... is what is regarded as the proper and supreme power of art" (cited in Karelis 1979, p. 47). Dewey says "craftsmanship to be artistic in the final sense must be 'loving'; it must care deeply for the subject matter upon which skill is exercised" (cited in Karelis 1979, p. 47, 48). But art is nothing ... except in relationship. Isn't it wonderful that this supreme power of art needs me in order to exist? But it needs more than just my *physical* presence. Aesthetic works of art and teaching can be carefully and painstakingly designed and rendered, but the order

and outward form of their appearance is not enough without the presence of loving relationship.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing ... without love, then I am nothing at all.... In short there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love (Corinthians 1:13).

Teacher-as-loving-artist

Love informs beauty in the aesthetic order of re-creation. I like this word, *inform*, as it both tells about and shapes the nature of our substance. I am informed by my past experiences. They both tell my past and shape my future in the space of the middle. But the aesthetics of beauty cannot stand alone. Beauty needs care needs compassion needs faith needs love in the aesthetic order of re-creation. Aesthetics reveals the order or arrangement of things in relation to one another. In order to be whole, aesthetics must be informed with the mutuality of care and love that is both given and received. Aesthetics cannot exist within the space of oneness. Oneness is a void, a vacuum.

As an artist, when I work *with* my clay I must give myself up to the making of the form. My clay and I become a new beingness together. Dewey (1934) speaks of the aesthetic as the actual shared experience. The new form created, therefore, is a product of the loving relationship between the clay and me. In a true aesthetic relationship, the experience or subject matter is one informed with love. By this I mean that my clay and I show our respect for one another by pushing and pulling each other to our limits. When I encounter my students as a loving artist, I give myself up to the re-creation of a loving relationship. My students and I meet in the I-Thou (Buber 1958) space, pushing and pulling one another to our limits as we become a new beingness together. We must challenge, care for, nurture, disagree with, listen to, and acknowledge one another's truths enough to endure and welcome our likenesses and differences.

This spiritual kind of love I speak of is an intrinsic element of Martin Buber's I-Thou relationship. It is grounded in the pages of the New Testament where I return again to hear the words of Matthew: "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in their midst" (Mt. 18: 19-20). The presence of God cannot come forth in the spaces of oneness. Relationship is the spiritual substance of love as love is the spiritual substance of aesthetics.

My teacher-as-artist role fades into the background, lovingly preserved as it informs and celebrates the blossoming forth of this canvas of my dissertation. My picture of aesthetics has not changed as much as it has been more fully revealed. When I say to my students, "I have confidence in you," I am affirming the presence of the spirit of God in both of us. I am saying, "We all have love to recover and bring to the wholeness of our relationship. We all have within us the potential and the response-ability (Huebner 1984) to give to and receive within the design of our classroom-as-painting.

Aristotle's definition of aesthetics tells us that beauty blossoms forth from organic unity, and unity relies on every member of the community contributing to the quality of the whole. I want to look at this word *contribute* closer. It comes from the Latin word *"contribuere,"* meaning to unite, and its current dictionary meaning is "to give up a share or to participate." I think our capitalist culture has turned this word away from its original intent, that of giving of myself, to a more materialistic, impersonal giving of money and things to causes that are relatively distant from us. This is why it is so important for teachers to recover the aesthetic of love as we reshape and redefine the substance of unity and wholeness in our classrooms. If we as teachers *inform* our classrooms with loving relationship, the element of beauty will blossom forth from the buds of mutuality and reciprocity.

I have spoken of the aesthetic experience of working *with* my clay and *with* my students. No one member of the classroom can stand alone. The teachers need the students need the subject matter needs the media needs the (class)room to come to know with one another in the loving aesthetic of teaching. Heschel (1962) says, "It is impossible to find truth without being in love" (p. 43). Purpel says, "Beauty is love. That's all you need to know" (in conversation, March 1995).

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The Source

A Personal Odyssey Toward Love

Sheldon Stoff

Guided by three "hero" teachers — Emerson, Martin Buber, and Franz Winker — the author describes his own journey towards spiritual awakening and the realization of the importance of love in life.

> When the knowledge of God is suffused by a great love, when it is pervaded by its true illumination, according to the capacity of each soul to receive it, there radiates from its absolute light a love for the world, for all worlds, for all creatures, on all levels of their being. A love for all existence fills the hearts of the good and kindly ones among creatures, and among humans. They yearn for the happiness of all, they hope that all may know light and joy. They draw unto themselves the love for all existence....
>
> — Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook

As I look back I realize that it had been a long, very interesting journey that I embarked on while still an adolescent. I had received what had been considered a good religious education. Even at the time I realized that it had been severely lacking. It had been almost like other academic studies. It lacked the experience that I now realize was "inner," but then the studies just seemed distant and tangential to a true purpose. They had not provided the basis for later involvement because they had not even let me know that another dimension was available for the asking.

One Sunday morning, when I was 13 or 14, I was sitting up in bed wondering what I was to do during that day. I heard a voice speaking to me, loud and clear. It repeated a message in a gentle but firm tone, "You are to become a Rabbi." I was shaken to my core. Although I had done well in my religious studies, it had never occurred to me that they were to be my life's work.

I shook my head and uttered a negative reply. Again my life's mission was repeated and again my reply was negative. This direction and reply was repeated several more times but with one difference. I was now sobbing and confused. As I look back on this gift of my mission in life I realize that a beautiful opportunity had been lost. I know not the source of the message but now assume that an unappreciated angel had communicated my life's mission (read *tikkun*) to deaf ears. It has taken decades for the mes-

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sage to be welcomed, and even now, only partially fulfilled.

In high school I came across the first individual who, I believed, really understood the world. He was America's great genius, Ralph Waldo Emerson. Emerson would not have us become "the parrot of other men's thinking." Somehow, I must learn from others to follow a path but, at some point, the final journey was mine alone. In his essay, "Nature," hadn't he awakened me with his observation that

> man is the dwarf of himself. Once he was permeated and dissolved by spirit.... The invariable mark of wisdom is to see the miraculous in the common.... To the wise, therefore, a fact is true poetry and the most beautiful of fables.

Knowing was the heart of cognition, and Emerson made it abundantly clear that it could not be left to intellect alone, even as important as intellect was.

I knew that I needed guides since I wasn't even sure where my footsteps should take me, but I also knew that Emerson's insight that "reliance on authority measures the decline of religion" meant that I must find a way to unveil the light that I sought. The journey could now begin in earnest and Emerson had been my first hero. A spiritual awakening had begun. Fortunately, this hero of mine accompanied me along the way.

The years that followed were filled with excitement: a wonderful marriage to a childhood sweetheart, college, serving in the Navy during the Korean war, a farm, and two great children. At bedtime my wife, Lorraine, and I followed the practice of reading to each other something of spiritual insight. It helped keep us focused and contributed to pleasant dreams.

I taught agriculture and finally returned to Cornell University to study for my doctorate. Cornell is an outstanding university, as are many others, when examined from the perspective of intellect alone. A balanced cognition is not their goal or even something that, with a very few exceptions, is ever sought. Cornell and our learning institutions are dominated by the search for testable facts. Emerson saw the narrowness of our schooling when he stated that

> the great object of Education should be commensurate with the object of life.... A man is a little thing whilst he works by and for himself, but, when he gives voice to the rules of love and justice, is godlike....

An interesting feature about Cornell is that you can receive a fine education without ever going to class. I mean by this that there are so many evening lectures and presentations always in progress that choices are difficult to make. Those were the circumstances in which Lorraine and I were introduced to the powerful ideas of Dr. Martin Buber. You can honestly say of Buber that he was one of the world's truly great men. Yet, he was never mentioned in any of my classes even though his classic *I and Thou* was a bestseller on college campuses for 50 years after it was written.

His philosophy of "I and Thou" has influenced our times and our thinkers. Buber made it clear to generations that there are I-It kinds of knowing and I-Thou kinds of knowing. The reality you see can be very different.

Too bad that he was in Israel and not on a faculty in America. His declaration that "all real living is meeting" keeps you constantly grounded in the here and now. When Buber wrote of love you realized that he was writing from the inside, as a person who had been there and was sharing his most intimate experiences.

> love is **between I and Thou**.... Love is responsibility of an I for a Thou. (Buber 1958, p. 15)

Buber was able to awaken much that was asleep within. His thoughts kindled my thoughts. I did not realize it at the time but I was clear that I was again, in a more subtle way, being offered my *tikkun*. I was not to become a rabbi but I did become a teacher. Rabbi is translated as "my teacher," and the life of a university professor became my chosen profession, or was it chosen for me? Martin Buber became my second hero and joined Emerson as my guide. We did not meet face-to-face but a series of letters helped my understanding. Buber's knowing two kinds of knowledge, I-It and I-Thou, forever changed the content of perception. You can encounter an "It"or a "Thou." Never would they be the same and never would you be the same. Far better to love a Thou than an It.

Shortly after receiving my doctorate, I started my teaching career and also began my training in meditation. Looking back, that was where my real education commenced. I studied with my mentor, Franz Winkler, for three years, all the while progressing as a successful college teacher. My intuition had to be cultivated after having been ignored for my entire formal education.

Franz Winkler continued to open my eyes to the need for balance in thinking if I was to know more than the superficial. He saw this need for a full cognition and suggested that my training in meditation would help bring this about and open me to unknown dimensions of reality. This training helped

me recognize Kabbalah in all of its depth and enabled me to learn and mature from the inside. He was able to sum up this insight with a remarkable statement:

> True self-recognition emerges from an equilibrium between analytic intellect and comprehending intuition. To achieve such equilibrium we must seek to strengthen our dormant qualities on intuition without weakening our hard-won intellectual faculties. The way to this all-important goal is to reverse consciously and systematically — if only for minutes — our habitually utilitarian approach to the natural, the divine, and the artistic, into an attitude of unselfish devotion. Such an attitude will gradually open the clogged channels through which the creative forces flow into the human soul, to kindle her intuitive perception. (Winkler 1960, pp. 250–251)

Though Franz has passed on, he has joined my two heroes who now became three. My three heroes had succeeded in awakening in me the realization that knowledge was a blending of intellect and intuition. Using either as the totality of knowledge was a prescription for distortion. Intellect provided the analysis and discrimination; intuition the patterns, depth, caring, and inclusion.

They had also been able to awaken me to the importance of love enfolding the light-filled goal. My focus had become clearer. The foundation had been put in place for a further ascent.

A small incident may reveal some progress. Lorraine and I were walking through the woods when we came across a huge oak tree. It seemed to call to me and I embraced it. "So it is Thou" was all that I could murmur. The universe always calls to us and it is we that are dead to the calling. That calling is beyond intellect, and it is we that must open to that constant message.

I stumbled or was led to the gateway of reality, Kabbalah. I had heard of the depth and breadth and the awesome richness and completeness of Kabbalah and was now prepared and anxious to explore its secrets. With the background that my mentors had provided, I was now making my humble approach to this mystical pathway, Kabbalah. It would provide me with entrance to wider horizons. Kabbalah (to receive) encompasses all of the various aspects of Jewish mysticism. It has ancient components, since some attribute a text to Abraham. It has grown and received many vital contributions along the way. Since meditation is fundamental it is fresh and always current. What you are reading now is Kabbalah, written from the inside. As a result of years of training, the inner experiences that I needed were beginning to unfold.

I quickly became aware that there existed, and was rather widespread, a Christian Kabbalah, usually spelled with either a *C* or a *Q*. Where Kabbalah writes of "Cosmic Consciousness," Cabbala writes of "Christ Consciousness." The *C* is derived from the *K* and there are many similarities. Christianity has had a remarkable interest in Kabbalah since its inception. There are probably as many books published in our time on Kabbalah or Cabbala by non-Jews as by Jewish scholars. The study of Kabbalah has, in fact, become universal. It is the universal aspects of Kabbalah that I have focused on. In this journey I learned that Kabbalah, spiritual experience, and love were intertwined. They are bound together in a grasp never to be separated. To the Kabbalist it becomes self-evident that the act of loving is an essential part of being and knowing.

Kabbalah provides a glyph (read road map) to help you proceed along this pathway (Figure 1). This glyph is called The Tree of Life and was first brought to our attention in Genesis 2:9. The Tree of Life glyph is composed of ten Divine emanations or Sefirot.

In proceeding with my study of these Sefirot

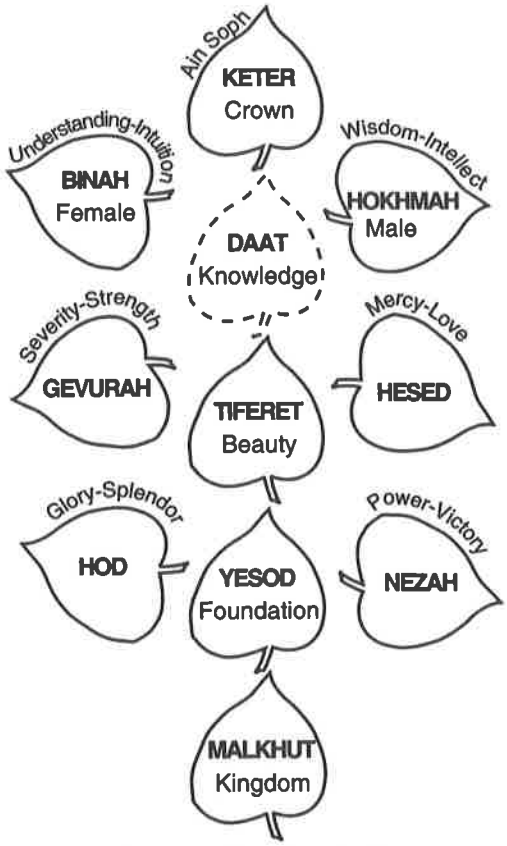

Figure 1. The Tree of Life

(energy centers), it became clear that the study of two of these centers, Hokhmah and Binah, was critical to any progress with depth and balance. Hokhmah is the male intellect, intellect at its brightest. It, unfortunately, passes alone for the current state of knowledge.

Binah is female intuition or understanding. It sees patterns and relationships denied to those seeking a superficial analysis. Kabbalah then goes one step further. It maintains that a full knowing happens only if Hokhmah and Binah are combined into a full cognition at the shadow Sefira called Daat or Knowledge. This is the "knowing" that the Bible saw when it stated that "the man Adam *knew* Eve his wife: and she conceived" (Genesis 4:1). Knowing was a complete act of cognition that included a loving embrace.

A society knowing intellect alone could not understand the essence of love. It would limp along, stumbling and never righting itself. It would live in the shadows of reality. It would live encountering only "It," never "Thou." It would understand marriage as an I-It relationship. It would encounter the world as It, to be used, not to be loved and protected. Wars would be a natural part of life and social harmony a myth. In fact, living without the balance of Binah, the color of life is never found; it is all gray and drab.

Knowing is not a dry, sterile act. It is one of embrace. The Bible and Kabbalah anticipated quantum mechanics and the insight that there could be no separation between the knower and the known. My three heroes understood the fullness of knowledge and had been able to open my eyes to that reality, a reality denied to those seeking immediate gratification and satisfied by superficial experience.

All of the Sefirot are of equal importance and can only be fully understood in their totality, a totality necessary for a full cognition. In this search my concern was aroused again and again by the Sefira Hesed. Hesed is the energy center of mercy and love. It stands for inner emotion and a love growing out of experience. It is love of homeland and all of God's creations. It is true religion and engulfing kindness. It is spiritual awakening and forgiveness. In every action the soul is pure, although the outer form may be a complete distortion.

Having experienced that awesome reality as a result of Kabbalistic meditations, I was determined to see where it had led, at least in some part. I now knew where my heroes had sent me. They pointed to a full cognition as the basis for a higher consciousness, a consciousness dwelling in love.

I have entered and lived with the umbrella of Kabbalah for some 25 years and it has always been expanding and providing a brighter light.

I was now determined to examine the lives of just a few of the great rabbis to see if the centrality of the reality of love and loving had remained within our heritage. I first proceeded to study the thoughts of the Rabbi Hillel, often simply called Hillel the Elder since the concept of "rabbi" was just coming into being. Hillel taught to begin where the student could understand. "Say not something that cannot be understood, because you think that in the end it will be understood" (Avot 2:5). It was a practice that John Dewey emphasized in our century.

When asked by a gentile to teach him the whole Torah (law) while standing on one foot, Hillel replied, "What is hateful to you, don't do to your fellow man. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. But go now and learn it" (Pirke Avot 1:12). Yes, Hillel taught at the level of understanding. Hillel also often spoke of "loving peace" and "loving people." (See Deuteronomy 14:23.) First avoid hate, then step forward into love. He lived to have his teaching be "for the sake of heaven." Love was truly the foundation for great teaching, marriage, and living.

His understanding of the commandment in Leviticus 19:18 to love your neighbor as yourself seemed to apply to his actions and thoughts all of his days. It was his prime lesson and motivation. Even under the rule of the harsh Herod, Hillel maintained that we were to be persons "loving peace and pursuing peace." The experience of Hesed had not been lost on Hillel and his disciples, who formed Bet Hillel (House of Hillel). They continued to teach of "loving all of God's creatures" and it became the rock on which Kabbalistic Judaism rested. His insights remained the seed of all Jewish law.

Hillel was not afraid to reduce the whole of the law to but one injunction, that of love for stranger and neighbor. He also knew that only study would enable the seeker to fully understand the meaning of such loving action. Hillel, the Nasi (highest authority on the law), was also a radical, willing to let the heart decide when appropriate. The inner meaning of law — the spirit of the law, rather than the word — was always the right action.

The next rabbi I chose to explore appears to have arisen out of Bet Hillel and surfaced shortly after Hillel's death (10 C.E.). Of course I am writing of Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth. As professor Pelikan, of Yale University, writes:

> To the Christian disciples of the first century the conception of Jesus as a rabbi was self-evident, to the Christian disciples of the second century it was embarrassing. To the Christian disciples of the third century and beyond it was obscure. (Pelikan 1985, p. 17)

Bultmann saw the issue in the same way as Pelikan and many modern Christian theologians. He presented his study this way:

> It is at least clear that Jesus lived as a Jewish rabbi. As such he gathers around him a circle of pupils. As such he disputes over questions of the law with pupils and opponents or with people seeking knowledge who turn to him as the celebrated rabbi. He disputes along the same lines as Jewish rabbis, uses the same methods of argument, the same turns of speech; like them, he coins proverbs and teaches in parables. Jesus' teaching shows in content also a close relationship with that of the rabbis. The question, "Which is the chief commandment?" (Mark 12:28-34) was often discussed by them, and was answered in the same way — love to God and one's neighbor. (1934, p. 173)

Jesus, continuing in Hillel's footsteps, probed to the center of our relationship with both God and humankind. It was a simple one word answer, *love*. The answer has resounded throughout history. Unfortunately, action rarely lived up to the challenge, the challenge of "loving peace"and "loving people." I consider Jesus to be a holy rabbi and a rebel. I realize that others may see him differently. Each individual must make that choice for himself.

As I previously stated, Kabbalistic meditations have been an important part of my life for many years. I tried to present and awaken participants and students to the necessity of studying from the position of the shadow Sefira, Daat, the view from a complete and balanced knowledge. In a particular workshop that I was offering we had studied all of the Sefirot and were ready to embark on the climb up the central column of Sefirot. The night prior to the difficult ascent I meditated on the way I should proceed. In the meditation I was astonished that I encountered Rabbi Isaac Luria, better known as the Ari. Rabbi Luria lived from 1534–1572 and has an outstanding reputation as the Kabbalistic rabbi who clarified much in the Zohar, a fundamental work of Kabbalah. In a calm, clear voice he explained that the students were rightly coming from Daat but now, seeking to ascend to higher realms of knowledge, they must go only with hearts filled with pure love. As was becoming quite clear, when you experience the spiritual you are also standing in love. It is also clear that when meditating you must be open but also fully balanced in your cognition. There are no shortcuts.

Although these are times of great chaos and pain, these are also times in which we have been blessed with great Kabbalists. Abraham Isaac Kook was chief rabbi of Palestine following WWI and left a formidable store of Kabbalistic insights. He had the ability to see beyond the mundane into what was of supreme importance. To quote from one of his poems, "Shall I Abandon The Source of Love":

> Shall I abandon the source of love
> For an endless craving after pleasures?
> Shall I leave that reservoir
> That is above all that is and is not,
> Above the void and above the chaos,
> Above its own beauty and strength?
> And I am so thirsty for its light —
> Its delights always still my thirst
> By adding to my pining,
> By increasing my thirst,
> It uplifts and delights
> While gently distressing my inner being.
> I have my secret and my secret is my light....
> (Kook 1978, p. 383)

To a Kabbalist, light, the spark of the Divine, and love are all parts of a whole.

The experiences I lacked as a child now became something I entered into as an adult. Simply knowing that they would be available to me would have satisfied my teenage hunger, but it was not to be. These inner experiences, based on the foundation of a full and balanced cognition, taught me many things. My actions on earth must be people. Becoming a religious hermit as life's vocation was, to a Kabbalist, a retreat into self-immersion, though brief retreats into silence have been a necessity and have been so recorded in both the Old and New Testaments.

All experiences pointed to one fact, that "loving all of God's creatures" (Hillel) was a doorway into celestial realms. My actions and knowledge had to blend together.

Years ago, as I prepared to go to sleep, I performed my usual evening Kabbalistic meditations. I had followed this routine for many, many years. In order to ease the passage into sleep I continued to meditate in a seated position, with legs crossed while in bed. This evening was a bit different since I meditated on the meaning of the Sefira Hesed.

The meditation deepened and I saw myself standing at the edge of an ocean. The waves breaking over me were at least six times higher than I was. The scene continued all night long and I realized that I was witnessing the sustenance of the universe in a form that I could understand. I was witnessing and

standing in the force of unbounded love. Waves of love embraced me and encompassed me. The message was repeated again and again: "The universe was born in love and is sustained in love."

The alarm clock sounded and I realized that I had not slept. The meditation had continued all night, as it had on only a few other occasions. I had been to a place beyond the spoken word. I was refreshed, alert, and grateful. The gift I had received was mine to share. Other insights engulfed me.

We live in an age of the self-centered ego. What is relevant to sensuous man grows more important to him with each passing day. The world of things becomes everything. There is no room for anything else. He lives in shadows.

He who does not share love becomes as if dead. Such a person perishes though he still walks the earth. To find the way of the spirit requires living in the Divine Light, giving and sharing the force of love. It is to be kind and gentle. This love comes from the spark within. It is ours to pass along. It is constantly replenished. This is the great lesson of life.

That which is our essence is the spark, the spark is love, it is there to be shared. The Divine is the prime giver of love, and since we are created in the image of God, in fulfilling the image, we, too, become givers of love. To a Kabbalist, to have been created in the image of God entails an awesome responsibility. "Image" does not denote hands and feet. "Image" means only that which we can fully understand about the Divine. The Divine is a giver and what is given that we can know is love. To be in the image of God is to constantly love, to love without reserve. This loving is an act of creation. We are co-creators of the Divine through our acts of love.

All of the emanations described in The Tree of Life, the Sefirot, (again, see Figure 1), contain the Light of Divine love. Everything that we see, everything that we know, is supported by Divine love.

The key to our understanding the creation and maintenance of the universe is our love of God and all of God's creations. The reality that we can best understand is that all of life is holy. Yes, *all of life is holy*. It is holy, it is God's creation and it is to be loved.

We were created in love and our essence is love. It is loving action that makes us human. It is only through the power of love that the hurdles impinging upon us can be overcome.

An understanding of the male and female relationship followed. I realized that Hokhmah (male) and Binah (female) (again, see Figure 1) were also the archetypes of earthly man and woman. Their coming together was a completion of two halves. It involved the spiritual as well as the physical. It was far better that the spiritual union was formed first and that the physical was proceeded by consecration. That is the task of Keter, the Godhead, which immediately towers over them in the glyph of The Tree of Life.

In realizing that our destiny was to give with an endless love I also realized that there was no separation between heaven and earth. They were both parts of the whole. They were one.

Final reflections

The religious experiences I sought as an adolescent were beginning to flow. There was no need to look further. I had known the spiritual. It was not simply an analytical exercise. I knew that I was immersed in love. The journey was the fulfillment.

I have had a long history of schooling. There was elementary school, high school, college, the university, and graduate school. During all that time, no teacher, no professor had ever mentioned the concept of love. Surely, there had been occasions, even in the most secular of studies, to discuss this most important of all topics. How are you prepared for your life if the core is avoided? Damage must inevitably follow. Looking at our society, it *has* followed in the form of violence, divorce, greed, and alienation.

What of my growth? There is much room, though that is not my concern. The now, the wonder and beauty of every moment, is there to be experienced. The cup is full even though the vessel, I, is to be expanded. If my essence is the spark within, and I act out of that essence, I am acting in freedom and I am acting in love. Since that essence is also the spark of the Divine, I am also acting "for the sake of heaven."

> Some thoughts always find us young and keep us so. Such a thought is the love of the universal and eternal beauty.
>
> — Emerson

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El Amor es un Mentirozo

Andrea Ohlson

Love lies. Love creates confusion. I know this because I've watched it at work and I've spoken to it. I've breathed it and lived alongside it. I've touched it and yearned with the beauty of it, and I've felt it die. I've felt love bury itself in the ashes and remains of a fire it once kindled. I've felt love hide itself in night's shadows and fade before the morning's light could betray it. I know why love lies; so I've grown tired of being part of it. Sometimes it returns softly, tiptoeing behind me. It whispers cunningly through me, but I have locked it out and I am safe. Love lies. Love betrays.

I once wanted to know love's scent of old leather and harsh soap. I hoped to feel it reaching through me, enfolding me in silken arms. But love pulled me from my hiding places with hands of ice. It stole my securities and escaped with the person I once was. So, with the scattered stones of my life, I have built a smooth, impenetrable wall. Love's prying fingers won't locate any cracks to reach through or ledges to climb upon.

Love tortures and haunts those who pursue it after it has gone. It leaves behind but memories, recalling tastes of angry words and bitter agony. Its fragrance is a sour musk. Memories of love are tired and silent and worn. Memories want only to learn from love's passing and to forget what remains. But I have not forgotten the pain which remains and I am wise to love. It cannot leave within me its promises and memories and disillusions.

Love is hungry. Love stretches over aching days and holds with arms of false tranquility.

Love is cruel, but love does not discriminate. The poor, the rich, the angry, the meek, the old; they have known love. They have been tricked by love. I know because I've witnessed love at play. Love lies to those who believe their fantasies. I know. My mother married my father in love. My mother planned to finish her college education and get a degree in social sciences. My father wanted to be a teacher. But he found a job with the state, supposing it would be a better income. My mother stayed home to raise my brother and me. Love left them nothing but failed dreams of hope, filthy from overuse. Love changed while they turned their backs to raise a family and love disappeared. Love escaped with the trouble and the heartaches. Love fled while my mother changed the diapers, and as my father worked figures behind a large gray desk stuffed in an orange cubicle. As it fled, love revealed the follies in their lives and their shoddy achievements. Love left my father bitter and hateful, and left my mother broken.

I despise love. I know why it lies and why it betrays. It lied to me because I wanted it to, and it betrayed me when I let it become my master. Love is tangible as smoke and transparent as time. If love is nurtured it becomes leather; soft and comfortable and warm. If ignored, it becomes the choking dark green leaves of a forgotten weed. I did not intentionally ignore love. The weed seemed a flower, growing without need of care or tending. Love deceives.

Love is not my master any longer. Love's lies cannot lead me to the cliffs of desperate, reaching hope and crashing, aching wrenching despair. I am scared and I am empty, but I am free and I am wise to love.

But as love cannot reach me, neither can joy and longing, and passion and fury. Without love, emotion finds no place in me. So I rest ...waiting.

Andrea Ohlson wrote this piece when she was 16 years old and in the 11th grade at Timberline High School in Lacey, WA.

Love of Nature

Lessons from the Lakota

William Crain

Loneliness and emptiness seem to pervade modern life. A relatively unexplored factor is our estrangement from nature. In *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, the Lakota author Luther Standing Bear provides a rich and detailed account of what a love of nature can be like and stimulates thinking about how we might nurture a greater feeling for nature in today's schools.

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All the lonely people,
Where do they all come from?

—John Lennon and Paul McCartney

Everywhere there was life. Even without human companionship one was never alone.

—Luther Standing Bear

A dominant theme in modern literature, art, and social thought is the loneliness and alienation of the individual. People seem isolated, rootless, and disconnected. They desperately seek love, and may even temporarily find it, but an underlying emptiness and loneliness soon returns.

Explanations of this condition have varied, and many social theorists have suggested that more than one cause is to be found. Perhaps the most common explanation, advanced by scholars such as Toennies (1913/1971), Durkheim (1930/1951), and Fromm (1941), is that the modern malaise has to do with the loss of communal ties. In medieval society, people were deeply immersed in their village communities. But during the 16th and 17th centuries, the rapid growth of commerce, cities, and market economies created new opportunities for personal gain, and people increasingly left their communities to pursue these opportunities. In the process, they became freer and more independent, but they also became more isolated and alone. Once feeling solidarity with others, people increasingly felt estranged from them.

Some writers, especially those inspired by Marx (1844/1963), have suggested that modern loneliness also has to do with alienation from the self. For example, Erich Fromm (1956) and C. Wright Mills (1951) argued that modern individuals do not develop a firm sense of themselves through creative work, but develop whatever images and traits they believe will sell on the contemporary commercial scene. They become empty shells and as such are incapable of mature love.

It is also possible that modern loneliness and rootlessness results from our estrangement from nature.

As Rollo May (1958) said, in modern technological societies people suffer from "a vague, unarticulated and half-suppressed sense of despair of gaining any real relationship with the natural world" (p. 57).

Yet over the course of the century, relatively little attention has been paid to this topic. Even Erich Fromm, whose insights into 20th century loneliness and alienation were exceptionally wide-ranging, typically mentioned alienation from nature in a perfunctory manner. In *The Art of Loving* (1956), for example, Fromm had a great deal to say about how modern societies thwart the capacity to love, but he talked almost exclusively about the love of people — not the love of nature. Similarly, as Theodore Roszak (1992) has observed, the vast psychoanalytic and clinical literature on the varieties and disturbances of love almost totally ignores the possibility that human beings have a need for loving ties with their natural environments.

To a considerable extent, this attitude among scholars has reflected the attitudes of their wider societies. For decades, our society's general image of a "nature lover" has been that of a person who is somewhat on the fringe of things. A keen interest in birds, animals, or plant life, it has generally been assumed, is acceptable as a hobby, but it's a bit frivolous. Indeed, a particularly strong passion for pets, animals, or wildlife has frequently aroused the suspicion that the person is compensating for the absence of a human relationship.

Only in the last two decades has this situation showed a degree of change. As the general public has become more aware of the global ecological crisis, pioneering naturalists and environmentalists such as H. D. Thoreau (1862/1982), John Muir (1894), and Rachel Carson (1951), who openly advocated a love of nature, have gained a new measure of credibility. Moreover, some scientists have made our species' love of nature a topic of serious investigation. A leader in this inquiry is the biologist E. O. Wilson, who, together with a loose group of natural and social scientists, has been developing the "biophilia hypothesis" (Wilson 1984; Kellert and Wilson 1993).

The biophilia hypothesis

Wilson and his colleagues propose that our species, over the long course of its evolution, developed a partly innate affinity for living nature. We are fascinated by animals, we are struck by nature's beauty, and we feel calm and restored in many natural settings. We are even drawn to and fascinated by forms of life that arouse fear in us, such as snakes and spiders.

Our attraction to nature, Wilson says, makes sense when we consider the environment in which our species evolved. For more than 99% of human history, our ancestors had to learn to live in a natural environment — not a mechanical world. Thus a curiosity about and a sensitivity to nature must have conferred survival value on our species.

Contact with nature, the biophilia hypothesis further asserts, is vital for human self-actualization. Nature inspires much of our art and poetry, and we cannot be truly fulfilled without a relationship to her. Nature enriches our lives and restores our spirits.

At the same time, the biophilia hypothesis maintains that our sensitivity to nature is only partly genetic. It requires experience with nature to develop and express itself. But in modern, technological societies, this experience is frequently missing. We increasingly grow up in environments of glass, plastic, and concrete, in worlds dominated by TV, computers, and videos. In such environments, our species' inwardly determined feelings for nature can easily atrophy.

In fact, surveys by Kellert (1993) suggest that an underdeveloped feeling for nature is widespread. Kellert found that most American and Japanese adults, while professing some environmental concerns, seem indifferent to many forms of life. For example, a large majority of Kellert's respondents said that they would permit the extinction of a species of fish if this were necessary to build a hydropower plant.

Such research suggests, then, that the recent upsurge in environmental awareness may prove too superficial to prevent continued degradation of the natural environment. If we want to preserve nature — for the sake of our own species' emotional development as well as for nature herself — we will need to alter our culture in a major way. We will need to develop a new, nature-affirming outlook and educational practices to promote it.

Many biophilia researchers (e.g., Wilson 1993; Kellert 1993; Orr 1993) openly advocate such changes and hope that the biophilia hypothesis and the research it generates will contribute to them. However, the biophilia research thus far, while often important, has also been incomplete. Empirical studies have indicated that exposure to nature might reduce stress and help medial patients recover (Ulrich 1993; Katcher and Wilkins 1993), but this research has

largely relied upon artificial stimuli such as photographs of nature scenes or limited contact with nature. The research so far has given us little sense of what a deep love of one's natural environment might be like in real life or how this love might make a difference in personal development.

Native American models

I believe that efforts to change attitudes toward nature can benefit greatly from the study of Native American societies. Despite differences among them, American Indian societies have shared fundamental belief structures that center on a deep reverence for nature (Cajete 1994), and they have developed ways of fostering this attitude in children.

We cannot, of course, expect that large segments of the United States population will ever adopt tribal ways. But indigenous cultures can provide us with useful models. They can provide us with alternative philosophies and day-to-day experiences that inform and inspire us as we work out and articulate our own approach to the natural world.

One of the most insightful and richly observant works on the American Indian's love of nature is Luther Standing Bear's *Land of the Spotted Eagle*. Although the book was first published in 1933, it hasn't received the recognition it deserves, and I will make it the focus of much of the remainder of this essay.

Standing Bear was born in the mid-1860s. As a boy, he was raised in the traditional manner of his Lakota (Souix) tribe. When he was about 11 years old, he went to the Carlisle Indian School in Pennsylvania, a member of its first class. There he withstood efforts to strip him of his traditional identity, and at the age of 16 he returned to his people, who were by then tightly confined to reservation life. Standing Bear worked at various jobs, including rancher and teacher, and when he was in his 30s he joined Buffalo Bill's famous Wild West Show. He also acted in several Hollywood movies. Near the end of his life, Standing Bear returned to his reservation after a 16-year absence and was shocked to see how poverty-stricken and demoralized his people had become. Outraged, he wrote several works, including *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, to tell people about the dignity of the traditional Lakota peoples and the damage the European-Americans had inflicted upon them (Ellis 1978).

When writing about the traditional Lakota, Standing Bear typically used the past tense. He felt his people's way of life had basically been destroyed. He did not foresee the recent movements to revitalize traditional Indian cultures, although he certainly would have welcomed these movements.

The Lakota's love of nature

"The Lakota," Standing Bear said, "was a true naturist — a lover of nature. He loved the earth and all things of the earth" (1933, p. 192). Specifically, the Lakota, like indigenous peoples all over the continent (Mander 1991), looked upon the earth as a life-sustaining mother.

> Wherever the Lakota went, he was with Mother Earth. No matter where he roamed by day or slept by night, he was safe with her. This thought comforted and sustained the Lakota and he was eternally filled with gratitude. (Standing Bear 1933, pp. 192–193)

According to Lakota legends, Standing Bear reported, the first human emerged from the muddy earth when *Wakan Tanka*, the Great Mystery, breathed life into him. With the help of the sun's rays, the man lived and became a free and joyous creature. In much the same manner, all other life forms came into being. Thus, the older people, when talking to children, "would place a hand on the ground and explain, 'We sit in the lap of our Mother. From her we, and all other living things, come'" (p. 194).

Because in the Lakota view all life shares the same mother, the Lakota assumed that "he was therefore kin to all living things and gave to all creatures equal rights with himself" (p. 166).

> We love the birds and beasts that grew with us on this soil. They drank the same water we did and breathed the same air. We are all one in nature. (p. 45)

Indeed, the Lakota are known for ending prayers with the phrase *Mitakuye oyasin*, "All my relations" (or "We are all related"), emphasizing their ties to all life, which in their view included the wind, sand, stones, and everything about them (Black Elk and Lyon 1990, p. 190; Cajete 1994; Tinker 1991).

Standing Bear was struck by the way the European-Americans placed themselves apart and above all aspects of nature. Considering everything inferior to themselves, they destroyed whatever they wanted.

> Forests were mowed down, the buffalo exterminated, the beaver driven to extinction and his wonderfully constructed dams dynamited.... The very birds of the air are silenced.... The white man has come to be the symbol of extinction for all things natural to this continent. (p. 166)

As members of Western society, it is usually difficult for us to imagine considering all life equal to ourselves. Yet this attitude has been widespread

Fortress

My fortress, with its seemingly
impenetrable walls, sits
on an isolated hilltop,
away from everything.

The high looming walls
cast shadows over me,
they protect me from what I fear,
they protect me from what I desire.

They protect me from
the pain,
the disappointment,
and the sorrow
that wait outside the walls
like an ever stalking
predator.

They also protect me from what I most desire,
to be understood,
to be cared for,
to be touched,
to be loved.

The walls discourage any
faint-hearted intruders,
but if any one was brave enough
to walk up to the walls,
they would crumble at the slightest touch.

So I sit in darkness
high atop the wall
and watch the people
pass by my fortress.

They gaze indifferently upon my walls,
then they go on their way.
I wait for someone brave enough
to take the a chance, to risk pain,
and walk up to my fortress.

Sure maybe no one has even
the slightest desire to love me,
or maybe someone does, but will
not take a chance.

They stare hopelessly towards
my castle and wish there
was some way to reach my fortress,
not knowing how easy it would be.

I'm content to sit and wait,
for I have taken my chances
and failed.

I will no longer leave my castle
I will wait for someone who is
willing to take the risk.

— Mark Crudo

among the original peoples of our continent. When Oren Lyons of the Onondaga tribe addressed the United Nations in Geneva in 1977, he pointed out that the assembly was incomplete. "I do not see a delegation for the four-footed. I see no seat for the eagles. We forget and consider ourselves superior, but we are after all a mere part of the Creation" (cited in Bruchac 1995, p. 92).

In his book, Standing Bear gave us a sense of how the Lakota's love of nature simultaneously operated on several levels. It was a moral obligation — an attitude one ought to have. It was also a spiritual feeling; humans were part of a unifying life force, created by the Great Mystery, "that flowed in and through all living things" (p. 193). Finally, and most impressively, Standing Bear gave us a fine sense of the Indians' love of nature as a concrete, daily, lived experience. For example, Standing Bear reported that the Lakota's affection for nature grew with age, and

> the old people came literally to love the soil and they sat or reclined on the ground with a feeling of being close to a mothering power. It was good for the skin to touch the earth and the old people liked to remove their moccasins and walk with bare feet on the sacred earth.... The soil was soothing, strengthening, cleansing, and healing. (p. 192)

Daily experience made the Lakota feel lucky to be alive. At dawn, the Indians "drew in great breaths of pure morning air" and absorbed the sun's early rays (p. 49). They drank heartily of the cool spring water. Bubbling up from the earth, the water seemed to reflect the work of some unseen force — further evidence of the life-giving power of the Great Mystery.

Off in the distance were hills so heavily wooded with dark pines that they were called *He Sapa*, or Black Hills. In them were many springs and lakes, and the trees provided shelter from the storms of the plains. The Lakota went to the hills like "a child to its mother's arms" (p. 43).

Most of the entrances to the hills were rugged and forbidding, but one was easy and beautiful. It was used by buffalo and Lakota alike, and was called *Pte ta tiyopa*, or "Gate of the Buffalo." To the whites, who cut down the trees along the pass, it was merely "Buffalo Gap." On the stone cliffs, the whites carved giant sculptures of their presidents.

A sampling of Native American cultures and beliefs, from Pawnee (Cronyn 1934) and Creek (Harjo 1983) to Inuit (Roberts and Amidon 1991), suggests that the most sacred time was one that occurred every day — daybreak. The Lakota, too, considered this a special moment. They awoke before dawn and stopped whatever they were doing when the sun began to rise for a moment of silent thanks for it and its life-giving rays. "There was no kneeling, no

words were spoken, and no hands were raised, but in every heart was just a thought of tribute" (p. 47).

We might guess that the Lakota didn't love everything about their surroundings. They must have felt, as we do, that the heat was sometimes unbearable or the storms too strong. But Standing Bear said this wasn't so. The Lakota never complained. They even ran into the heaviest rains, feeling a unity with nature, and viewed the tremendous duststorms as nature's attempt to clean the air. (And when the winds subsided, the air did seem clearer and brighter.) To complain about the weather, Standing Bear said, would be to deny praise to *Wakan Tanka*, the Great Mystery, which was completely good. For the Lakota, unlike the Europeans, there were no devils or evil forces to contend with. Noting this difference, we might wonder about the extent to which the European preoccupation with the devil represents a projection of their own destructive actions toward nature.

All in all, the Lakota's love of nature was the kind that is mixed with feelings of fortune and gratitude. The Lakota felt toward the earth and the elements like we occasionally feel when it strikes us that we are incredibly lucky to have someone beside us — or the way a new mother feels when she is overwhelmed with a sense of humility and amazing good fortune as she gazes at her beautiful baby.

At the same time, Standing Bear pointed out, the beauty and comforts of nature were not always glaring or obvious. A full appreciation of nature required an extensive education — an education that began in childhood and lasted a lifetime.

Lakota education

The Lakota child's education was informal. It didn't take place during a specified time period or in a separate room. Everything around the child, Standing Bear said, was a source of knowledge and inspiration. "The world was a library and its books were the stones, leaves, grass, brooks, and the birds and animals that shared, alike with us, the storms and blessings of earth" (p. 194).

The adults seemed to rely heavily on the children's spontaneous interest in animals and natural occurrences. Standing Bear said that he and other children sometimes would sit and "watch the swallow, the tiny ants, or perhaps some small animal at work and ponder on its industry and ingenuity; or we lay on our backs and looked long at the sky and when the stars came out made shapes from the various groups" (p. 194). To encourage the children's spontaneous interest, it was often sufficient for the adults to invite the children to look at something, or to tell stories about animals and insects that piqued the children's curiosity. In addition, the adults' own interest in nature stimulated a good deal of spontaneous modeling.

The adults did, however, provide the children with certain kinds of direct guidance. In particular, they asked the children to sit still and use their senses. The child learned to be completely quiet and keep all his or her senses alert, even when there was apparently nothing to see, hear, or smell. Then, after waiting, the child typically detected something — a rustle of the wind, a gentle scent, the faint call of a bird — and was rewarded with the pleasure of discovery.

Alertness was so highly valued that chores and routines were halted whenever anyone noticed a change in the surroundings.

> "A-ah!" spoken quickly and sharply was a word that brought everyone to attention at any time or place, night or day. Whenever this word was given by anyone, it meant that all, no matter with what they might be occupied, must stop and listen; and everyone did, even to children and dogs. (p. 70)

Standing Bear observed that in the eyes of white society, the most prominent Lakota were the warriors, but the Lakota themselves valued no one more highly than the scout. The scout was the person whose senses were most keenly developed, and on whom the entire tribe depended. The scouts, in turn, paid careful attention to insects and animals. The scouts were always alert, for example, to the sounds of the prairie cranes, which might foretell changes in the weather, or the head movements of the ground beetles, which might indicate the presence of buffalo (p. 76). In fact, animals served as admired models for all tribe members as they continually strove to refine their senses, and, in a burst of pride, Standing Bear estimated that "the senses of the Lakota were, I believe, developed to a degree that almost matched those of the animals" (p. 69).

The education of the senses had obvious practical value, enabling the Lakota to find food and protect themselves from danger. But Standing Bear's emphasis was on the way that highly developed senses contributed to the Lakota's emotional lives. "With senses alive and alert to the myriad forms of life about him, his own life was full and interesting" (p. 69). The Lakota learned to appreciate life in its tre-

Untitled

It seems like things are changing,
As if life is becoming real,
What used to be a dream
Is now something I can feel.
Without even asking questions
Answers are given to me.
I'm discovering the meaning of life,
My eyes are finally beginning to see.
My ears have begun to listen,
I can hear the words that are said.
These words are meaning and passion,
They put thoughts and visions in my head.
I have begun to speak with sound,
I speak with the will to be heard.
My expressions are meaningful at last,
There is a significance in every word.
What has developed this change in me?
Who has made me real?
When did these emotions start working?
How did I learn how to feel?
Who has taught me this power?
Who has shown me who to be?
Who is this mysterious person,
That has taught me to be me?
This unknown stranger
Holds the only key,
The key that opened my soul
And set my spirits free.
Each day more changes occur,
But I finally begin to see,
That the unfamiliar key holder
Is not a stranger ... but me.

— Monica Welter

mendous variety and beauty, and "this appreciation enriched Lakota existence" (p. 195).

Modern loneliness and discontent

For the Lakota, feelings for nature seem to have been nearly as strong as those for other people. Because of this, the Lakota were never alone.

> There was no such thing as emptiness in the world. Even in the sky there were no vacant places. Everywhere there was life, visible and invisible, and every object possessed something that would be good for us to have also — even to the very stones. This gave a great interest to life. Even without human companionship one was never alone. The world teemed with life and wisdom. (p. 14)

The experiences of the whites, Standing Bear noted, were quite different. In a particularly perceptive passage, Standing Bear reported that, "I have often noticed white boys gathered in a city bystreet or alley jostling and pushing one another in a foolish manner. They spend much time in this aimless fashion...." The reason, Standing Bear speculated, is that "their natural faculties are neither seeing, hearing, or feeling the varied life that surrounds them. There is about them no awareness, no acuteness, and it is this dullness that gives ugly mannerisms full play (p. 195).

A major implication of Standing Bear's book, then, is that the existential loneliness, emptiness, and restlessness of modern times has to do with the absence of nature in our lives. Growing up in sterile, synthetic environments, we are cut off from the vivid, pulsing, beautiful life that people once felt all around them. Outside ourselves and other people, there is a void, and this void contributes to our chronic restlessness and discontent.

To compensate, we seek all kinds of stimulation — drugs, TV, video games, sexual excitement. But these sources of stimulation hardly help. Indeed, if trends in psychiatric symptomatology are any indication, restlessness, distractibility, and loneliness are on the rise.[1] The problem, Standing Bear's book suggests, is that without rich and sustained contact with the natural world, we don't develop the capacity for calm and patient observation, nor do we feel a kinship with other forms of life or experience the comfort and beauty that nature provides.

Implications for contemporary Western education

As I mentioned earlier, we cannot expect that large numbers of people will ever adopt Native American lifestyles in an effort to get closer to nature. But we can use Native American societies as resources, incorporating their wisdom and experience where we find it appropriate.

As it happens, the study of American Indian societies is already common in elementary schools. Thus, schools can help children develop an appreciation of nature by giving more emphasis to the central role that the indigenous societies themselves have placed on nature. To make lessons meaningful to children, schools also need to include projects and activities. I would like to recommend two kinds of activities: nature studies and the composition of poems.

Nature studies. For some time, environmental educators (who often work out of nature centers) have had a special regard for Indian cultures. When, for example, introducing children to a natural setting or a species of flora or fauna, the educators have often told an Indian story that enriches the experience. Recently, Michael J. Caduto, an ecologist, and Joseph Bruchac, an American Indian writer, have tried to

integrate American Indian stories and nature-study activities in a more systematic way. In *Keepers of the Earth* (1988) and *Keepers of the Animals* (1992), Caduto and Bruchac introduce each set of nature-study activities with an Indian story. For example, the authors introduce activities pertaining to the seashore with a story about the creation of the shoreline. Sometimes the connection between a specific story and the nature-study activities seems a bit remote, but the writers seem on the right track. For as they often remind us, American Indians and ecologically minded naturalists share a basic philosophical assumption. They both believe that no species lives apart from or above nature; we all exist in relationship to other species and our surroundings. As Standing Bear said, "We are all one in nature" (p. 45).

In terms of specific activities, Standing Bear argued that the most valuable experiences are those that refine the senses. For it is through direct sensory experience that we appreciate the comforts, beauty, and intricacies of the natural world. For this reason, Lakota adults asked children to sit still and listen when there was apparently nothing to hear, to look when there was apparently nothing to see, and to be open to other sensory experiences. Schools might employ this task, as well as others Standing Bear mentioned, such as tracking and the imitation of animals. And here again, environmental educators have already developed similar methods. They suggest, for example, how children might lie on the ground like ants and try to perceive the world as ants do; or cup their ears like deer and note the effect; or track animals in their yards or parks (Caduto and Bruchac 1988; Russell 1990; Shedd 1994).

In their own "nature education," the Lakota and other indigenous societies seem to have followed, to a greater extent than most contemporary schools, a Rousseauian or child-centered approach. That is, the adults do not believe it's their job to fill the child's head with information or "right answers." Instead, the adults assume that children have an inner, spontaneous urge to learn and can be trusted to make their own discoveries. Adults might present tasks or ask stimulating questions, but they try to allow the children to discover truths for themselves. Indeed, it is likely that one reason indigenous peoples have resisted formal schooling is that it so frequently requires children to learn things secondhand, from books and teachers, rather than from their own experience (Cajete 1994, pp. 222–227; Lee 1959, pp. 5–15, 59–69).

Nature educators, as well as others who value the development of the senses, often share this orientation. They believe children have a deep, spontaneous interest in nature.[2] As Joan Erikson (1988) points out, observation of a toddler at the beach, completely engrossed in the exploration of sand, puddles of water, or shore life, should remove any doubts about the strength of this interest. Thus, it is the task of the environmental educator to nourish and draw out the child's own interests, and while the educators do ask children questions, they pay considerable attention to the kinds of questions that stimulate children to make their own observations and discoveries (Gega 1993; Harlan 1985; Russell, 1990).

Poetry. Standing Bear said that the living spirit of the Indians was manifested through their arts — their song, dance, ritual, magic, oratory, design, handiwork, and folk story. And running through much of their art was poetry — for "the Indian loved verse and into this mode of expression went his deepest feelings" (p. 256), including his love of nature. Cajete (1994) suggests that a strong "mythopoetic" orientation has been widespread in tribal societies.

Young children seem to share this love of poetry — at least, as Cajete (1994) notes, until they go to school and are pressured to learn the mechanics of literacy and rational thought. Several researchers have reported on the way infants and young children like to experiment with the rhythmic and melodic qualities of speech and the way young children come up with highly original metaphors (Schwartz 1981; Winner 1982).

Equally impressive — but not yet well documented — is the way early poetry expresses the child's deep interest in nature. In *Those First Affections*, Timothy Rogers collected 220 fresh and spontaneous poems by children between the ages of two and eight years (many of which were written down by attentive parents), and by my count 85% of the poems deal with the natural world.[3] In them, moreover, the children's senses are keen and wide-awake. For example, 8-year-old Wendy Hancock (Rogers 1979, p. 106) calls our attention to a sound that could easily be overlooked:

> The storm is over and gone away,
> Not a bird sings, not a twig moves....
> But there *was* a sound,
> Was it a rabbit scurrying
> Or a dog barking?
> No, no, no,
> It was the whisper of the trees

Far away,
Far away.

Many of the children, like so many adult poets, are impressed by the sounds of the wind.

'Whump!' goes the wind on the window,
And the window goes 'Whamp!'
— A 4-year-old (Rogers 1979, p. 33)

I like the sounds of the wind
As it brushes against the
Chestnut trees
It seems to have
A sweet song that I
Sing to my baby brother.
— Laura Harlan, age 7 (Rogers 1979, p. 86)

The children also are struck by the sounds of water. Four-year-old Hilda Conkling (Rogers 1979, p. 33) tells us there is going to be a "brook dance":

There is going to be the sound of
voices,
And the smallest will be the brook:
It is the sound of water
You will hear.
A little winding song
to dance to....

Many of the children speak directly to plants and animals. Hilda Conkling (p. 34) addresses a flower:

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

Many of the children's poems contain touches of animism; the children attribute human voices and feelings to nonhuman objects. Trees whisper, a brook sings, a flower is tired.

Animism seems strongly developed in indigeneous cultures. According to Standing Bear, the Lakota firmly believed that all things — even rocks — are alive (p. 26). "Everything was possessed of personality, only differing from us in form" (p. 94). Other Lakota elders also have described the way animism permeated Lakota art and life. For example, Black Elk (1953, pp. 74–75) reported the rite honoring the "kind and good-looking" cottonwood tree, which was whispered in prayer, and Wallace Black Elk (Black Elk and Lyon 1990) told how the Indians could hear song in all things.

A particularly sensitive description of the animistic orientation in Native American society is provided by Roberta Blackgoat, a Navaho elder:

> If we pray and there is rain, the grass starts waking up, it starts growing, and then you hear the wind whispering in the trees and the plants — they are talking to each other. That is how we are. We are like plants.... (in McLuhan 1994, p. 380)

Animism presents difficulties for us in Western societies who have been trained to believe in rational, scientific thinking. We make sharp distinctions between the human and nonhuman, and between the animate and the inanimate. Piaget, perhaps our most esteemed developmental psychologist, argued that animism reflects immature cognition; it fails to differentiate one's own subjective experiences from the workings of the rest of the world. For this reason, Piaget said, animism is prevalent in childhood but diminishes with the development of more rational and scientific thought (Crain 1992).

Yet it is difficult to deny the feeling and beauty that the animistic outlook gives to artistic expression — in both indigenous and modern Western societies. Moreover, at least two outstanding Gestalt psychologists — Heinz Werner (1956) and Rudolph Arnheim (1954) — maintained there is a degree of reality to the animistic outlook. In their view, the entire world does share the same underlying forces and expressive qualities. Qualities such as rising and falling, bright and dull, gentle and rough, underlie all existence. Thus, when four-year-old Hilda Conkling urges a flower to "sparkle up" because it appears tired, she isn't just speaking metaphorically. Just as human energy may rise or fall, so too does that of a plant, and there is a similarity between the expressive gestures. Arnheim (1954/1971) said that perception fulfills "its spiritual mission only if we ... realize that the forces stirring in ourselves are only individual examples of the same forces acting throughout the universe. We are thus enabled to sense our place in the whole and the inner unity of that whole" (p. 434).

Since the late 1960s, a growing number of poets and writers have turned to Native American culture for inspiration. Some, such as Linda Hogan (1990) and Joy Harjo (1983), are themselves of Native American ancestry, while others, such as Gary Snyder (1974) and Nancy Wood (1972), draw strongly upon Native American sources. But whatever their backgrounds, these writers are appalled at our technological attitude toward nature, which considers nature as nothing but impersonal material for human use and exploitation. The writers are trying to reconnect with the Earth and give us a sense of nature as a living, expressive presence. As Joy Harjo (who is of Creek descent) writes, "Remember the plants, trees, animal life.... Talk to them, listen to them. They are alive poems" (1983).

Earlier, I tried to indicate how children spontaneously do what Harjo recommends. They eagerly create poems based on their observations of nature. And their poems are frequently attuned to the expressive qualities of nature — to the sounds and gestures of trees, wind, brooks, and plants.

Unfortunately, we don't do much to encourage children's poetry, or their art in general. In fact, we increasingly crowd out the arts to teach the three Rs and analytic thinking at younger and younger ages. And we increasingly shut children up in the artificial and mechanical worlds of the computer and TV monitor, where nature is almost completely absent.

Although it will be an uphill battle, we should do what we can to reverse this trend. We should encourage children's nature-inspired poetry and artistic expressions, and in the process, we can use Native American works and thought as models of what is possible. From Native American cultures, children can gain a sense of how people can grow into adults who care about the Earth and don't feel so alone upon it.

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Notes

1. Pediatricians and mental health workers have become increasingly concerned about the attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Some believe the disorder has reached alarming proportions, characterizing 20% to 30% of American children. Even conservative estimates put the figure relatively high — between 3% and 8% (see Baren, M. 1994, ADHD: Do we finally have it right? *Contemporary Pediatrics* 11:96-124). In adulthood, one of the most widely discussed disorders in the past two or three decades has been the borderline personality disorder, which is characterized by feelings of emptiness, loneliness, impulsive behavior, and moodiness. As many as 10% of clients in outpatient health clinics are diagnosed with this disorder (see the American Psychiatric Association DSM-IV, Washington, D.C., 1994).

2. Gary Paul Nabhan cites public opinion polls, which indicate that a large proportion of children, but few adults, believe the quality of the natural environment is the nation's biggest issue (Nabhan, G. P., and S. Trimble 1994. *The geography of childhood*. Boston: Beacon Press, p. 40).

3. The Russian poet Kornei Chukovsky in his 1925 book *Two to Five* (M. Morton., Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968) described the young child as a natural poet. He included 32 poems composed by children between two and six years (pp. 64–69, 76–81), and I would classify 60% of the poems as dealing with some aspect of nature.

Conflicting Commitments in the Classroom

The Paradox of Truth and Love

Delores D. Liston

Both practical experience and biogenetic research reveal that truth and love are related entities that are interdependent in the process of knowing.

Mary is a student whose work this semester in your class has been embarrassingly inadequate, especially in light of the ability she has demonstrated in previous semesters. But, she has been struggling with some difficult personal problems and has received little support from her family. Today is the last day to submit grades, and you, as the instructor, are once again faced with a difficult decision. The grade as calculated seems punitive and does not adequately assess Mary's overall performance in the class. You are torn between conflicting responsibilities as her teacher: your responsibility to help her develop and achieve versus your responsibility to assess her performance in an unbiased manner.

At first, it seems the most accurate assessment of Mary's performance entails simply inputting her grades into the calculator and recording the output on her transcript. We usually associate this assessment with accountability, which in turn assumes "objective" status as unbiased truth. Such numerical assessment often "fits" with our qualitative assessment of a student's performance. Sometimes however, as in Mary's case, the grade determined in this way does not "fit" with our qualitative assessment.

Here is the dilemma we face as educators. Assessment of student performance seems to depend on our ability to transcend personal bias in order to present an honest appraisal. And yet, this assessment appears equally dependent on the reintroduction of qualitative and intangible factors to complete the picture.

We have all experienced such scenarios and know that one of the most pressing issues facing classroom instructors is this tension between responsibilities of assessment (accountability to truth) and student de-

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velopment (responsibilities of love). At base, I assert, this is a philosophical conflict between definitions of truth and love. At the foundation of our system of education is a commitment to truth and a concurrent, though often discordant, commitment to love. Our moral responsibility as educators is embedded in an apparent paradox between truth and love.

Our society's allegiance to truth is evident throughout our educational rhetoric. This commitment is revealed especially in our theories and practices regarding so-called objective measures for assessment of student performance, maintenance of academic standards, mastery of subject matter, and enforcement of disciplinary codes. In these ways, truth and accountability become parts of our educational endeavors.

As our attention is drawn to objective measures though, the systems of evaluation that we establish to assure the accurate transmission of knowledge from teachers to students become the focus of *schooling,* as opposed to *education* (Greene 1988; Purpel 1989). *Schooling* pulls us away from the original purposes of education: to pass on the knowledge or truths of our culture to the next generation (accountability to truth) and to support the development of our students into adults capable of fully participating in our culture (responsibility of love). These original purposes of education are obscured as the evaluation of teacher and student performance takes on the central role and academic discussion revolves around test scores. As education devolves into schooling, we experience a desire to rehumanize the educational process.

This drive to rehumanize the test-driven institution of schooling is born of love. Our commitment to love is demonstrated in the language we use in focusing on our students. For example, those who advocate a student-centered curriculum reiterate the importance of love, compassion, and caring in our classrooms. Their emphasis on the development of our students as whole human beings reminds us that without compassion, empathy, and other aspects of love, our children's future will be difficult and inhumane. Therefore, although not always apparent, love is also at the base of our educational endeavors.

As educators, we often find that these two important commitments to truth and love are in conflict. Truth is commonly believed to be harsh, because absolute honesty to established codes often leaves students suffering. Conversely, love seems impossible without a compassionate departure from this harshness of truth. Thus, a paradox is established in which strict adherence to truth demands the exclusion of love, and absolute commitment to love demands an abandonment of truth.

However, these commonly held definitions of truth and love are limited. The apparent paradox between truth and love can be overcome when we encounter the greater complexity of these terms. Indeed, love entails more than simple compassion and caring. Often, our most genuine demonstrations of love impose restrictions on the behaviors of those we love. For example, caring for our students does not always mean going easy on them. When we genuinely care for our students, we will not "pass them on" without the skills necessary to participate fully in our culture. Love, then, demands both compassion and accountability or truthfulness.

Truth also is not as one-dimensional as we often suppose. Returning to our example of grading, we recognize that the quantitative assessment of Mary's performance is not the whole truth. In order to gain a more truthful assessment, we must include qualitative factors and intangibles. We must assess Mary's desire to learn and her insights as revealed in class discussions. While we may not be able to establish a quantitative measure of these factors, they must be taken into account in order to provide a true picture of Mary's overall performance in the class. Thus, our moral responsibility to truth entails not only transcending personal bias and upholding academic integrity, but also integrating qualitative factors into the overall assessment. In so doing, I maintain, we discover a fundamental relationship between truth and love.

The primary objective of this paper is to explore the dilemma of truth and love as it relates to our experience as educators and human beings. Our tendency is to view truth and love in opposition. My goal here is to more fully explore these concepts in order to establish through paradox a firmer grounding for a vision of truth and love as interdependent concepts. This exploration revolves around concerns that arise in the macrocosm of our global experience, as well as the microcosm of our decisions in the classroom. Of particular import is the exploration of our commitments to our educational system versus our commitments to the individual needs of our students.

Paradox of truth and love:
The lives of the Baal Shem Tov and the Kotzker

As our own teaching experiences demonstrate, the relationship between truth and love is very complex, seemingly even paradoxical. According to Jewish parable, humanity owes its existence to mercy. "In this world love and compassion took precedence over truth. One must be ready to forego veracity for the sake of mercy." (Heschel 1974, p. 13) Is there a point at which one must choose between them? Is it true that we must abandon truth to our standards if we are to be compassionate or merciful to our students? And what of love? Is love somehow dishonest or untrue?

Silver Stranger

From where I lie to sleep I can see the moon.
It glows and looks in on me.
Casting a silver shadow on my bed.
With the binoculars on my nightstand
I can see its curves and crevices that tell its story.
We all have a story.
My head falls back to the pillow and I lie in amazement
and think someday
I will go there.
Then I will greet the silver stranger that has watched me sleep.

And in my silver dreams I journey,
Surrounded by the twinkling stars.
From here Earth appears to be a blue and green heaven
But for me, this silver heaven is mine.

— Erin Morrissey

During my personal struggle with this dilemma, I have found the work of Abraham Joshua Heschel to be helpful. Through his writings, I have encountered two Jewish spiritual teachers, the Baal Shem Tov and the Kotzker, men whose lives demonstrate absolute commitment, respectively, to love and truth.

Baal Shem Tov, "Master of the Good Name," was a Jewish spiritual leader during the middle of the eighteenth century. He is considered to be the founder of the Hasidic movement, which he grounded in love, joy, and compassion for this world. His teaching grew out of an understanding that the role of humanity is to "lift what is low, to unite what lies apart, [and] to advance what lies behind." (Heschel 1974, p. 19) Heschel describes the Baal Shem as a "lamp," gently lighting the way to elevate humanity to the realm of the Divine. As a contemporary classroom teacher, the Baal Shem would have unhesitatingly chosen a student-centered curriculum and a compassionate grade over the mastery of subject matter and a strictly "objective" grade.

Reb Mendl of Kotzk, the Kotzker, on the other hand, was "lightning." The Kotzker began his teaching nearly a hundred years after Baal Shem Tov. His adherence to truth struck terror through the complacency established by the comfortable light of the lamp. The path of the Kotzker valued reflection over emotion and analysis over imagination. The Kotzker's truth was made available to only an elite few, those who were willing to endure the hardships of self-abasement: "A man must be a rebel in his very existence; he must refuse to be what he is" (Heschel 1974, p. 270). As a teacher, the Kotzker demanded rigor and dedication to a quest for truth that would remain one's unfulfilled destiny. To follow the path of the Kotzker, one must sacrifice everything for the truth: "oneself, one's home, even one's portion in the world to come" (Heschel 1974, p. 45). The terrible lightning of the Kotzker exposed the core of human wretchedness. His choices were always founded in veracity rather than love: In his classroom one would have been graded strictly by "objective" measures.

As an instructor myself, I initially agreed with the Baal Shem Tov. I felt drawn to his understanding of the world and how to teach. I found his message of love and gentle spirit attractive and comfortable. Especially important was that while the Kotzker's message was meant for an elite, the Baal Shem's message was intended for all: a position that is demonstrated by the fact that his door was open to women as well as men.

> In the thought of the Baal Shem, love was the beginning of all experience. Whoever came to him felt how his reverence for God blended with his affection for all men.... He sought people out, traveling from town to town, from village to village, in order to befriend simple folk. In those days of complete segregation between men and women, when a pious Jew was careful not to enter into conversation with a strange woman, the Baal Shem's behavior was bold indeed. He received women who requested his counsel and blessing. (Heschel 1974, p. 27)

The Baal Shem was "the lamp," "the song," and "the wings" of flight. He taught love, joy, and compassion for this world and everyone in it. At first, I tried to bring these lessons to my classroom and my teaching. As Heschel says, "one can trust a lamp, put confidence in it; one can live in peace with a lamp" (Heschel 1974, p. xv). For a while, I was comfortable

in the light of the lamp, and so were many of my students. I could choose to grant compassion to my students rather than to "give them what they deserved" in the grading process.

Gradually, my feelings of comfort dissipated though, and flashes of the Kotzker's lightning began to disturb my tranquillity. I recognized that unrestrained compassion in the classroom left me vulnerable to manipulation by students and denied them the incentive they needed to learn. Thus, as I faced the dilemma between truth (as accountability) and love (as compassion) in the classroom, I began to acknowledge an affinity with the Kotzker.

"The true worship of God, Reb Mendl of Kotzk seemed to say, was not in finding the truth, but rather, in an honest search for it" (Heschel 1974, p. 11). Disciples of the Kotzker were encouraged to go against family, friends, and society and to "stand apart." Classroom teachers who choose to assess student performance strictly through "objective" measures are similarly forced to "stand apart" from any attachments to their students. From this distance, I found I could grade with impunity after compassion had let some students take advantage of me.

Thus, I found myself aligned with the Kotzker. I, too, sought "Truth." Despite the difficulty of finding "Truth," I certainly didn't want to tell beautiful stories that were not truthful. Ironically, neither did the Baal Shem Tov. This suggested a connection between the Kotzker's truth and the Baal Shem Tov's love and pointed to a way to reconcile my classroom grading dilemma. For it is through this connection within paradox that I have found a new position that unites truth and love in my classroom.

Connections between truth and love

The distinction between the Baal Shem and the Kotzker lies more in their priorities rather than in their essence. For the Baal Shem Tov, love was at the top of the list, while for the Kotzker, love meant nothing without truth. In my personal struggle, I kept returning to the "fact" that both appear to be equally correct, as well as mutually exclusive. If you put love first, you cannot put truth first, and vice versa. The nature of first is singular: there can only be one first.

Nevertheless, through the lives of these two men I encounter the junction of truth and love. Junction being both the place of coming together and moving apart. "It is impossible to find truth without being in love, and it is impossible to experience love without being truthful." (Heschel 1974, p. 45) Here, truth and love exhibit their paradoxical relationship. It seems that one must choose the path of either love or truth, yet neither can exist without the other. Truth is aligned with the head and reason, while love is aligned with the heart. Both are needed for life.

In the classroom, the connection between truth and love became most obvious as I attempted to apply "objective" measures in assessment of student performance. At first, the unquestionable nature of "objective" measures allowed me to pretend that my personal bias had been removed from the process. Occasionally, however, as in the case of Mary, the "objective" measures did not seem to accurately reflect a student's overall performance in the class. In order to complete this picture, I needed to reintroduce qualitative assessments, compassionately accounting for her motivation to learn and her involvement in the class. Thus, a connection emerged between truth and love. The simplistic definition of truth as objective proved insufficient, indicating the need for a more complex understanding of truth. This manifold truth incorporated aspects that had originally been allocated exclusively to love. In this way, the relationship of truth and love was revealed within the paradox.

Coming to understand the paradox of truth and love

A key to understanding this paradoxical relationship between love and truth is found with Nishida Kitaro, a 20th century Japanese philosopher whose work is based on notions of paradox and "nothingness." Nishida's philosophy represents a meeting of Eastern and Western thought. Many Western philosophers have bemoaned the inadequacy of language in expressing the paradox of "reality," but the idea encompassed in Nishida's view of paradox seeks to exploit the possibilities inherent in this apparent inadequacy (Carter 1989, p. 60). From the Eastern perspective, paradox is understood through the concept that whatever "is" exists because it also "is not."

This paradoxical unity of contradiction can be seen in our language regarding a "day." "Daytime" and "nighttime" exist as opposites because they are also joined as parts of the same 24-hour cycle. Without this underlying unity of "day," they could not contradict each other.

This paradoxical unity of contradiction is also apparent in classroom situations. Though often understood to be simply opposites, through the unity of

contradiction we are able to understand the relationship of quantitative and qualitative methods in the process of assessment. That is, without the underlying unity of assessment in general, quantitative and qualitative methods could not contradict each other.

Nishida introduces the term *basho* to explain this phenomenon. *Basho* is a field or universal that both encompasses and is within a paradox (Carter 1989, p. 31). It is the "enveloping matrix" in which the opposites are joined together. Thus, the opposites daytime and nighttime are encompassed and joined within the *basho* "day." Similarly, the opposites truth and love must be joined in a *basho*.

> All identity, i.e., all consciousnesses and objects of consciousness in the natural world are self-contradictory unities. But ... two things cannot be self contradictory unless they are related by an enveloping matrix [a *basho*] which, at the same time, unites them. (Carter 1989, p. 58)

The ultimate *basho* is "the *Basho* of Absolute Nothingness." This field encompasses all that "is and is not." This is the place of pure awareness, or William James's "pure experience," undifferentiated by reason. Within this ultimate *basho* is contained all possibility, all that can be imagined. However, once reason enters the *basho* of pure awareness, a distinction is made between the knower, the known, and the process of knowing. This revelation of distinction creates the worlds we know by making particular possibilities real, while most remain unrealized. Thus, as Nietzsche said, "What we do in dreams we also do when we are awake: we invent and fabricate the person [or reality] with whom we associate — and immediately forget we have done so" (Nietzsche 1886/1990, p. 101). Supporting data from neuroscience is useful here to ground this perspective and avoid mysticism:

> Ample evidence from various sources affirms that the world of our experience is largely a construct of our nervous system. This cognized world, and all the "things" in "it" are manufactured in the mind. (Laughlin, McManus, and d'Aquili 1990, p. 6)

The research of Laughlin, McManus, and d'Aquili (1990) into the function of the mind/brain gives a biogenetic structuralist account of human consciousness similar to that described by Nietzsche, but explained through the technicalities of homeomorphogenesis. This concept claims that "experience is symbolic because the system that generates the experience processes only symbolic material" (p. 245). This gives us a biogenetic account of the process by which we "create an identity and come to experience ourselves as distinct from the unified field of which we are an inseparable part" (p. 7). Thus, this concept returns us to Nishida Kitaro's notion of self-contradictory identity. The unified field or *basho* of which we are all a part unites us with everything even as our mind-brains create our "knowledge" that we are separate individuals. This is the point where the passionate search for truth both begins and ends. We *will* into creation out of the void a truth for ourselves through applying reason. This is the point of consciousness.

So what is the role of love at this level? Laughlin, McManus, and d'Aquili (1990) give a physiological explanation of the will as "the degree to which consciousness is auto-reverberative at the moment" (p. 95). Although lacking in poetic sentiments, this conception of the will presents an interesting explanation of the "cognitive imperative," our primal urge to know. A latent desire to know arises within "pure awareness" and inspires the intellectual activity of reason.

At this most subtle layer of consciousness lies reason. The role of reason is to distinguish "this" from "that." Sparked by passion for truth, reason arises out of consciousness like a phoenix from the ashes, to distinguish the knower from the known and recognize the process of knowing. This desire for and love of knowledge expresses the impulse to rejoin what has been separated by reason. But reason is unable to accomplish this task, because it is an agent of separation, not an agent of unity.

Living and teaching within the paradox of truth and love

Thus, love and truth experience separation in much the same way as we distinguish ourselves from the "unified field of which we are an inseparable part" (Laughlin, McManus, and d'Aquili 1990, p. 7). Love and truth are not an opposing pair as was first supposed. But instead, they are related entities that are interdependent in the process of knowing. Relying on this interdependence provides a way out of the grading dilemma in the classroom. Focusing on this relationship allows the teacher to dispense truthful justice in a context of compassion and love. The whole student is relevant to the grading process. They are held accountable for their lack of initiative and misconduct without being punished for their lack of ability or inexperience. In a traditional "objective" assessment of student achievement, these factors are not taken into account.

For example, in one of my recent classes I met a young woman who was returning to college after a few years of working two jobs. She is a single mother of two who had little experience with college classrooms and term papers. Consequently, her writing on the first paper fell far below the class average. Adhering to the Kotzker's commitment to truth would have meant failing this student. However, a passing grade on this paper would have meant abandoning truth altogether. Viewing truth and love in their paradoxical relationship, I was able to find another, more truthful and more loving alternative. I returned the paper to the student without a grade, and met with her individually to discuss her options. Talking with her assured me that her difficulty was in communicating her ideas on paper. We decided that she would rewrite the paper until it met college-level standards. By the end of the semester, her writing skills had improved greatly and were in line with the class average. She also became less reserved in class discussions. The paradoxical view allowed me to adhere to truth and love in my commitments to both the student's development and the perpetuation of academic standards of achievement and assessment.

While commitment to truth and love in their complex, paradoxical relationship benefited this student's grade point average, the misbehavior and lack of self-motivation of other students can alternately reveal our moral obligation within truth and love to hold our students responsible for their actions. For example, in another class, I met a young man who refused to attend class and turn in assignments. I listened to his arguments against class attendance and understood that there were activities which, at least for the moment, were more important to him than class discussions, readings, and assignments. I reminded him of the consequences of his actions and encouraged him to find ways to make college coursework more interesting. In the end, his apathetic attitude toward education left no room for a generous assessment of his performance in the class. Again, the more complex, paradoxical understanding of love and truth allowed me to see that true compassion and concern for the student required that he learn the consequences of his actions now, rather than in the future.

Presenting a compassionate stance in the classroom through love, as the Baal Shem Tov encouraged in our lives, is fraught with difficult choices. On the other hand, a strict adherence to accountability and truth, as the Kotzker recommended, can be heartless and destructive to students as well as to ourselves. If we are to help our students develop and achieve socially, spiritually, and physically, as well as academically, we must attempt to live within the paradox of truth and love, for it is only from within this paradox that we can take into account the whole being of our students. In this struggle, we must recognize that any stance we take will be temporary and must constantly be readjusted to meet the changing contexts of ourselves and our students. As educators committed to the goals of holistic education, we must rise to the challenge of sustaining more complex and paradoxical understandings of truth and love. I believe this perspective is necessary if we are to live up to the highest potentials of humanity. In the end, we must realize that we cannot find truth without attending to the principles of love, nor can we sustain love without a commitment to truth.

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Theodore Sizer's Compromise

A Phenomenological Critique

Tony Schwab

The program of the Coalition of Essential Schools is built on a view of education that threatens to ignore the real needs of students and the promise of intensely creative teachers.

"Do not think as a thinker ...think as a living, real being."

—Feuerbach

As we debate what should become of our schools in the coming years, it is crucial that each teacher and student be seen as a whole person, rather than simply an ambiguous part of some larger system. The recognition of school people as whole persons should define the school problem clearly, eliminating much of the tumult of competing theories fielded by school-reform enthusiasts. The trouble with these theoretical frameworks is that they are almost always based on *assumptions and preconceptions* about how people learn, academic success, or the needs of society and do not take into account the real experience of going to school, of being in class.

Debates often lose sight of the fact that adults and young people learning together are in a complex human situation, one that takes place in and outside of institutional settings. The challenge is to describe that particular encounter of society and the child in school ... for real. Strangely, this idea of describing the actual experience of the classroom seems to frighten some reformers because it may seem more subjective and difficult to manage intellectually than policies, theories, and formal agendas. Yet, such rigorous description is the foundation for positive change.

In light of these considerations, I have chosen to explore the classroom from a phenomenological point of view. Phenomenology attends to concrete human existence; the phenomenologist seeks to know things as they are lived by human beings rather than through an "objective" set of categories determined beforehand (Husserl 1970). Without making hypotheses and before setting out theories, the phenomenological educational researcher wants to understand the phenomenon of being in class as it is for the whole person.

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Investigating individuals in a class, we find that each participant has his/her own sense of the past, present, and future and his/her personal plans, including expectations and assumptions about school. To be sure, these personal silhouettes are shaped and forged in a kind of arrangement with the society as a whole, its pressures and its demands. But to *assume* what these social pressures are or to impose them before having investigated the people themselves is something a phenomenologist wants to avoid above all.

My research is based on in-depth interviews with one student or teacher at a time, after he/she comes from class. My aim is to know and to empathize with every reaction and feeling the person had within the class time. The overall goal is to understand the classroom from the vantage point of the person in the experience — the whole person. After all, it is in this complex interaction that schooling is actually taking place. Using methods of phenomenological analysis, I arrive at an Individual Structure of the experience for each person (see Giorgi 1985 and Wertz 1983). In the next phase of research, I compare, reflect upon, and integrate the Individual Structures of a variety of students and teachers from different classrooms. The goal is to establish two General Structures — one for being a student and one for being a teacher — that include the essential constituents of being in a school classroom.

I see phenomenological research into classroom life as a way to protect this life from reformers whose theories may be based on received assumptions or personal agendas or biases. Even theories that are based on the most humane and liberal assumptions can tend to steer the education system toward more control by political and business forces if they do not account for the personal stake each of us has in the classroom.

In the light of my research into the phenomenology of classroom learning and teaching, I shall analyze the popular reform theory of Theodore Sizer as it was introduced in his book, *Horace's Compromise: The Dilemma of the American High School* (1992). Having asked students and teachers about *their* world of the classroom, I shall use this knowledge to question Sizer's reform of school and class, to ask if it is based on enough knowledge of what school actually is to the people who are there? This critique draws, of course, on my experience as a teacher in an alternative high school in the South Bronx during the past six years.

The theory introduced in *Horace's Compromise* has become one of the most powerful agents of change in American education. Sizer has rallied educators around the idea of a new kind of American high school and has caught the attention of politicians, business people, and philanthropists who are looking for a more efficient educational system. The school where I teach has adopted Sizer's plan of recreating the school curriculum to emphasize, "clear, resourceful, useful thinking" (p. 59), and so I have seen first hand how Sizer's vision can guide the school staff rather effectively as it shifts away from information dissemination and focuses its attention on "general intellectual powers" (p. 115).

The book and its mission

In the late 1970s, Sizer traveled around the country as part of a quartet of observer/analysts hired by two national education associations to get to know the way high schools work. Although he sympathized with the decency and good intentions of school people, he did not like what he saw. Sizer was alarmed by the "tacit agreement" in American society approving of schools that make mediocre demands (p. 78). Sizer shared his concerns in *Horace's Compromise*; the book includes a fine diagnosis of the handicaps to intellectual work in most high schools: boring daily schedules, meager intellectual requirements, constant interruptions. He argues that we are mired in the late 19th century, when public schools were factorylike places, characterized by crowded classes and rote memorization, that rewarded students for accumulated seat time and credit hours (p. 84). The fact is that Sizer's ideal school would aim to turn out useful citizens. He would put an end to its "inefficiency" (p. 151) — refit it with behavioral incentives in order to produce thinkers and decent people (p. 25) — but the school would still be a kind of processing plant.

In the mid-1980s, Dr. Sizer started to bring to life new schools to serve as models for a more successful secondary education. Now he heads the Coalition of Essential Schools, widely viewed as the center of creative national school reform. Sizer urges teachers and principals to become intellectual leaders of their schools and to refashion curriculums to teach *less* subject matter in *more* depth (p. 109). To be prepared for this new education, students in a Sizer-inspired high school would only enter ninth grade when they have demonstrated basic knowledge in three focus areas: language, elementary math, and basic civics.

Those who are not ready could receive remediation to meet these standards. Now, in many Coalition schools, the mark of completing the high school course is a series of oral public presentations in which the student exhibits how well he or she has learned to think through essential problems within a number of areas including Expression, Math/Science, Literature, the Arts, Philosophy, and History (p. 132). The exhibiting student is supported, as well as questioned, by caring members of the academic world: parents, teachers, other students.

To create new places where intellectual skills can be sharpened, the Nine Common Principles of the Coalition (p. 225) call for secondary schools to shrink their agendas to give focus and simplicity. In brief:

- The staff must deemphasize isolated departments and teach "habits of mind" (p. 226), the capacity to stay intellectually alert and curious, to reason, judge, and analyze within the focus areas.
- Student-to-teacher ratios in all classes must be lowered to 20:1 and classes must be at least an hour long to allow for in-depth investigation (p. 226). Every high school student will be respected as a *thinking* individual (p. 226). In class, no more indiscriminate pouring out of information; the student is an intellectual "worker," the teacher a "coach" (p. 226). Sizer gives examples of courses from both academic and vocational tracks that develop thinking skills.
- Such services as psychological counseling must be deemphasized; the same goes for extracurricular activities. Sizer wants increasingly limited public funds to go toward intellectual work. Although he knows that without social services teachers themselves will have to become better counselors, he assumes that this extra burden will be worked out by each school.

Sizer does not dwell on the sociopolitical pressures that make this change imperative, but it is important to identify his reading of the current scene. (After all, each participant in school, including the theorist, has some vision of the future.) Sizer writes at one point:

> There are things in this world that are so important that we must learn them, whether we like them or not. The culture doesn't forgive us if we say we don't 'like' to become literate; it merely shuts the door in our face. (p. 234)

Sizer's young people will use their new skills of analysis and judgment to survive in an economic and political environment that offers a narrow avenue to success. In a brochure for prospective supporters, his Coalition describes the situation bluntly:

> Our society is speeding forward politically and technologically toward a future which will demand greater understanding and knowledge from each citizen. For those who lack sound habits of mind and heart, the dividing line between the haves and have-nots is likely to become increasingly unforgiving and result in a more pronounced two-class society for the country as a whole. Those who expect to achieve even a modest standard of living will need the ability to learn and keep pace with change. (Campbell 1993, p. 5)

This is a harsh vision and makes the Coalition determined to rejuvenate our system of education.

Horace's Compromise in the light of phenomenological educational research

Sizer's school experience is as a school teacher, private school principal, and professor, but he gathered new data through observations and interviews with school people. In a bold creative act for an objective theorist, he then created "nonfiction/fiction" characters for his book to illustrate the dearth of rational thinkers and the demoralization of school people. The idea is that these deadened people, notably the teacher Horace, could be brought back to life in new schools. The very choice of these characters tells one much about Sizer's attitude and objectives. I was concerned about this method and its implications. As a phenomenologist and as a teacher, I assume that school people are whole people, full of emotion, reasons, hopes, and plans. Since the major players in Sizer's theory are composites without individual identities, his theory might be hampered by a lack of knowledge of the way real people know school, both when it goes right and when it fails.

First, we meet Will and Janet, representing rather mindless, suburban students. Sizer gives Janet the upscale look of having "walked out of *Seventeen*"; preppy Will is "less assured ... awkward." They are part of a sampler of five adolescents representing three economic classes in an obviously descending order: well-to-do suburb, "respected" city, and "inner city." As the author gets down in the social scale there is an assumption that life gets harder as it gets less trendy. Pamela, from a "well-respected urban high school," is more burdened by life concerns than the fluffy suburbanites. She is more assertive than Will and Janet (she "hates school"), although, like Janet, she still has a "look that could have made the pages of *Vogue*." On the other hand, the "inner city"

Crawford's Delight

Jerry, sane and healthy,
Dwells on Earth in soft content.
With life in order and a blossoming career,
He avidly maintains a social life.
But the fact remains that something's amiss
In his fabled utopic dream
And in his lonesome universe he silently admits
That things are not what they seem.

In the dark of the night
After he wines and dines
He returns home dismally, dropping off his guests,
But in his automobile, though emptiness is apparent,
The silence is alive with the conversation
Of three recurring gentlemen.
Their messages tell of life's erratic web
And they give Jerry insight
Into the sorrows of Jones and Smith,
And the joys of Crawford's delight.

Jones sits in the back.
His icy world is frozen in unblemished whiteness,
His message is cold, dark, and still.
He retorts belligerently of his boredom
and excitement that lies ahead.
He will leave to embark on adventure,
He promises that he will.

Smith sits opposite,
His world a charred, barren landscape of hot desert,
His legacy worn ... almost petrified and old.
He sings wistfully of times gone,
Of broken hearts and forgotten dreams,
Of empty bottles and possessions long since sold.

Finally Crawford sits proudly in the center,
And as the others revolve morbidly around,
He shines brilliantly over all,
Laughing maniacally like a clown.
His message illuminates the present,
Though it's gibberish to translate.
It sparks magic and untold beauties,
And if received warmly it will soothe.

Jerry's world is Earth,
His message he has yet to find
But standing not too close or far away,
While ignoring the calling of Jones and Smith
He now seeks Crawford's delight
and stands tall in his shine.

— Nat Worden

students, Louella and Margery, are "waifs ... surely petty thieves" who "like the teachers and the warmth of their school."

It is surprising that after this stereotyping, Sizer declares his "fresh respect for the variety among young folk" (p. 33). In fact, he does not know how to show fully this respect or variety and is aware that his stereotypes can come across as "hostile" (p. xi). Repeatedly, he supports student autonomy (p. 140), individuality (p. 66), and free choice (p. 140), but he always adds that to understand his theory, the reader must accept "generalizations" (p. 33). Which will it be? Should we know students as whole persons or as types? To balance things out, Sizer hopes good teachers will "take note of these uneasy generalities, and ... deal with each student as an individual" (p. 39). But individualism is at the heart of teaching and it is a hard thing to describe and understand. This is the task of the teacher that takes the most creativity and empathy — it should be part of the theory. Yet for Sizer, on the one hand students are "like all humankind ... complicated," while on the other, he must reject this complexity and talk about students in shorthand because he is mostly concerned with their minds.

An extended passage of stereotyping of students highlights this frustrating way of understanding people. During a school visit (pp. 139–140), Sizer is thinking about how "sullen" students can be inspired. But watch how he perceives the situation. In the school parking lot he feels like the uptight observer being observed in turn. The distance he feels from the students is palpable — he is in a "drab coat-tie-slacks uniform" as "ridiculously out of place" as his little car, while the adolescents are rough and ready physical beings: "the masters and mistresses ... of dozens of vehicles ... row on row of loyal steel beasts ... grotesquely numerous ... tethered by this pedagogical water hole ... poised, snouts down, to roar purposefully off to God knows where." It is clear that he has a problem liking these kids, yet he frames the situation as nothing more than "a neutral human encounter." He says authoritatively that the students' "attitude ... was freighted with an absence of interest.... I might have been a bird in the vast aviary of a boring zoo...." His bold conclusion: "The human confrontation was nearly nonexistent" (p. 139).

How did he know there was no "human confrontation?" Phenomenologically speaking, that is exactly what there was. This presumably sympathetic observer was so disgusted by the experience that he contrasted animal images (the snout-nosed cars, the aviary) with his ideal, The School. Then, without asking the students, he characterized school through their eyes; it was a watering hole, a zoo. Did he inquire about *their* feelings?

When Sizer asks how these free teenage human beings, who have made a "choice" to be sullen (p. 140), can be inspired by teachers, he is describing a situation that begs for existential-phenomenological analysis. To reform schools, we need knowledge of the structure of the teacher-learner experience and that will have to include analyses of the teacher's perception of teenagers as, for instance, creatures having no feelings. After all, the school world is created in large measure by the attitudes of the teachers and the students. From what part of Sizer's experience do his conceptions arise? Would not school reform be better served by a method recognizing school as being shaped by the plans, histories, and life concerns of everyone there? For example, imagine if we did a phenomenological analysis of the classroom experience of the students and teachers in that school and found that Sizer was right — that both groups had neutral feelings about each other. What a sad psychological lesson that would be!

Is Horace the reformer?

In *Horace's Compromise*, Sizer looks at school through the teacher Horace's eyes in order to portray it as an alienating, even dehumanizing, environment. But Horace is so deadened that he spreads his gloom throughout the book. His lack of interest in real students actually has an effect on the theories being promoted.

So, we ask, how much of Horace is really Dr. Sizer? Hopeful and committed when young, Horace is now so cynical that he is convinced school is not real (p. viii). Horace "doesn't like" most of his students; he finds them bland and rather dull. They are rambunctious, they squirm and have the wriggles, they ignore him and they don't think. What are his interpersonal relations with the students? Not much; he "gets their attention," "ignores their excuses," "asks abruptly," "squelches," and "cuts them off." Only the "severity in his voice" causes quiet. He "presses ahead patiently, almost dumbly at times ... so familiar with their mistakes" that class is "a slow trudge, a slow business" (quotes from pp. 9–21).

Dr. Sizer seems comfortable describing most schools in this way. The result is that since Horace has been deadened by his creator, we will never find out — never even ask! — why he gave up; we cannot know him as a human being. Also, we can never know what it is like for the students to be trapped in this dysfunctional relationship with their teacher. Perhaps they could tell us the way to a more vital classroom. Once we have answers to these questions we might decide to revive Horace and his students by giving them a smaller school, perhaps indeed a Coalition school. But, given the glaring gaps in our knowledge, should we embrace a new plan for schools in which the end goal is better Minds — logic, judgment, and civic virtue in the name of the national good? We remember that in Coalition philosophy "the Mind" is connected to utilitarian goals like marketplace success. Is that what we want? Yes, we need smaller schools, but what will these schools teach, what will they ask students to care about?

Besides Horace's work, Sizer documents successful classes taught by real teachers, and he is a good judge of what effective teaching looks like. Each of the professionals is charming and patient, and a thorough questioner, and each is happy to model his/her intelligence to inspire students. Yet something is missing from these accounts. The portraits of three "good" teachers are just as lacking in existential depth as the account of Horace. There are no stories behind the success, no personal background, no battles with the system or with themselves. Without the lived experience of good teachers and students, reformers can hardly accomplish real change.

Coalition principles and the whole person

We are so enwrapped in technology these days that "technical-type reasoning" (May 1983) threatens to take over our thinking. We are used to getting things fixed, getting them started again, keeping things running. We turn our backs on people's lived experience and limit ourselves to concept-talk and techniques of external control. School systems lend themselves to this kind of view. They are perceived not as the temporary daily homes of people but as faceless systems servicing a large society that has no individuals in it. So we hire technocrats to "eye" it, analyze it, and change it. They survey the people inside, take the pulse of the people outside, and then use the two sets of results to solve the problem.

Sizer's emphasis on rational habits overlooks the life of the whole person. What does a quick look at some of the Nine Principles in the light of phenomenological investigations into school life reveal? When the Coalition says Essential Schools should focus on the mind and "should not attempt to provide an unrealistically wide range of academic, vocational, extracurricular, and social services for adolescents" (p. 225), what services should be eliminated? If a school social worker can help students define

I Love You

I love you more, and more each day.
'Til the trees under the wind's power sway.
'Til the rocks, they crumble.
"Til the dancers stumble.
I love you more, and more each day.
—Sean Thibodeau

what "hope for the future" means, as I have seen them do, then this service should be offered. If, as schools change their schedules, extracurricular activities are still a chance for fun and relaxed learning as a team — a play, a sport, a gardening project — then they should continue. At my school, advisee groups have a ratio of 16:1 and we think of them as the "glue" that holds the school together, life-affirming units in which the teacher-counselor and teens emote, question, study, and celebrate together.

Again, the Coalition says covering less curriculum in a more serious way produces habits of mind, but Sizer's point may be more applicable when the teacher is not good at his/her job. Perhaps with poor teaching, less material is better, but given good teaching, does breadth and amount of material hurt? For a good teacher, it is artistry, mastery, vision, and command of the teaching situation that are important.

In my view, "using their minds well" (p. 226) even when universally applied, is still a specialized goal. I prefer "development of the whole person." Phenomenological research shows that when the class is viewed as a meeting of the student and teacher as whole persons, subject matter is not just a path to better thinking but is an existential *way into life* that the teacher shares with the class. Each topic reflects the teacher's life-project and personal philosophy. Because class is the meeting of subject, teacher, and student in the context of Being, it may not be necessary for teachers to hug the shore of rational habits; there can be room for vast variation in each classroom.

Today, we want more personal attention from one another and we know that lower teacher-student ratios will give teachers the chance to work closely with students. But once we have the space and time for personalization, someone has to work with each teacher to make sure that he/she knows how to be "close" with a student (or with anyone). It is an exciting creative act when a teacher opens up to explore "Why am I teaching this subject? What do I cherish in students? What are my defenses against them?" (This is a good task for teacher-guides or coaches.)

Phenomenological research certainly reinforces the idea of diploma by exhibition. As the student moves from unfamiliarity toward mastery, the basic active/passive dichotomy of class changes, and the student takes on a more active role. This can be seen when the teacher encourages power to shift in class, or when the student initiates this change; for example, when students redesign the classroom to set up their own demonstrations or when the student teaches the class.

Almost all of us want students to think, to ask questions and then to exhibit mastery. But a class needs to be more an intersubjective experience than a factory with the student a "worker" and the teacher a "coach" for intellectual work. Martin Heidegger (1962), a major phenomenological thinker of this century, calls the relationship one of "solicitude" in which the teacher's best attitude is concern and care — not a pushing, but a jumping ahead of the students to show them a new way. As shown by some of his examples of good work in schools, Sizer knows this perfectly well. Perhaps his "coach-worker" terminology is another unfortunate result of his overarching objective: to get schools to turn out effective citizens. But interpersonal work is an obligation. Teacher training must be viewed in this light.

Conclusion

We need to help children trace their connections back to human experience. We must question the extent to which any theory sees people as inevitably part of a system.

I am in partial agreement with the politicians and business people who support Sizer's new smaller schools because I know that placing one teacher devoted to habits of mind with a manageable number of students can strengthen students' ability to question and to think. But, since it is of the nature of Sizer's political and business people not to think twice about the human experience in these new classrooms, educators should turn to their work and start questioning what happens between them and their kids.

In the 1993 report by the Coalition of Essential Schools, executive director Edwin Campbell predicts the further breakup of American society into haves and have-nots based on reasoning skills. By promoting this view, the Coalition is accepting a vision of culture that schools should instead be working hard

to prevent from coming to pass! The Coalition places severe external pressures on students to "think" or risk poverty and a kind of banishment. The pressure to go to school and to become thoughtful because otherwise the new information economy will eat you alive cannot lead to a healthy atmosphere in school. Yet this very threat may be what has convinced Sizer — and his supporting politicians and business people — that it is not important to worry about the experience of people in school. Personal experience is not a significant factor if the purpose of reform is to train as many young minds as possible, quickly, and to let the untrained drop away. This pressure is exactly what an educational phenomenologist wants to avoid by seeking and protecting the essential constituents of humanness. The phenomenological discipline is one bulwark against political and economic injustice. It refuses to put political drawing-board plans ahead of what human beings are experiencing.

Teaching as I do, in the New York City school system, which is well known for its susceptibility to political change, I will hold on to phenomenology as a way to know the people in the system, these people I am with every day.

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Book Reviews

School as a Journey

by Torin M. Finser

Published by the Anthroposophic Press (Hudson, New York), 1994; 256 pp., Paper. $14.95.

Reviewed by P. Bruce Uhrmacher

School as a Journey, written by Torin M. Finser, pictures on its cover a child's colorful drawing of an old vessel upon the sea. The purple ship with six wooden oars and four sails features eight people seemingly in action. A scout up above, on a small deck at the top of the ladder, peers through a telescope. What is he watching? Where is this boat going? Do they know what they are looking for? Will they find it?

Finser gives us a clue early in the text while describing how he taught his first grade children writing and reading. Each letter he teaches has a story with it. In teaching the letter "K" for example, he chose Grimm's tale, "The Water of Life" because, Finser states "of the relational aspects of the three brothers and the quest for higher knowledge and renewal" (p. 22). Clearly, water has a special significance in the story and in Finser's thinking. On Monday he told the story, and students drew pictures of the king and his castle. On Tuesday, students thought of words that started with the *K* sound and then drew another picture of the king after he had taken the water and became whole again: "He stood upright and looked much like a *K*." On Wednesday, they practiced writing *K*s, looked for more words that started with it, and learned verses that combined *V* and *K*. Then they took the story one step further:

> Because of the quest nature of the story, I found a special wooden vessel and filled it with water. I then constructed an imaginative obstacle course: a few chairs became a mountain range, a plank became a narrow ravine, a few desks helped us make a tunnel. Then the children were invited, one by one, over several days, to take that journey with the water of life held carefully in their hands.... I wish my readers could have seen the expressions on their faces as they took that journey. It was with the utmost reverence and care that they traveled over mountain and dale, always holding the cup carefully in their hands. What joy when the journey was completed! They never tired of seeing their classmates strive for and finally reach the goal, bearing the water that represented purification through life-learning.... Pedagogically, this exercise served as a metaphor for the journey they were embarking upon, which would take us eight years to complete. (pp. 22–23)

As with most of Waldorf education, there are always layers of meaning. At the most mundane level, children learn to write their *K*s and *V*s. At its most cosmic, children partake in the enchanted spiritual journey of life.

At these two levels, as well as all those in between, Finser guides the reader through his journey in teaching a class of children from first through eighth grades, as is traditional in Waldorf education. As guide, Finser practices what he preaches. That is, Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925), the founder of Waldorf education, suggested that teachers should teach concepts flexibly so that students may grow with them. In Finser's terms, "Abstract ideas and concepts are quickly rendered irrelevant from the perspective of the soul, but imaginative pictures have a wonderful way of growing over time" (p. 41). Such seems to be Finser's charge: to meet the needs of a variety of readers by providing educational images that may be understood practically, metaphorically, spiritually, and anthroposophically.

At a practical level, Finser tells stories about his own life and teaching that will remind educators about ideas and practices often forgotten or dismissed in our age of standards and assessments. For example, he reminds us that teaching may be perceived as a "calling" rather than a mere career decision. He informs us about how he made connections with parents and students during the summer through home visits and how such home visits built trust so that he could proceed with children educationally rather than politically. Additionally, he explains how he writes verses (a form of evaluation) for his students as a way to capture who they are and as a way to suggest possibilities for future growth. At one point, in reflecting on his own inadequacies as a teacher he wishes he could — What? Have more knowledge about the subject matter? Have more money for better resources such as computers? Develop better management skills? — no, he wishes he could have more expertise as a "poet, illustrator, storyteller, and dramatist" (p. 27). These examples represent only a few of the many ideas Waldorf and non-Waldorf educators may choose to reflect upon in thinking about what matters in education.

While *School as a Journey* may be appreciated solely at the practical level for its Romantic yet very practical implications for the classroom, it also has the potential to impact its readers and the way one thinks about educational reform at a metaphorical level. That is,

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basic assumptions about the teacher, the learner, the school, and the role of the school in society are embedded in the way we talk. Examine current and past reform movements and one will find a technical mentality inscribed in the root metaphors of their manifestos. Children have been described as blank slates, as vessels to be filled, and most often as workers. Teaching is something that should be done efficiently and linearly. Learning is acquiring knowledge step by step. Thus, when Finser writes about making a decision whether to commit to staying with a group of children for eight years by stargazing he seems to be out of kilter. Comparing children to stars? Yet he comes back to this metaphor later:

> As I prepared for sleep each night, I often spent some time thinking about the children in my class. When focusing on Margaret in second grade, I wondered, "How can I help her find the strength she will need for life?" My image of Margaret was often that of a bright star, sparkling with radiance, only recently descended to the earth. In asking the question "Who is this child?" I was filled with reverence. With a slight body and great spirit, she must have accomplished much on her star journey before entering my classroom. (p. 38)

Finser's worldview directs him to see children as spiritual gifts from heaven, and as such he feels reverence and awe. One does not need to agree with Finser's worldview, however, to see how his language creates a very different conceptual framework for thinking about our educational system. Finser recognizes this fact and in a footnote cites Thomas Moore (*Care of the Soul*) who states "that Renaissance doctors said that 'the essence of each person originates as a star in the heavens. How different this is from the modern view that a person is [only] what he makes himself to be'" (p. 239).

While some readers may choose to read this book in terms of the practical activities they provide, and others may wish to rethink the metaphors they live by, still others may wish to approach the text from a spiritual point of view. For instance, Finser began his mornings with an activity called "morning circle" in which students recited verses, said their math tables while walking and clapping, and jumped and stepped over rods. At a practical level, this morning time prepares students for the day, energizing them or slowing them down (depending upon what was needed), and gives teachers an opportunity to observe students working together. At a metaphoric level, morning circle represents an equal sharing among students. Thus, in graphic form it reminds educators of such abstractions as cooperative or democratic learning. One may also appreciate the activity, however, spiritually. Finser states,

> In morning circle, we worked on things that went beyond traditional classroom "learning" yet in many ways seemed more important in the big picture. For how a child finds a connection to the earth is related to his or her finding a connection to the physical body and to the "self" who inhabits it and who is transforming that particular body to suit its own needs. (p. 32)

At this level of perception, the morning circle is about more than skill building. Now the recited verses have spiritual overtones rather than language-building ones. Finser's reverence and awe for the children set the classroom tone such that the children have the opportunity to feel reverence and amazement for all that they encounter. This is a key point. One does not need to teach spiritually in a heavy-handed or a dogmatic manner. Setting the right classroom environment so that spirituality comes through (rooms are often decorated with angels and candles are lit when some stories are told) and teaching by example help provide a spiritual curriculum.

One does not need to be an Anthroposophist to appreciate the spiritual dimension of Waldorf education. But for those who are, another level of interpretation may be ascertained from the book. Thus, *School as a Journey* may be appreciated in a particular spiritual framework — Anthroposophy. To delve into the Anthroposophical interpretations, however, one must dig deep and study the footnotes. Thus, the structure of the book loosely correlates with the idea that there are deep or even hidden levels of meaning. Anthroposophists will appreciate the fact that one must work a little harder at uncovering the Anthroposophical information, and for those who take this journey, there is adventure in following the winding paths.

To return to the example above, the one page description of morning circle comes with three footnotes, which leads the reader to learn about Steiner's ideas of human development, about etheric and astral bodies, and about former existences. In turn, these footnotes lead the reader to two footnotes in chapter one, which, in turn, lead the reader to a footnote in chapter six that is more than a page long. For those inclined to follow this journey, the paths are there. (What is that scout, on the front cover of the book, looking at through his telescope? Is that a ninth person floating in the air in front of the boat or is it an angel?) For those who prefer to avoid such interpretations, readers do not have to flip over various sections. There are, in the end, 22 pages of endnotes.

One criticism I have of Finser's ideas is his belief in Steiner's recapitulation theory (p. 94). Hegel's theory that human development recapitulates the progress of societies was prevalent in Steiner's day, and although Steiner altered Hegel's ideas, he was still impacted by them. The problems with stereotyping ancient or cur-

rent cultures by modes of consciousness are numerous. I comment on this point in particular because current Waldorf educators ought to reconsider Steiner's thinking in this area.

Finser's addition to the Anthroposophic Press's literature on Waldorf education is a valuable one. In the preface to the book, Finser states, "My hope is that, by participating in a personal account such as this one, readers — whether parent or prospective parent, teacher, or administrator — will be encouraged to reexamine existing practices of teaching, reflect on their personal philosophies of education, and explore alternatives for educating children" (Preface). He has clearly achieved his mark.

Spitwad Sutras: Classroom Teaching as Sublime Vocation

by Robert Inchausti

Published by Bergin & Garvey (Westport, CT) 1993; 178 pp. Paperback, $15.95

Reviewed by Robert Sargent Fay

Robert Inchausti wrote *Spitwad Sutras* as a chronicle. The book recounts the author's introduction to classroom teaching and his initiation into "the pedagogy of the sublime."

Inchausti arrives for an interview at St. Vincent's Boys Preparatory Academy. Almost immediately he is aware of the great distance between his recent graduate school experience and the reality of ninth-grade boys in a deteriorating lower-middle-class neighborhood. His knowledge and training seem a world apart and largely unrelated to the backgrounds and interests of his prospective students. In addition, the physical environment and atmosphere of the school are stark and cold. They impress him as incompatible with the kind of instruction he knows and wishes to perpetuate within his own classroom. Nevertheless, when offered a teaching position, he accepts.

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Inchausti fares well during his first two weeks in the classroom. Then the troubles begin. The boys in his ninth-grade English classes start to test his authority and disrupt his lessons. Often they are disrespectful to the teacher and to one another. Rude remarks and bad behavior become commonplace. His personal idealism produces a range of responses from apathy to sudden departures from the classroom. A month passes. Inchausti experiments with new approaches and materials. The results are the same. The situation appears hopeless. The new teacher becomes resentful and discouraged. He recognizes that he is not prepared to be an effective classroom teacher.

Matters reach a climax. Inchausti reads to the students a passage from Matthew 13. The text explains why Jesus taught with parables. It also expresses Inchausti's view of himself as teacher and of his students as learners. He recalls: "I was reaching for my messianic moment, but no one was there." A few minutes later, a spitwad sails through the air and strikes him in the center of the forehead.

At this point, Brother Blake enters the chronicle. Brother Blake is a 67-year-old Christian Brother and a wise and experienced teacher. He offers Inchausti wisdom and personal support in his quest for a new and workable approach to classroom instruction. Even more, Brother Blake offers a view of teaching that is comprehensive and profound. Earlier, Inchausti received assistance from a school administrator named Strapp. Strapp offered superficial solutions to immediate problems. His methods for obtaining attention and obedience from students were authoritarian and callous. Through classroom visits and lively conversations, Brother Blake introduces the young teacher to his personal way, "the pedagogy of the sublime."

Inchausti also receives help from daily prayer. At St. Vincent's each class period begins with a few minutes of prayer. These repeated occasions become important to him both as a person and as a teacher. It requires several months. In time his "quest for purity of motive got God's attention...." He becomes less preoccupied and more confident and open. He recalls, "it helped me to get out of my mind and attend to the world in its pure sensuous reality." The change helps him to *see* his students. They become less abstract, more real. Prayer offers him the opportunity to respond to people and to events as they present themselves. This revised orientation pro-

vides the basis for the teacher to respond to the realities of his classroom and of his life.

With the guidance of Brother Blake, Inchausti begins to learn and practice "the pedagogy of the sublime." What is "the pedagogy of the sublime"? Inchausti maintains that "it cannot be rigorously defined." However, he describes the approach as a "prophetic art ... born of poetry, excess, exaggeration, and risk. It is not so much a means of instruction as it is a call to self-transcendence, an act of liberation.... It is an anti-technique powered by metaphor, irony, and a profound skepticism toward the ways of the world." During the following months, Inchausti practices "the pedagogy of the sublime" while teaching a variety of subjects on several levels of education.

In *Spitwad Sutras*, Inchausti presents an approach to classroom instruction. He relates many stories based on his personal experiences in order to make the approach understandable. He is a good storyteller and the book engages the interest of the reader. It also prompts memories and reflections. Most readers have spent time in school settings. The book represents an invitation to consider what it means to be a teacher and a student in the school classroom. Often analysts reduce teaching to a mechanical activity of cause and effect with little or no allowance for the complex, the subtle, and the mysterious. Inchausti offers a view that is broad, comprehensive, and open. His view allows for imagination and creativity. It establishes the possibility of teaching as art.

Inchausti recounts his early teaching experiences in the form of a personal and professional journey. He strives to understand himself and his students and to become a better and more successful teacher. The process requires that he develop a clearer and more accurate understanding of himself and of his students. It also demands that he attain a keen awareness of the nature and possibilities of classroom instruction, and of the knowledge and skills necessary to be successful in the classroom setting. Probably all good classroom teachers engage in a struggle of discovery and growth. The struggle, however, is seldom documented. Inchausti offers an important account of his personal initiation into the art of classroom teaching.

Inchausti presents a general view of schools, students, and teaching that appears dark. The darkness seems prevalent and inevitable. Light shines now and then during moments of personal insight and revelation. Some of his observations advance to the edge of despair. "To survive as a teacher, one must master the art of creative suffering. Like Gandhi's nonviolent soldiers of truth, the dedicated teacher must walk into the assault of pettiness and disinterest every day with no expectation of victory — serene only in the hope that the abuse one endures is redemptive and encouraged by the conviction that teaching is, above all other things, an art of endurance."

Many readers, including teachers, will find the general accounts of the darkness extreme and difficult to comprehend. Perhaps the reason is the result of personal outlook and emphasis. Some teachers recognize and appreciate the positive qualities of other teachers and administrators. They acknowledge and accept the positive aspects of the curriculum, instructional materials, facilities, and organization and management of the school. They gain pleasure from the day-to-day act of teaching. They achieve satisfaction from the recognition of challenges and the attempt to meet them. They realize that many factors influence the behavior of their students. They acknowledge and accept their own personal and professional limitations. They acknowledge and accept the limitations of their students. They recognize and strive to develop potential. They recognize signs of improvement and value long-term progress. They learn from the observations and insights of their students. They appreciate the finished work of their students. They celebrate their own improvement as teachers. "Suffering" is not relevant.

In *Spitwad Sutras*, Robert Inchausti focuses on the teacher and on special moments in the classroom. In the future, perhaps the author could write a companion volume that explores "the pedagogy of the sublime," with greater emphasis on the students and on the daily interaction between the teacher and the students in the classroom. He might also explain and illustrate more fully the theory and practice of "the pedagogy of the sublime" and provide specific testimony on the long-term influence of such instruction on students.

The author concludes his book with a final chapter entitled "Maxims, Aphorisms, Insights, and Reflections on the Art of Classroom Teaching, by Brother Blake." The contents of the chapter provide an effective closing to the book. The passages are provocative and worthy of consideration. They will challenge readers and encourage them to question and clarify their own ideas and assumptions about teaching and about education in general.

Presence of Mind: Writing and the Domain Beyond the Cognitive

Edited by Alice Glarden Brand and Richard L. Graves

Published by Boynton/Cook; 1994.

Reviewed by Steve Lawless

In the edited collection, *Presence of Mind*, editors Alice Glarden Brand and Richard L. Graves offer a collection of articles that consolidate recent advances in the methodology for teaching writing on the secondary and college levels. The 19 essays making up the book are placed under the headings of: Silence, Wisdom of the Unconscious, Wisdom of the Body, Images, Emotions, and The Open Door. The premise organizing these essays recommends a departure from the discursive, formal logic approach to composition.

In its place, the book presents a meta-cognitive approach that calls into relevance such writing enhancements as understanding and using the subconscious, ideational imagery, personal archetypes and experience, and bodily kinesthetic movement. This ambitious undertaking derives from a phenomenological base that roots itself "in emotions and the senses, in private and social experience, in the body and the unconscious, in silence and intuition" (p. xi). In his forword James Moffett lays out the scope of the book by saying, "The synergistic approach of this book may do for college what whole language attempts for the elementary grades and Writing Across the Curriculum attempts for the middle and secondary school. The authors of the essays collected here aim to restore the integrity of human functioning that educational institutions unwittingly break up in breaking down learning into piecemeal, pragmatic goals" (p. xii).

Though the book calls us to explore the "Domain Beyond" traditional cognitive approaches to composition, it retains the use of psycholinguistic research. It also recognizes the need for rational ordering at a later point in the composition process. Alice Glarden Brand's essay demonstrates how linguistically represented information alone has little effect on a student's evaluative system. Instead the "heartbeat, pulse and emotion give experience its stick-to-the-ribs quality. We see the world from the inside. To the extent that emotions reflect such reality, they are emblematic of the only conscience we have" (p. 78). Tapping this domain gives the student writers the opportunity to achieve oneness with their subjects. This oneness comes only when students are afforded the freedom to discover their own subjects.

As a teacher of secondary English looking to better equip my bag of tricks, I found some of the essays largely immersed in the world of ideas and sometimes thin on specific strategies for classroom implementation. Yet I kept in mind that the "Domain Beyond" does not easily reduce to the step-by-step technique familiar to many teachers.

Intriguing in its ability to integrate kinesthetic and spatial intelligences in the writing process is Karen Klein and Linda Hecker's essay. They present walking directions and symbolic transcriptions to help students map the logic of their essays. As a student's essay presents new information, the student takes a step forward. "For example" or any addition or juxtaposition would be indicated by a side step.

Teachers wishing to develop objective expository writing techniques may find the essays by Hildy Miller and Kristie S. Fleckenstein helpful. Miller's essay shows the importance of letting the writer see ideas through emotion and image. Thought becomes most inspired when felt originating on the bodily intuitive level. The challenge is to validate this experience and provide the writer with the opportunity to translate it to the written word. Fleckenstein examines connections between text engagement, emotion, and imagery among underprepared writers by using data from writing habits questionnaires and QMI scores (Questionnaire upon Mental Imagery).

Teachers seeking a more subjective, inner-directed, intuitive approach to composing should look to essays on the use of the unconscious by Anne E. Mullin, Richard L. Graves and Susan M. Becker, and Elizabeth Holman. Mullin's essay draws attention to what she calls traces in a written text. These traces may include "a word that is left out, a substitution, a double-edged phrase, ambiguous punctuation, a jarring juxtaposition, contradiction, or sudden turning away from an idea in progress" (p. 42). Mullin believes traces represent unconscious activity that is often meaningful territory to explore through writing. Rather than correcting traces as errors, Mullin calls for a paradigm shift that sees the "error" as a source for stronger writing. For example a student who suddenly shifts from the past tense to the present tense may signify an unresolved issue. Given this difference in interpretation, students are generally relieved to know their mistakes may reflect something below the surface worth exploring rather than that they are dumb, bad, or lazy students.

Graves and Becker advocate the use of Jungian individuation in the writing process. Their essay outlines an approach for allowing personal archetypes to

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emerge spontaneously. After an overview of Jung's theory of archetypes, a workshop format is presented entitled, "Let the River Run." Students are encouraged to make the shift from thinking of rivers in concrete terms to more abstract meanings. The lore of rivers is given and eventually students move toward a personalization of river as a metaphor for their lives.

Holman's essay draws from brain research and Jungian psychology to examine the relationship between intuition, insight, and inspiration in the writing process. Her work examines the moment in the brain and nervous system when "knowledge erupts into consciousness as intuition, insight, or inspiration. We label the process intuition when it is slow. We label the process insight or inspiration when its results appear in a flash" (p. 69).

The final section of essays entitled "The Open Door" is a sampler of new directions. It represents the diverse approaches to teaching and learning beyond the cognitive domain. Donald M. Murray in his essay, "Where Do You Find Your Stories?", writes to find the answer to his question. He traces his story back to his childhood: "I was a writer when my finger traced the brown roads in the faded oriental rug on the living room floor of the house I can hardly remember, and even now I can explore the boxed red squares in which there were secret places I later called forts" (p. 182). Murray shows how stories are everywhere in our lives. They are in our blood and passed down in the symbols we use to order and make sense of the world. Murray argues that stories are not made up by writing them but that we are always overflowing with narrative. The satisfaction of good narrative is close at hand and waits to be burned into consciousness through the basic drive to know.

Sandra Price Burkett's essay looks at the healing aspect of writing. She uses a case study of an adult student to show the effectiveness of writing as a therapeutic tool. Specifically writing is used to move from fragmentation and chaos to wholeness entailed in Jung's concept of individuation. Burkett uses the analogy of the Butterfly Effect, developed by mathematician-meteorologist Edward Lorenz, to show that within apparent chaos are patterns waiting to be integrated and made sensible. Burkett's use of case study makes real this redemptive process.

Gabriele Rico's "The Heart of the Matter: Language, Feeling, Stories, Healing" sees writing as an opportunity for wholemaking. She uses the voices of four writers to suggest how personal stories interface with the mythological knowledge we carry. "All four writers — each in her unique way — struggle toward wholeness through writing. As they involve themselves in the creation of meaning, their growing trust of process and of their own words on the page evolve into patterns of feeling that clarify and illuminate" (p. 213).

In the final essay of this section, Richard J. Murphy, Jr., draws attention to the topic of intimacy and trust in the writing group. Murphy looks at the powerful forces at work in a group where life stories are being written. Inevitably when life stories are being written out, powerful forces can affect relationships within the group. Particular attention is given to the teacher-student dynamic.

The book leaves me with affirmation of some of the intuitions and successes I've witnessed in my own writing and in the work of my students. The thrill of individualizing learning comes when the student inquires through narrative writing. A learning paradox emerges whereby the students find their writing engaging them on a personal level and then opening up and out on a more universal level.

Though calling for significant change toward non-cognitive techniques, the breadth of the essays in this collection prove that a diversity of approaches are needed when teaching composition. In reading these essays, teachers should not be made to feel that they need to become psychotherapists or that they should completely abandon the cognitive techniques they know and use. These essays are not another accusatory finger, but tools for enhancing our understanding of the depth and wonderment the writing process can entail.

School Cultures: Universes of Meaning in Private Schools

by Mary E. Henry

Published by Ablex (Norwood, NJ), 1993, 269 pages, paper, $22.50.

Reviewed by Ron Miller

School Cultures is an unusually vivid and immensely valuable study of alternative visions of education. Mary E. Henry has crafted a detailed and revealing ethnography of two very different schools — an elite "prep" school and a Waldorf school — to demonstrate how implicit worldviews are cultivated in the young generation through symbolism, ritual, and the daily routines of a school culture. This book contributes original insights to the holistic education literature in three ways. First, it affords a historical and sociological overview of independent schools in America and asserts that the serious study of unconventional schools can yield important lessons for public school reformers. Henry argues that "as a society we have created a set of assumptions about and practices that we call 'school-

ing' and ... it is salient to take a step back and deconstruct the familiar and to think about alternative cultural possibilities" (p. 31). This is in fact a major aim of holistic education, and it is too rarely articulated.

Second, *School Cultures* provides a critical (but sympathetic) analysis of the holistic worldview upon which Waldorf education is based, contrasting this worldview with both the materialistic philosophy that characterizes the prep school and the technocratic culture that drives mainstream public schooling. This analysis is seldom found in either the Waldorf literature (which is largely self-preoccupied rather than critical or comparative in intent) or in mainstream scholarship (which ignores holistic education for the most part). Writing at the beginning of the 1990s, Henry does not seem to have found the then-available literature on holistic education (for example, works by Douglas Sloan, Joseph Chilton Pearce, John P. Miller, or myself) that would have enabled her to discuss the holistic worldview more broadly, but her interpretation of Waldorf education constitutes an accurate and useful description nonetheless.[1]

Third, Henry describes a holistic research approach that effectively captures the qualitative elements distinguishing holistic from conventional education. Here we have something other than test scores by which to assess the value of different educational approaches. For Henry, a school culture is "an ecology of people and events" that evolves as participants seek and create meaning. Through a process of engaged observation that seeks to uncover these meanings (Henry is influenced by social scientists such as Clifford Geertz, Gregory Bateson, and Erving Goffman) she is able to offer a more intimate and experiential account of school life than the "macroanalysis" approach through which researchers generally attempt to describe schooling. We would do well to describe the many varieties of holistic education in this fashion; it would mark an important step toward the maturity and wider influence of this movement. Along with the speculative and exhortative writings that have characterized our literature so far, imagine this journal and other publications being filled with "thick descriptions" (Geertz's phrase) of the experiences that actually occur in holistic learning environments.

The central argument of *School Cultures* is that different types of schools reflect different worldviews and hence stand for different social and cultural values. By considering the deeper meanings of a school's curriculum and teaching methods (for example, whether knowledge is packaged into discrete subject areas or approached in more integrated ways), its organization and management, its use of time and space, and the styles of personal relationship that are encouraged or ruled out, we can discover how an educational approach defines the individual's place in the world and how it embodies "cultural beliefs and assumptions about such things as authority, hierarchy, or equality" (p. 98). Henry concludes that the worldview expressed in Waldorf education is based upon the belief that human beings are "one small part in a giant complex web, rather than ... instigators and controllers of the world" (p. 108). This is, in fact, the heart of holistic thinking, and from this essential orientation, other important social beliefs follow; Henry observes that the Waldorf school

> hopes to give children an opportunity to hold values other than those of the excessive competitiveness, materialism, and violence that are seen to pervade American culture at large.... The school attempts to counteract the depersonalization, fragmentation, and alienation of humans from nature in an economy and consumer-driven culture, and hopes to affirm the spiritual in nature. (pp. 147, 149)

Henry's interpretation of the Waldorf approach clearly portrays holistic education as the radical, critical worldview many of us intend it to be.

> The values being promoted by St. Catherines are like those found in business and the professions. The rituals of Waldorf School, on the other hand, are those of an extended family which holds alternative ideas to mainstream society with its economic base of business interests. (p. 172)

School Cultures, then, is a successful effort to "deconstruct the familiar and to think about alternative cultural possibilities." This book should be included on any list of essential readings in holistic education, and I hope it will be the first of many such inquiries into the phenomenology of holistic education.

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Note

1. Henry did come across *New Directions in Education*, a collection of articles from the early issues of *Holistic Education Review*, and briefly cited one of the 30-odd contributors on a relatively minor point. She also wrote a review of the book (published in *Educational Studies* 23(1), Spring, 1992) that focused on some of the overly romantic and isolationist tendencies in the early holistic education literature. I later appreciated this critique (see pp. 15–16 of my essay "Holistic Education in the United States: A 'New Paradigm' or a Cultural Struggle?" *Holistic Education Review* 6(4), December 1993), yet I find it curious that her sympathetic understanding of Waldorf philosophy did not arouse a more enthusiastic interest in these other holistic educators.