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Special Issue: The Politics and Economics of Holistic Education

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Educational Policy, National Intellectual Capital, and the Profits of Childhood

Buried unceremoniously 17 pages deep in the 1983 Report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education lie the words, "nation's intellectual capital." This phrase, however, with its deeply rooted assumptions provided the foundation for a model of educational policy now coming to the surface. Federal and state policy makers have hit upon the idea of enlisting American corporations to develop children's minds as a national proprietary resource to achieve perceived national and economic objectives. While the public has been told that we are a nation at risk because of educational mediocrity, and while the rhetoric proclaims that the acquisition of technological skills and knowledge will herald personal and national prosperity, the driving force in educational policy has become the expansion of education itself as a market. For government, the focus is on the refinement of intellectual capital for perceived national interests. For corporate America, the focus is on the growth of a profit-rich industry. The differences in motivation and intent have not been recognized. Governmental and corporate leaders jointly can pursue their agendas in the name of the American people because educational policy now concerns national capital rather than children. The function of educational policy is not to guide the development of children as children, as growing autonomous human beings.

The notion of national intellectual capital "de-anthropomorphizes": It makes children an anonymous mass with potential economic utility as its dominant characteristic. As intellectual capital, individual children take on all the significance of individual trees in our policy of the interior. In both contexts, the key factor in shaping policy is the relegation of the development of the national resources with respect to the economic benefits that may be derived by the nation and the corporate profits that may be made in the process. The lives of children — the world that they know when they open their eyes in the morning; the hopes and fears they carry into sleep as they close their eyes; the concrete realities they face from violent streets to the isolation in front of a television; the grappling with what they experience in attempting to understand themselves; the actuality of their needs and interests — have no place in such policy.

While arguments abound that the American economy requires a new generation of workers with the skills believed to be required for information industries, political and corporate leaders are becoming increasingly interested in the economic potential of education as one of those industries. The presumed value of children lies in the fact that they possess intelligence — a raw material "for international commerce" in an "information age." Given that potential, there is a perceived need to develop it for the nation. Given the need, corporations see new potential for selling goods and services. The argument goes that the more effective the development of such capital, the higher the quality of American labor, the more competitive the American corporation, and the greater the prosperity for the nation and its people. While each of these suppositions fails under critical analysis, collectively they have drawn strength, rather ironically, from the declining American standard of living.

While the productivity of American labor and profitability of American corporations have risen, our national standard of living has declined steadily. As American corporations have internationalized, national borders have not stemmed the flow of jobs to the markets of cheapest labor. Companies like International Business Machines are laying off thousands, and many Americans find themselves working harder than ever for comparatively lower salaries. While the American labor force is the most productive in the world, and while corporate worth has shown dramatic growth during the past several years, individual Americans are finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. The well-being and interests of Corporate America have little to do with the well-being and interests of the American people. International corporations are global not national.

For such international corporations, American education is only a market; the corporate push for educational technology and increased standards is intended to create massive market need. The strategy is particularly effective because it plays into people's worries about basic financial needs and fears about their children's futures. Just as the sources blamed for the American economic woes had less to do with education than with misguided federal policies and corporate investment strategies, the current focus of educational policy has less to do with education than with creating new corporate profit centers. Children as children just don't enter into the calculations.

Over the years since *A Nation at Risk* defined children as intellectual capital, American corporations have increasingly seen schools not only as subject to market forces but as marketplaces. Lehman Brothers' first annual conference on the education industry leaves no room to wonder where American corporate interests lie. In February 1996, investment bankers and fund managers were told of the possibilities for profit in a $619 billion education industry. A report Lehman Brothers circulated to participants suggested, "The education industry may replace health care in 1996 as *the focus industry*." Of particular note were the possibilities for EMOs, the equivalents of HMOs in the health care industry. Participants in the conference were urged to see Home Depot and McDonald's as well as "Wal-Mart discount stores and Kinko's photocopying centers as models for school-management companies to embrace."

One may expect that the profit motive and corporate management models will serve children just as HMOs have served the needs of individuals seeking health care. The unique needs of individuals will be weighed against profit margins and systematic controls. The result likely will be that children will be forced into low-cost educational tracks or dropped by the provider. All of the corporations cited are noted for their ability to provide mass goods and services with low labor — their profitability rests in their systematic management of volume. None of them are known for the time they take to get to know their customers, long-term supportive interactions, coping with confused or complex needs, or service to individuals without cash. Transactions are quick, impersonal, and prescribed.

Schools, using computers and other telecommunication technologies, could offer similar models of service and profit. Therein lies the most powerful incentive for the relentless drive to expand the role of

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technology in schools. While many teachers and researchers are enthusiastic about what they've seen and what is promised, the pedagogical virtue of technology serves the same function in educational policy as nutritional value does in setting McDonald's menu. If we are in or moving into an information age, the engines of the economy will be in the production and consumption of information technologies. The engines will not yield for pedagogical concerns; they run on the fuel of perceived technological need. The actual needs of children, the efficiency of various educational models, are not of primary concern.

The first major corporate thrust into education was led by media entrepreneur, Christopher Whittle. His Edison Project not only includes market-specific commercial television but an extended use of computers. With sufficient numbers of schools, companies such as the Computer Curriculum Corporation (CCC) and hardware manufacturers such as IBM could work together to create new educational products. The products could then be tested in Edison schools with everyone enjoying a round of profits. Undoubtedly, tests would be generated by the same or other interlocking corporations to establish desired criteria as evidence of educational success.

When children are abstracted and reduced into a

mass of intellectual capital, there is no place for their actual educational needs and the fundamental ethical responsibilities of educators.

And so, the nation's governors planned their education policy summit for March 26-27, 1996, at the IBM Conference Center in New York. Each governor was asked by summit organizers led by Governor Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin and Louis V. Gerstner, Jr., chairman and CEO of IBM, to choose a business executive to attend. There was no effort to soften or otherwise muddle the agenda by focusing on children, learning, teaching, or schools as cultural institutions shaping the minds and characters of individual human beings. With education being, perhaps, "*the* focus industry of 1996," policy is intended to reflect the concerns of corporate leaders such as those on the summit steering committee representing AT&T, Bell South, Boeing, Eastman Kodak, and Proctor & Gamble. Educators have no role since children are not the central concern. Intellectual capital requires the attention of corporate leaders. The governors made their position clear in their planning paper. "We are convinced that technology, if applied thoughtfully and well-integrated into a curriculum, can be used to boost student performance and ensure a competitive edge for our workforce."

Today, federal educational policy is largely a function of corporate economic interests coupled with political expedience in the face of a population suffering beneath the crushing weight of a declining standard of living. Today, schools are economic institutions, where capital is developed and invested, where information is packaged and purchased, where social, developmental, and moral issues are honed with indignity as marketing tools.

In such an environment, insight into and a commitment to the human and cultural dimensions of education seem like indulgences we can no longer tolerate. Where there is sanctity, human vulnerability is exploited. Where there is dignity, human potentialities are nothing but rich ore.

The key educational questions of our time do not revolve around curricula, instructional methods, developmental theories, and the like. Are children national intellectual capital? Should educational policy revolve around the profits corporations may reap in exploiting such capital? Should schools serve as cultural trusts — that is, places in which we place our cultural trust — or as marketplaces where the growing human beings are compelled consumers? All else depends upon the answers we give and the commitments we make. Self-referential holism — holism which does not address the pressing realities of lived life, holism which fails to assert the cultural depth and scope of educating children — is wasteful reverie.

— Jeffrey Kane, *Editor*

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Homo Religiosus as Social Process

John B. Cobb, Jr.

We view our human nature much too narrowly when we focus exclusively on its political or economic dimensions. We need to move beyond this and explore our spiritual nature, the interrelatedness that it implies, and the implications that it has for education.

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The controlling image of the human being in our culture is *Homo economicus*. This is because we live in an age of economism. The economy has always been important. But through most of prehistory and history, the myths by which people lived defined the human being primarily in other terms, usually religious ones.

In *The Great Transition*, Karl Polanyi described the shift that occurred in Great Britain in the late eighteenth century, when the relation between social and economic structures was reversed. Prior to that time, economic structures served society. After that time, in the most "advanced" countries, which means the most industrial ones, society was reshaped in order to serve the economy.

Even then, however, the economy continued to serve the nation-state. Nations made decisions about when and how much to trade, for example, from the point of view of national interest. The language of sovereignty was used with respect to nations or to the rulers of nations, these sometimes being "the people."

After World War II there occurred a further step in the great transition. Partly as a result of the nationalistic excesses of that war, the nation-state lost credibility as the object of devotion. As local societies had been subordinated to the economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, national societies were also being subordinated. The language of sovereignty shifted from the political to the economic sphere. We now hear more of "consumer sovereignty" than of the "sovereignty of the people."

Transitions of this sort occur gradually and are often recognized and understood only retrospectively. At the end of World War II, most of us at that time attended to the move from nationalism to internationalism represented by the founding of the United Nations. But more important than the United Nations have been the Bretton Woods Institutions, founded about the same time, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and now, at last, the World Trade Organization. The policies of these eco-

nomic institutions determine the limits of what nations can do far more than do pronouncements or actions of the United Nations. Certainly they have more effect on the day-to-day life of ordinary people around the world. More important and more real than the shift from nationalism to internationalism was the shift from nationalism to economism.

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*M**any of us are dissatisfied with the course that education has taken. We do not believe that human beings are to be understood primarily and fundamentally as economic beings. We believe that the economy should be in the service of values such as truth, beauty, and goodness.***

How has this affected education? Education in the United States in the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth was directed primarily to the preparation of citizens. Public education Americanized the children of immigrants and gave them the skills to participate in the political process. Higher education consisted chiefly of liberal arts colleges devoted to preparing leaders for American societies. Of course, public education also prepared students for jobs, and at higher levels there were programs preparing people for the professions, but the former were seen as part of citizenship and the professions as special forms of public leadership more than as lucrative roles in the economy. In short, the controlling image of the human being in both culture and education during that period was *Homo politicus*.

After World War II, the primary purpose of education changed. The aim now is to prepare people to participate in the economy. We compare the education of our labor force with that of our economic competitors and judge the effectiveness of education accordingly. People are encouraged to get more education because this will enable them to compete for better jobs. The solution to the problem of unemployment is thought to be educating the unemployed so that they will become employable. Colleges and universities advertise their success, more or less subtly,

in terms of the kinds of positions their graduates attain in the economic world. The controlling image of the human being in American education, as in society as a whole, is now *Homo economicus*.

There are, of course, many exceptions to these generalizations. Religious concerns have played a role during this whole period. There has been a concern to prepare people to use their leisure time creatively. Some portion of education is aimed at knowledge for its own sake. Economic concerns were important in the earlier period, political concerns in the latter.

In this day of a market-driven society, or economism, however, the most important modifying factor is the economy itself. There is widespread recognition that in a rapidly changing economy the role of educational institutions cannot be simply, or even primarily, to prepare people to meet current expectations in particular jobs. The economy needs workers who have learned how to learn. Furthermore, those who aspire to leadership positions in the economy require broad horizons and the ability to understand a great variety of people. For them imagination is important.

In light of these considerations, the study of business management today is a humane interdisciplinary program which recognizes that both the managers and those managed are complex beings. In other words, as education comes to serve the economy, the traditional image of *Homo economicus* turns out to be quite inadequate to understand the needs, although it still remains dominant in departments of economics. The liberal arts or general education still maintain a foothold in institutions devoted to serving the economy.

Many of us are dissatisfied with the course that education has taken. We do not believe that human beings are to be understood primarily and fundamentally as economic beings. We believe that the economy should be in the service of values that are not to be measured by price — values such as truth, beauty, and goodness. We think there are dimensions of human beings that are neglected in both education and culture and are atrophying as a result. We think that organizing the whole world around economic competition is appallingly destructive to human life and community. Although we are glad that business leaders recognize that effective leadership requires some general or liberal education, we do not think that the only reason for such education is that it enables business leaders to be more competitive.

Unfortunately, our efforts to keep other ideals alive as independent goals, even when doing so would lead to conflict with economic norms, have marginal effects on either public education of children or on the community colleges and universities that provide most higher education. These institutions are geared to meet market demands, that is, preparation for jobs. Colleges and universities are competing for the best students, and for the most part they want assurance that their education will lead to top positions in the economy. Also they are competing for economic support, and for the most part this is geared to their contribution to the economy.

Exceptions are to be found among some private and parochial schools for children and among some small liberal arts colleges, especially those that take church relationships seriously or were founded for quite specific and unusual purposes. Although these are under pressure to conform to the more general pattern, some have resisted successfully and still attract enough students to survive.

Most of these exceptions have the appearance of survivors. That is, one rejoices that it is "still" possible to maintain forms of education that are geared to other dimensions of the human person and the culture than the economic one. One wonders how long these can survive as the economy becomes ever more competitive. They are tempted to argue that in fact the education they provide is what is needed for business and professional leadership, thus entering the competition to serve the economy.

II

There is one new element in our culture that is significant of future developments. We have become concerned about sustainability. For the most part this concern is not allowed to interfere with the dominant concern for successful competition in the global market. But thoughtful business leaders sometimes recognize that competing in a market that is bound to collapse is not an adequate goal for shaping human affairs. Concern for sustainability is entering into the thinking of major actors in the global market.

This is, in principle, quite different from the humanizing concerns that have been introduced into management thinking. For the most part these have been forced on business leaders by the recognition that competitors with more humane approaches are more successful. Issues of sustainability, in contrast, pit present competitive advantages against future consequences to be borne by humanity as a whole rather than by one particular business. They cannot be dealt with effectively by individual businesses acting alone when their competitors continue unsustainable practices.

I am not saying that business as a whole has been significantly affected by such thinking. I am not saying that the culture as a whole is ready for the changes to which such thinking leads. Indeed, at present, some business leaders are organizing and leading an effective backlash in the whole society against such gains as have been made in this direction. The pressure to make immediate profits at the expense of long-term sustainability has never been greater.

Nevertheless, issues of sustainability will not go away. Our present global and national behavior is so profoundly unsustainable that its consequences cannot be ignored indefinitely. Sooner or later cultural concern for a sustainable society will affect education in more than peripheral ways. We hope it will not be too late.

Concern for sustainability in itself does not imply the end of such ways of viewing human beings as *Homo politicus* and *Homo economicus*. We may simply want to make our political and economic order sustainable. But reflection on what is required for sustainability often leads, indeed, must eventually lead, to questioning the dominant image of the human being in modern education and culture. A sustainable society and economy will be possible only in relation to the Earth and its ecosystems. Hence we are forced to study our natural environment. The more we study the Earth, the more we realize that we are part of it, that we are Earth creatures, that defining ourselves as separate from the Earth has led to practices that have brought about our unsustainable society.

This shift to nonanthropocentric thinking can be documented in Christian reflection. Christianity in the modern world participated fully in its anthropocentrism and its dualism of history and nature. The World Council of Churches resisted the new environmentalism in the late sixties and the early seventies. But in 1975 it affirmed the importance of societies being sustainable, as well as just and participatory, helping to give currency to the word "sustainable" in global affairs. In 1982, however, it changed its expression of concern from the anthropocentric notion of the sustainability of societies to "the integrity of creation." If our societies are to be sustainable, we

must be concerned for the whole of the Earth not merely as means to our survival but also as having its own worth and importance.

In education, too, some attention to sustainability is now acceptable, even expected. This is, for the most part, within the context of economism. But once the topic of sustainability is introduced for serious reflection, it breaks the context in which it is first considered. It drives toward the replacement of economism by Earthism. On many campuses today Earthism is the only effective contender against economism. Its claim for the role of controlling principle will grow louder. The backlashes against it will become more severe, and I dare not predict the outcome. But as we reflect on the image of the human being in modern education and culture, we need to consider the image of the human being that accompanies Earthism.

We need a convenient phrase that can be placed alongside *Homo religiosus*, *Homo politicus*, and *Homo economicus*. Perhaps we can try *Homo ecologicus*. *Homo ecologicus* is a new emergent on the scene, or a return of a very old form of human being.

For at least 25 centuries the leading philosophies and religions shaping human thought and sensibility have emphasized human superiority and transcendence over all other things. This primacy of the human has, in the modern world, become an extreme dualism. Despite all the evidence for evolution, we have organized our educational system according to the assumption that human affairs are discontinuous with nature. We teach different methods for the study of nature and for the study of history. We almost never mention what is happening in the natural world when we study history or the impact of human action on nature when we study the natural sciences. In other words, we train ourselves to see reality in terms of a radical dualism, and we have supported this in our dominant philosophies and theologies.

This is changing in philosophy and theology. These disciplines are giving increasing attention to the relation of human beings to the remainder of the natural world. However, these theoretical changes have not yet affected the way we organize knowledge or structure our educational systems.

Earthists directly challenge this organization of knowledge and these systems of education. They recognize that human beings are part of the Earth system and cannot be understood in separation from it. They teach this different image of the human being

in a few courses. Here and there they are beginning to introduce into education programs and activities that give larger expression to this anthropology. I commend to your attention in this regard especially the work of David Orr. Here and there whole institutions are making significant gestures in the direction of change.

The changes called for by Earthists are threatening not only to economism but also to traditional forms of humanism. Humanism means many things, but in the modern world it usually means that human beings are not to be understood in the terms applicable to nature. Since these terms are typically mechanistic and reductionistic, this negation plays an important, positive role. To the extent that nature is still understood reductionistically, this form of humanism remains necessary. Under these circumstances, the conflict between Earthists and humanists cannot be avoided, and truth must be recognized to lie on both sides of the dispute.

Most Earthists, however, no longer see nature in this mechanistic way. Nature is alive, and life cannot be reduced to something that is lifeless. It can only be understood relationally or ecologically. When human beings are also understood relationally and ecologically, the discontinuity between human beings and the remainder of the natural world disappears.

There may still be tensions between Earthists and humanists. Even when they abandon their former dualism, humanists will emphasize features of humanity that are unique to the human species. These emphases are often heard by Earthists as continuing false pretensions to apartness. Earthists emphasize what unites human beings with other creatures, the interdependence among them, rather than what is distinctive. If the truth in both humanism and Earthism is to be retained, the task is to affirm the uniqueness of each species, and especially of the human species, while simultaneously affirming the value of each, the continuity among them, the participation of all in the Earth, and their interdependence. Human uniqueness then appears primarily as a unique responsibility for the Earth of which humans are a part.

Earthists have a chance of being holistic in a more inclusive way than humanists have been. If, instead of deemphasizing distinctive features of humanity, they include these fully within a broader context of organic human physicality organically related to other members of the ecosystem, the movement

from humanism to Earthism will be entirely positive.

III

The emergence of Earthism has led to renewed recognition of the importance of religion or spirituality. Whereas *Homo politicus* and *economicus* could present themselves in quite secular guise, *Homo ecologicus* is defined by a change in the nature of human being. *Homo ecologicus* is not a self-contained and self-interested individual who recognizes the importance of a healthy environment for survival. *Homo ecologicus* is a human being who experiences such being as bound up with other creatures. The emergence of *Homo ecologicus* is a transformation at the base of human being. It is a religious conversion.

Further, Earthism cannot be sustained in the context of a dominant economism without special disciplines, mutual support, and rituals. It is by its nature a form of what today is called spirituality. The issue is no longer, as in modernity, whether there is a place for religion or spirituality, it is whether the inherited religious traditions can be so transformed as to respond to current needs or whether the needed spirituality will have to be a radical break from Western religious traditions and its institutions. *Homo ecologicus* is a new form of *Homo religiosus*. Does this mean a transformation of existing traditions or their rejection?

There is no doubt that Earthism requires rejection of the dominant forms of past spirituality. *Spiritualitas* in its medieval form was specifically monastic and ascetic. It cultivated a spirit that rose above the body in its relation to a God who stood far above the world.

Nevertheless, the word "spiritual" has a more general meaning that has enabled it to function quite differently in our time. It suggests a heightening of awareness of that which is most important for us as human beings to escape from immersion in the culturally conditioned categories that shape so much that we think and do. Paying close attention to motivations or emotions or relationships or bodily needs or imagination is also a form of spirituality. Paying close attention to the Earth and all of our fellow creatures as they interact with us is yet another form of spirituality. This is especially true when the divine is discerned as present in, or discernible through, one or another of these objects of attention.

Just as Earthism can be so developed as to allow for the positive values of a chastened humanism, so

can it be allied with a repentant Christianity. The challenge of Earthism has caused Christians to rethink their dominant spirituality. Some have found traditions that support what Matthew Fox has taught us to call "creation spirituality." Others have emphasized incarnational and sacramental spirituality. These can lead to Christian support for much that is involved in an Earthism that is open to the values of humanism. It may be, after all, that the new form of *Homo religiosus* can be a transformation of Christianity rather than a simple repudiation requiring a whole new beginning.

The crucial issue is theism. Earthism often formulates itself against theism, understanding theism to posit a God "above." This way of understanding God has in fact encouraged the alienation from the Earth against which Earthism rightly protests. But there are Christian traditions that find God in ordinary life, human and nonhuman. God is seen in the humblest neighbor and in the depths of each person. A theism that affirms the God who is found within every creature, and within whom every creature finds itself, need not be antithetical to an openminded Earthism. Indeed, it may strengthen it by connecting it to an ancient tradition and by grounding it systematically in a coherent theology.

A union of Earthism and theism may also protect Earthism from the threat of idolatry, that is, of treating as ultimate what, however important, is not in fact ultimate. Devotion to the Earth makes a great deal of sense, since the Earth is the most inclusive context now worthy of serious attention. But if we should encounter creatures from other planets, Earthism would be but another form of tribalism. Our ultimate devotion must be to something more inclusive than the Earth. The worship of God as the principle of life in all things and the One in whom all things live and move and have their being can keep us open to what is beyond this planet.

IV

The other great change in our cultural image of the human being is being made by feminists. They have shown us that the human being apart from and above nature is the male of the species and, indeed, it is that male as shaped by a patriarchal society. The overthrow of patriarchy inherently leads to the reconnection of the human with everything else, and the Earthist emphasis on this connection inevitably works against patriarchy. This connection between feminism and Earthism is made especially clear by

ecofeminists. They, too, fully appreciate the spiritual dimension of human existence, affirming a new form of *Homo religiosus*.

The feminist contribution to the emerging image of the human being has other dimensions. Feminists have made us aware that within patriarchal cultures, women have been defined by men, and the traits assigned them have been denominated as inferior. This has expressed the structure of power in these societies and has also been used to justify these structures.

One of the most celebrated features of the male, especially in the West, has been autonomy. Prizing autonomy has led to viewing the mature human being as independent of community. Invulnerability has been especially admired. Power has been viewed as the ability to impose one's autonomous will upon others, thereby taking away their autonomy. The male has been expected to exercise this power over women and children, and males have competed to exercise it over one another.

Education in this context has been individualistic and competitive. A class of students is a collection of individuals who are encouraged independently to advance in their knowledge. The relations among the class members are competitive, since only a few can receive the top grade. Those who succeed in this competition are often successful also in the similarly structured society outside the classroom.

This kind of individualism may or may not be in opposition to socialization. The purpose of this education may be to socialize individuals into the values of the wider society. It then rewards those who most fully embody these values. On the other hand, this individualistic education may encourage the development of critical thinking that subjects the received values to questioning. It can produce individuals who protest against the status quo. Prophecy is highly individualistic. Feminism as a contemporary form of prophecy itself depends on an individualistic element in education.

Nevertheless, feminists call us to a different understanding of the human being as fundamentally relational. We have considered above the relation of human beings to the remainder of the Earth. But the most intense and formative relations are among persons. Rather than the idealization of autonomy, feminists encourage us to think of individuals as formed by their relations to one another in community. We are thus vulnerable to others and seek our welfare *with* that of others rather than in imposing our indi-vidual wills upon them for competitive advantage.

Clearly the implications for education are quite different from the traditional classroom, and these have already been adopted and explored fairly often. For example, a class may be organized into teams within which students work together. It is their joint achievement rather than individual contributions on which attention is focused. The power of each is found in the ability to spark and support others as well as to lead when that is appropriate.

The danger, fully recognized by feminists, is the loss of the self in this relational-communal practice. Women have been socialized to subordinate their personal needs to meeting those of others in ways that lead to the failure to become and to contribute what they could if they developed their own capacities more fully. In classroom teams this self-subordination can continue.

V

We need an image of the human being that clarifies how the bodily-relational-communal-ecological reality of human existence is related to the volitional-individual reality. Such an image may help us find styles of education that do justice both to our social nature and to our individual personality. For this purpose I appeal to the image of all actual things developed by the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead. To place his proposal in sharp focus, I begin with a sketch of the position to which he is offering an alternative.

Our culture and our language have encouraged us to think of the world as made up of objects or substances. When we want an example of what we can confidently affirm as real, we are likely to select a stone or a chair. We think of these as enduring through long periods of time, changing chiefly in their relative locations. Of course, we know that they change in other ways, gradually wearing away or being abruptly destroyed by some external force. Philosophers have taught us that these objects can change because they can be decomposed into smaller objects or substances. Analysis into their parts leads finally to what were long called "atoms, that is, "indivisibles." These were strictly unchanging except in their spatial relationships to one another.

Human minds or psyches do not fit well into this scheme. They are subjects instead of objects. Accordingly, Descartes taught us to think of two types of substances, one material and one mental. They are

extremely different, but they share the characteristic of enduring essentially unchanged through time. They also share the characteristic of having their being quite separate from every other being. Material bodies relate to one another spatially. Minds relate to material objects through sense organs, but these relations are accidental or incidental to what the minds are in themselves. Thus relations play a very secondary role in this worldview.

Physical objects such as stones and chairs are seen as composites of atoms. Human societies are understood to be composites of human individuals. The traditional views of *Homo politicus* and of *Homo economicus* express this vision. Qua *Homo politicus* individuals enter into contracts for their individual benefit to establish political authority. Qua *Homo economicus* individuals sell their labor as dearly as possible, employ their capital as profitably as possible, and acquire goods and services as cheaply as possible.

In this century there have been many protests against this extreme individualism. That of Whitehead is unusually thoroughgoing. He proposes that we abandon the notion of the primacy of substances and think instead of the primacy of events. Events, such as conversations or elections, are not to be understood as analyzable into substances and their adventures. Instead, they are analyzable into smaller events, ultimately into indivisible ones.

In the physical world these indivisible events are subatomic. In the human world they are momentary experiences. Rather than first try to imagine what the subatomic events are like and then interpret momentary human experiences accordingly, Whitehead proposes that we begin with what we can immediately know and analyze, our own experiences, and then imagine what other unitary events are like in analogy with them. For our present purposes, it will be enough to concentrate on human experience itself.

A momentary human experience comes into being out of its given world. A very important part of that world is made up of previous experiences of the same person, especially the most recent ones. That is, my experience in one moment is influenced by my whole life history, but it is most directly and intensively informed by my experience in the previous moment. If I have been feeling cheerful in one moment, that cheerful feeling is likely to be reenacted in the next moment. If I have started speaking a word in one moment, there is great likelihood that I will continue *that* word in the next moment.

A second major part of the given world out of which an experience arises is the complex activity of the brain. Through the brain, the other parts of the body and the external world contribute to the content of experience. In extreme cases, that contribution can be so drastic that my cheerfulness is disrupted or I cease speaking in mid-word. Even in more ordinary instances, the body and the environment, through the brain, provide much of the content of the new experience.

An extremely important part of the environment

Homo ecologicus is not a self-contained and self-interested individual who recognizes the importance of a healthy environment for survival, but a human being who experiences such being as bound up with other creatures.

is constituted by other people. Their impact is mediated through our sense organs and the brain. But much of this impact consists in symbolic communication that introduces extraordinary richness into the new experience.

This image of the human being as part of a world of events is open to the possibility that not all of the influence of other people is mediated through the sense organs and the brain. The event of human experience may, directly or unmediatedly, take account of other events of human experience. For example, the influence of a mother's emotions on her baby may not be entirely a matter of changes in the skin that the infant feels through touch or changes in the tone of voice that she hears. This possibility that we affect one another more immediately than most of our philosophies have encouraged us to think is important, but it is not necessary to this image of the human being.

Thinking of the event of human experience, we can see that we do not first have an experience that is only subsequently affected by its relations to other events. On the contrary, the experience comes into being as the coalescence of the influences upon it. It is constituted by its relations to past events, espe-

cially very recent ones, including the experiences that make up its personal past.

Notice that, in this image, I am not a person who *has* experiences. That language is difficult to avoid because our thinking has been shaped by the substance model. Instead, person is constituted by the flow of successive experiences. There is no substantial entity underlying this flow. The pronoun, I, does not name an unchanging subject of experience. It refers to the flow of experiences themselves, or to the organizing center within them.

This image of the human being accentuates the social character of existence. Human beings are what the world makes them into. The contents of experience are given by that world. They include the body and the physical environment as well as past human experiences, one's own and those of others. When the momentary experience is complete, it becomes part of the world that is given for all subsequent events. It is especially important for that next experience in the flow of experiences that constitutes a person.

No human being can be, even for a moment, apart from either the natural or the social world. Both ecological relations and human community are of primary importance for understanding what and who we are. The ideal of autonomy and invulnerability are contradictory to the nature of things.

VI

If this were the whole reality, however, then our individuality would be a matter of descriptive differences only. Our sense of moral responsibility would be delusory. Our beliefs would be *only* the reflection of what society leads us to believe. There could be no ability on the part of individuals to judge the truth of what they are taught. There could be no real creativity. In short the image would not fit our actual experience.

Equally important in this image of the way in which each experience is constituted by the inflowing of the past is the way the outcome in each moment is determined by a decision. A "decision" is a cutting off, that is, it is a selection from among possibilities. This can occur only because a momentary experience includes not only relations to its past but also relations to possibilities for supplementing that past, for building upon it.

Whitehead calls all of these relations "prehensions." The relations to the given world whereby that world flows into the new experience are physical prehensions. The relations to possibilities are conceptual prehensions. The experience constitutes itself by weaving together its physical and conceptual prehensions into a new whole. It can only be what its incorporation of its given world allows. But because it can supplement that, and integrate its physical prehensions with new possibilities, it is never *merely* determined by that world. In this integration there arises imagination with all of its importance for every aspect of human life. Every occasion of human experience both embodies its world and transcends it, however minutely. We can work to expand this element of transcending or freedom.

Another dualism sometimes appears here. The call for expanding human self-determination is sometimes juxtaposed to the spirituality that we need. I spoke of the needed spirituality of attending to the Earth and our relations with it. But such attending is possible only as we transcend the socialization of modernity. Precisely through such transcending we can become open to include much that is otherwise excluded from our being.

Whitehead locates the divine precisely as that which makes possible and real our being something more than the determined product of the given world. It is our freedom and creativity that witness to the Spirit in the world. But that element of transcending is by no means limited to us. The basic structure of the human occasion of experience is also the basic structure of all unitary events. All are examples of the given world coalescing into a new event, which, nevertheless, finally decides just how it will integrate that world. Especially where there is life, we see the divine gift of transcending everywhere present. Precisely that transcending enriches our relatedness to all.

It is important not to view the relation of freedom and the causal efficacy of the past dualistically. It is not the case that the more the past is effective in the present the less the present experience is self-determining. On the contrary, the relation is polar. The more actively the occasion constitutes itself creatively, the more of the past it can incorporate.

VII

This is quite abstract and therefore hard to grasp. An example may help. I have asserted that independence of thought is not antithetical to sensitive understanding of the past. On the contrary, the more creative our thinking, the more we are able to understand a great diversity of thinking in the past. Con-

versely, the more diverse the past that influences us, the more we are able to think creatively.

This example focuses on thought, whereas thinking is not the primary activity of an occasion of experience. An example that focuses on the emotional level may balance this one. Where there is little transcending, one person can have little empathy with another, or, if one is empathetic, one loses the integrity of one's own feelings. As one matures, however, it is possible to allow the feelings of another to play a major role in shaping one's own feelings without losing the continuity of one's present feelings with those informed by one's personal past. The result is a more complex feeling that is not simply the addition of the two. A skilled counselor can be genuinely empathetic with a client, for example, without losing her emotional self in the process. Indeed, for the client's feelings to overwhelm those of the counselor would destroy the value of the relationship.

The predominant reality of every momentary experience is its reenactment of the past. Intentionally or unintentionally, every feature of the world we have collectively brought into being influences all of us. There is no such thing as an autonomous individual or a self-created person. We are creatures of our world. Education is inevitably and overwhelmingly socialization.

This is not to be deplored. Without the continuity built into the way we are, society could not exist. Our concern must be to socialize people in ways that are as positive as possible both for the future of the persons we are educating and for their contribution to others in the human and wider community.

But as soon as we have said this, we have implied that we have choices as to how to socialize. That implies that we do not think of ourselves as *simply* products of socialization. In writing this essay, I have been aware of how greatly my thinking has been shaped by the culture of the theological seminary in California where I have taught. I have been formed also by my education at the University of Chicago and still more by the family in which I grew up. All of these formative influences have in turn mirrored much in the wider culture. I am overwhelmingly a product of my world, and I am deeply grateful to many of those who constituted that world for me in what I deem a constructive and positive way. I am anything but a "self-made" man.

Nevertheless, I have thought of myself as having options as to just what to say, that is, just what contribution I should make to the given world that influ-ences the reader. I think of myself as having some self-determination as to my contribution to the socialization of others. I am not a *mere* product of my world. To some extent my own decisions influenced the culture of the School of Theology, which in turn shaped me. Even the family of my childhood would have affected me differently if I had affected other members of that family in a different way.

Since I suppose that others are much like myself in these respects, I do not need to think of what I am doing as *simply* socializing them. Of course, I do want to influence, and that means, in the present instance, that I want what I write to flow into the reader. But I do not want it to flow in in a simply determining way. I would like to present ideas in such a way that they would not determine how others think, but would offer new ways of thinking. If I can do that, and if I can present the ideas in such a way that they really do flow into others, then the range of options among which others choose is expanded, the complexity and richness of their self-constitution become greater. The range of their freedom is expanded. It is only as they become freer persons that they can be appropriately influenced by what I write. Out of their creative self-determination they can formulate fresh ideas that are positively or negatively influenced by mine, and they can share them with others so as to expand the freedom of these others as well.

VIII

The goal of education is thus twofold. It is, first, to increase the amount of the given world that can enter constitutively into each occasion of human experience. It is, second, to increase the freedom, transcending, or self-determination in each human experience. If the image of the human being that I have proposed is reflective of what people really are, then these goals are not in opposition to each other. Indeed, each can be effectively pursued only as they are pursued together.

To hold up this goal for *Homo religosus* does not determine methods. People vary as to the context that enables them to grow. This variation is both cultural and individual. The complexity is infinite; the responses of educators should be multifarious. But if we approach the educational task with a common image of the human being, we may be able to support one another in developing and improving many practical approaches to helping people grow. It is to that task that I would like to contribute.

The Foundations of Holism
Some Philosophical and Political Dilemmas

Kathleen Kesson

As the modernist world seems to collapse before our very eyes and the possibility of respiritualization emerges, we as educators need to critically examine the basic tenents of holism from a spiritual perspective.

It is the predawn of a new millennium. Awakening early, restless, we find ourselves unable to sleep. The night is long and full of shadows — remnants of lives come and gone, shades of rememberings, flickers of meanings — a chaos of histories collapsed into the singularity of this moment before dawn. We lie suspended between worlds, undecided whether to linger in dreamtime or to arouse ourselves awake into a future in which the only certainty is that it will be uncertain and unpredictable.

All around us, in every sphere, the world as we have known it is disintegrating. Perhaps never before in our species-history have we lived through such monumental and ever-accelerating changes. It is difficult to find one's footing. The litany of cataclysms, actual and potential, is unrelenting. Fritjof Capra (1983) summed up the human condition as well as anyone, over a decade ago, with this description:

> We find ourselves in a state of profound, worldwide crisis.... [I]t is a complex, multi-dimensional crisis whose facets touch every aspect of our lives — our health and livelihood, the quality of our environment and our social relationships, our economy, technology, and politics.... [I]t is a crisis of intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions; a crisis of scale and urgency unprecedented in human history. (p. 21)

A parallel feature of this oft-recited statement of the problem is the more optimistic notion that amid the general and pervasive *breakdown* of social, political, and ecological systems there is an emergent *breakthrough* in consciousness, a "respiritualization" of the world, a shift in the modernist, mechanistic worldview. The respiritualization of our world, according to many thoughtful observers (Berman 1984; 1990; Kovel 1991; Smith 1982; Griffin 1988; Capra 1983), emerges out of a relatively short historical epoch — a period of "despiritualization" — characterized by the elaboration of a technical rationality, the subduing and harnessing of nature to the logic of

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production, and unprecedented material acquisition for enormous numbers of people:

> Despiritualization occurs at the arrival of technocracy, the deadening of nature and the loss of the sacred, and the breaking up of the organic wholes into isolated fragments. (Kovel 1991, p. 2)

The idea of respiritualization is a compelling reminder that for most of human history, over most of the planet, Spirit, with multiple variations in form, provided a vital, if intangible, principle that suffused existence and served as an organizing center for the activities of daily life. Spiritualities, having been displaced from this defining center by the modern age, lie "scattered about the cultural landscape.... This is a mark of despiritualization" (Kovel 1991, p. 8).

The cracks in the monolith of modernity have now become rather huge fissures, and the reason and the science that were to have brought about a modern utopia now appear to have contained the seeds of their own dissolution. Many of our modern "systems" — systems of meaning, accepted orthodoxies, family structures, nation-states, ecological systems, etc. — are strained to the limit and have begun to exhibit signs of collapse. McLaughlin and Davidson, authors of the book *Spiritual Politics* (1994), suggest that this breakdown of major world systems is a process that is necessary if we are to make the fundamental changes required for the survival of the human species. What seems to be required for this respiritualization is nothing less than a radical shift in our worldview and corresponding behavioral and structural changes. We are, if any of this is to be believed, at a perilous juncture.

Shifting worldviews

The word "world," according to Huston Smith, "denotes inclusiveness: the view in question purports to embrace everything, including regions of being presumed to exist without their nature being known" (1982, p. 18). The word "view" is analogous to eyesight, so a worldview is literally how we see everything in the world, even those things we don't understand. Beyond this, a worldview is the conceptual framework that we bring to our interpretations of what we see. Everyone has a worldview:

> The normal human condition is to live out of a relatively unified understanding of the nature of things, which is partly conscious while being partly and unconsciously taken for granted. (Griffin 1988, p. 100)

It can be problematic to overgeneralize about worldviews, and elsewhere I have criticized contemporary holism's uncritical acceptance of the concept of a paradigm shift, with its assumption that because numbers of mostly white, overeducated, and relatively comfortable members of a privileged class were undergoing similar life crises and transformations of outlook, it could be construed as a worldwide phenomenon (Kesson 1991). Certainly, people who share a common cultural matrix *have* had their perceptions shaped in similar ways. Despite intracultural variations between individuals, there are even more vast intercultural differences. Jamake Highwater (1981), for example, illustrates how Native-American conceptions of such fundamental philosophical categories as time, place, image, motion, sound, and identity total up to a distinctly different way of seeing the world from that of people embedded in Indo-European industrial culture. The postmodern encounter of contrasting worldviews, facilitated through international media, global transportation, and immigration has enabled us to comprehend the contingency of all worldviews upon language, historical circumstance, and cultural narrative. With this relativising of worldviews has come a liminal moment in time — a window of opportunity for reshaping our individual and collective perspectives. It is one thing to describe the outlines of the dominant worldview we are leaving behind; however, given the enormous complexity of the process of "renegotiating worldviews," it is quite another to speculate about what might fill the vacuum left by its demise.

What are some of the components of the worldview said to have outlived its usefulness? Most theorists who write about the holistic vision of the world (Lemkov 1990; Capra 1983) suggest that at the core of the fading vision is a scientism that has, for at least the past 300 years, assumed that it could obtain absolute knowledge of the world by breaking it down into its component parts. The opposition to reductionism is grounded in the notion that the parts cannot be understood in isolation from the whole, that they are, rather, dynamically interrelated and interdependent. Holism also criticizes the epistemology of mechanism (the idea that reality is constructed of dead, inert particles engaged in a random exchange of energy) for its inability to deal with consciousness. The critique has also challenged the many dualisms generated by science — the splitting of subject from object, mind from matter, knower from known, person from nature, reason from emotion, spirit from flesh. Science, according to Huston Smith (1982),

> is restricted in principle to telling us about a part of reality only, that part ... that is beneath us in freedom

and awareness ... and as only aspects of reality that are inferior to us can register in this viewfinder, those being the aspects that we can control, the West has lowered the ceiling on its worldview, forcing us to live in a cramped, inferior world. (p. xii)

Compelling challenges to the mechanistic, reductionist way of perceiving and acting upon the world have come from science itself, with investigations into both the subatomic and the cosmic dimensions of experience providing generative new metaphors for understanding our world (Bohm 1980; Bohm and Peat 1987; Briggs and Peat 1989; Capra 1983; Davies 1983; Jantsch 1980); from ecologists, who stress "the interdependent and unified character of the eco-system as a whole" (Griffin 1988, p. 106); from feminist theory, whose proponents have deconstructed numerous patriarchal myths including the oppressive reign of reason; from humanistic, transpersonal, and depth psychology, which have laid bare the limitations historically imposed upon consciousness; from postcolonial theory and literature, which has disclosed the hegemony of ongoing cultural imperialism while at the same time revealing alternative cultural possibilities; and from the mystical core of the world's religions (Huxley 1949). These emergent (albeit, in some cases, ancient) perspectives have called into question such treasured components of the Western worldview as individualism, the progressive nature of change, unlimited expansion, materialism, anthropocentrism, and the centrality of reason as an organizing principle.

Clearly, the deconstruction of our dominant myths and the synthesis of postmodern ideas and archaic wisdom have opened some doors to the possibility of respiritualization. Voices from the margins of society have filtered into mainstream discourse. (One can visit most bookstores and view shelves of books on topics that were relegated to the "radical fringe" of social/spiritual thought just a few decades ago: feminist thought, new age spirituality, ecology, transpersonal psychology, "new" science, magic, etc.) It is worth noting that this plethora of new ideas and cultural developments is accompanied by an intense backlash and a resurgence of conservatism. We should not, therefore, underestimate the resistance of worldviews to radical change, nor the resolve of dominant groups to shape perspectives according to their vested interests, nor the inevitability that humans will rapidly seek to fill the vacuum created by the loss of certainty with regressive ideologies. If this reading of the cultural pulse is even partially accurate, I think it is time to foreground some of the assumptions of the holistic worldview that have influenced holistic educational thought, open them up to critical inspection, and point out some of the contradictions and dilemmas that they pose.

Central ideas in holism

Education scholars agree that ideas about education have at their core a set of beliefs about the world and the place of humanity in it. Educational aims and goals stem from fundamental philosophical assumptions. Some examples: about human nature (Is the baby at birth a tabula rasa or a unique self to be gradually revealed?); about knowledge (Does it exist outside the human mind or is it individually constructed in interaction with the world? Is it inevitably linguistic in nature?); about the mind itself (Is it a separate substance from matter or immanent in matter?); about consciousness (Is it located in individual brains or is it a nonlocal phenomenon — Is it causal, reciprocal, or merely an epiphenomenon?). This depth of philosophical discussion rarely takes place in teacher education courses. As a result, educational decisions are mostly made at an unconscious, or, at best, pragmatic level. Decisions about curriculum, instruction, and policy issue from taken-for-granted habits, and few school people have either the opportunity or the inclination to engage in a sustained study of philosophical beliefs. This, of course, has been a recipe for the perpetuation of the status quo.

The above questions, however, guide the educational thinking of many holistic educators. John P. Miller, in his book *The Holistic Curriculum* (1988), summarizes the foundational principles, drawn largely from shared assumptions of the world's esoteric traditions, upon which holistic educational theory is based:

1) There is an interconnectedness of reality and a fundamental unity in the universe;

2) There is an intimate connection between the individual's inner or higher self and this unity;

3) In order to see this unity we need to cultivate intuition through contemplation and meditation;

4) Value is derived from seeing and realizing the interconnectedness of reality;

5) The realization of this unity among human beings leads to social activity designed to counter injustice and human (and the balance of the natural world's) suffering.

This set of ideas, while not comprehensive, has supported the emergence and the evolution of many of the theories and practices of holistic educators. Little attention has been paid to the analysis or critique of these fundamental ideas, however; they are often accepted as "givens," which may have contributed to the somewhat cult-like status of holistic education. In other writing, I have concerned myself with holism's relationship to other conceptual frameworks in the field of education (Kesson 1991). I have tried to weigh it against critical theory, which has always seemed to me to hold great promise for the development of freedom, equity, and justice through education. I have tried to weigh it against the challenging perspectives of postmodernism, an analytic that succeeds best when it reveals the multiplicity of subtle and shifting forms that power assumes. It is a delicate dance to apply rational considerations to what is at its core an expression of the nonrational. But I have kept with the task, guided by the conviction that if we continue to explicate the assumptions of those who position themselves on the spiritual transformation end of the social change continuum and those who operate out of a more critical political framework, we may find intersections of common beliefs and commitments that will prove useful in our mutual efforts to better education and build a more livable world.

Modern society thinks of itself as "secular"; however, scratch the surface of the polis and we find that fundamental beliefs have historically been at the center of political life. The contemporary shifting political wind that is blowing our culture ever further to the far right of the horizon portends an increasing focus on the intersection of belief systems and politics. The conservative religious right wing, once a marginal political force, has become one of the most well-funded, well-organized, and powerful political forces in our history.

At this point in the discussion, things get rather complicated, because many conservative religious voices, which would never align themselves with holism, echo a similar disenchantment with the ravages of modernity. At the core of their ideology, however, in contrast to the open and inclusive ideals of holism, is a set of beliefs grounded in a patriarchal vision of the world, a literal interpretation of Biblical scripture, a "survival-of-the-fittest" mentality, and a desire to halt the flow of progressive change. While by no means a monolithic ideology, this set of beliefs seems to feed off fear of the future, fear of difference,

insecurity, greed on the part of those who benefit from the current order of things, and the desire for stronger social control. The coming to power of this ideology has vast implications for education in general, and for those who consider themselves holistic educators, in particular, because schooling is a profoundly political undertaking, with beliefs about human nature and knowledge at its implicit core.

*H*olistic educators must become both more clear about our fundamental philosophical beliefs and more political if we are to effect the changes we hope for in education, or even to hold the ground we have gained.*

I would suggest that the ideas embodied in the holistic worldview, and by extension the ideas of holistic education, are likely, in the current climate, to become hotly contested issues. Holistic educators must become both more clear about our fundamental philosophical beliefs and more political if we are to effect the changes we hope for in education, or even to hold the ground we have gained. Further, I would suggest that the lack of a critical, political perspective may have an unanticipated side effect — the co-optation and assimilation of our ideas into the regime of truth (the worldview) historically opposed by holistic thinkers. An easy example of this sort of co-optation is "cooperative learning," an approach that most holistic educators see as desirable because of its commitment to developing positive social interactions. Cooperative learning, however, with its emphasis on structured teamwork and problem-solving, also meets the current needs of corporate capital, which requires future managers and technicians who will work in "quality circles" on creative problem-solving to ensure capital accumulation in an increasingly competitive global economy. In the spirit of identifying such contradictions, I offer the following critique — not in an effort to repudiate what I believe is a powerful emergent holistic perspective, but rather as an invitation to refine our thinking and our discourse.

Some philosophical, conceptual, and political problems in the holistic worldview

The ideas expressed in this section emerge from both an intellectual examination of some core principles of holism and from personal experience with individuals and groups undergoing transition. I am convinced that many of our theoretical and practical problems result from a misapprehension of the domain of validity to which ideas are applied. As Ron Miller (1991) reminds us,

> It is not appropriate to use spiritual, metaphysical, esoteric approaches to comprehend issues that are essentially personal, communal, social, or global. To do so is to perpetrate the misty idealism that has come to be associated with "New Age" approaches and, unfortunately, with holism itself. (p. 29)

As well, certain holistic concepts, when understood from a level of spiritual insight, reflect complex, subtle, and paradoxical understandings. These same ideas, when interpreted on the level of ego or narrow-mindedness, can foster orthodoxy and rigid thinking. With these caveats in mind, I want to discuss five problems: conceptual fuzziness, system-building, consciousness as causal, a-historicity, and the dilemma of interdependence.

Conceptual fuzziness. In significant ways, holism is the revival of Hegel's theory of internal relations, which itself was

> popularized in the English-speaking world during the last half of the nineteenth century by an upsurge of interest in Hegelian philosophy that was largely inspired by opposition to the growing mechanism and materialism of science. (Phillips, 1976, p. 7)

So the critique of science *is at least* a century old!

The core ideas of this theory are (a) that relations between entities are possible only within a "whole" that embraces them, else there would be no differences and no relations; (b) that entities are altered by the relations into which they enter; and (c) that wholes both qualify and are qualified by their parts. These key components of the theory of internal relations were reconstructed by Ludwig von Bertalanffy in 1948, when he called for the development of a rigorous holism under the rubric of General Systems Theory. The weakness of GST, however, is the ultimately subjective boundaries of any system, which according to Stafford Beer, "make it logically possible to equate any system with the universe itself" (in Phillips 1976, p. 61). But as Bertrand Russell said of Hegel (for whom the Whole *was* the universe) "if all knowledge were knowledge of the universe, there would be no knowledge."

In order for holism to become a workable methodology, one must select viable interrelated entities. This requires a corresponding severing of some relationships — an irreconcilable contradiction to some holists' creed. Phillips (1976) points out many cases where knowledge of highly organized bodies has been derived from the analysis of parts as well as cases where the properties of the whole can only be discovered by studying the whole — suggesting that reduction and holism may be complementary, rather than mutually exclusive, approaches to understanding. I would suggest that we need both the precision of analysis to be gained by reductionism and the expansive perspective gained by holism for a comprehensive theory of knowledge. Ron Miller (1991) has done an excellent job of elucidating the idea of "multiple levels of wholeness," noting that while we need to be concerned with the fundamental interconnectedness of all phenomenon, practical reality suggests that holistic theory "needs to be sensitive and nimble enough to determine which level of wholeness is appropriate to the task at hand."

System-building. Human beings exhibit an enduring tendency to construct unified, coherent, and harmonious systems of thought and meaning. Robert Unger (1975) writes:

> There is no single tendency in the history of modern social thought more remarkable in its persistence or more far-reaching in its influence than the struggle to formulate a plausible version of the idea of totality. (p. 125)

Systems are inherently hierarchical, which is not especially problematic in the study of physical phenomenon, but which presents difficulties when applied to social, cultural, or spiritual experience. Hegel's (1948) theory of spiritual involution and evolution, for example, which is the template for spiritual development theories such as Ken Wilber's (1980, 1981), has its own internal logic, which can be reduced to sets of principles. Sets of principles must remain unquestioned within the framework of a system in order for the system to continue to exist. This partially explains why spiritual groups have such difficulty dealing with dissent and internal critique.

Most holistic versions of reality are, in many ways, flagrant aspirations to system-building. We need only point to anthroposophy, scientology, rosicrucianism, freemasonry, astrology, and various forms of Yoga and Buddhism, not to mention the world's mainstream Western religions, for examples of elaborate system-building. Even McLaughlin and Davidson (1994), in *Spiritual Politics*, while purport-

ing to apply "generic" ancient wisdom principles to modern politics, rely heavily on Alice Bailey's *system* of theosophy as a conceptual framework. It is excruciatingly difficult to move away from our psychological dependence on system-building. Poststructuralist philosophers such as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, however, have pointed out the subtle ways that systems of thought, or "regimes of truth," can perpetuate relations of dominance. We are thus cautioned to examine *all* meaning-systems for their historical roots and genealogies, as well as for the interests they preserve.

The system-building tendency in holism has historically been invoked to justify the existence of a tyrannical state: In ancient Rome, for example, a plebeian revolt was quelled when the tribune Menenius Agrippa argued to the mob that

> the State, like a living body, is a whole; and just as the parts of the body are interrelated and require each other's presence, so with the various strata of society. (in Phillips 1976, p. 1)

We are constantly reminded that we live in a global village and participate in a global economy. Now we hear calls for a global, universal spirituality. Compelling as this idea is, it is worthwhile to remember that spiritual expressions as religions have often been intimately interwoven with the development of states and the consolidation of state power. (We need only note the historical emergence of England as a world power with the institution of the Church of England, the contemporary theocracies of Islam, and the powerful and growing influence of Christianity on the politics of the United States today as reminders of the power of such alliances.) These relationships are not incidental to the political process, they are, as Joel Kovel suggests in his important book *History and Spirit* (1991), "part of the process, and their spiritualities became signifiers of the whole" (p. 8).

The danger of a global, universal spirituality is that it will constitute a *system* constructed and contained to sustain the status quo — a global village that is the macrocosm of the feudal village, which itself was the macrocosm of the human body: with certain people as the head, certain people as the heart, certain people as the busy hands, and certain people as the well-worn, calloused, and bleeding feet. We need to be alert to the "recycling of medieval ontologies" that might support injustice and inequity in any quest for a coherent, meaningful, holistic worldview.

Consciousness as causal: The tyranny of the subjective. This idea, promoted by Willis Harmon, Roger Sperry, and other contemporary holistic thinkers (see Griffin 1988), suggests that the created universe is the product of a Divine Idea (Hegel again) and that the developed spiritual individual becomes a "co-creator" of reality. This is a compelling concept with which I both agree and disagree. I can't deny that I have experienced the "as you think so you become" ideology at work on too many occasions to discount it. A great deal of spiritual maturity is required to understand the "create your own reality" doctrine, however. Understood at a less developed level, it can be invoked to justify gross inequalities when material circumstances are judged to correlate with spiritual sickness, imbalance, or inadequacy. If someone is hungry, or in need, then it must be "karma" of their own making. The "consciousness as causal" argument fails to acknowledge its classist implications. It is easier, after all, to alter one's material conditions if one has access to resources. (Of course, one can always argue that one's class status is concurrent with one's level of spiritual development — or "karma" — a qualification that must remain beyond the scope of this paper!) A fuller theory of causality must draw upon the powerful work done in recent years on the sociology of knowledge, the dynamics of racism, the impact of social class, and the effects of patriarchy, and acknowledge the role of material, historical conditions on the construction of consciousness and the creation of "reality." This is an area in which the work of critical theory could prove invaluable to holistic theory.

A-historicity. This is related to the "consciousness as causal" dilemma. If, in fact, one believes that consciousness is the root cause of material phenomena, then it is an easy step to believing that if one can just change his or her "consciousness" (through suggestion, hypnosis, affirmations, meditation, etc.), then one can be free of deterministic historical circumstances. One's "story" does not really matter anymore; one can make oneself anew (reprogram oneself) with each deep breath. I am increasingly suspicious of this possibility and its conceptual connection to modern, mobile corporate culture. While the power of the idea lies in the possibility of freedom from the chains of circumstances, the weakness of it is the extent to which it attempts to set the individual outside of culture and community. A-historicity wants us to forget — our roots, our cultural specificity, our narratives, our communal connections —

and I would suggest that this state of mind makes it ever so much easier to homogenize the human race and gear it toward the standardized artifacts of a global consumerism. Critical postmodern discourses of identity and difference could provide a powerful "corrective" to this tendency of holism.

> **P**erhaps we should shift our focus away from initiating students into a new worldview and toward helping students become aware of how their way of seeing the world has been shaped by a multitude of mostly unconscious influences.

The dilemma of interdependence. The new holistic worldview implies, when taken to its logical conclusion, a radical reconceptualization of the self, a rethinking of the atomistic individual and the notion of the private mind. The vision of reality generated by some physicists (Bohm 1980), philosophers such as Whitehead (1929), and deep ecologists (see Callicott 1989) as a complex, fluid, and dynamic network of relations suggests a loosening of the boundaries that have until now clearly differentiated the self from the not-self. Jung's theory of the collective unconscious with its eruption of archetypal energies, Bohm's notion of an enfolded implicate order in which all describable events, objects, and entities are but abstractions "from an unknown and undefinable totality of flowing movement" (1983, p. 49), and the idea of a unitary consciousness emphasized in the many doctrines of the perennial philosophy (Huxley 1949), from which so many holists draw their inspiration, all suggest a convergence of the isolate subject and the object of perception: the whole world, in Bohm's words, "is internally related to our thinking processes through enfoldment in our consciousness" (in Griffin 1988, p. 67). James Hillman (1992), with coauthor Michael Ventura, attempts a radical redefinition of self consistent with these emergent ideas:

> I would rather define self as the 'interiorization of community'.... [I]f the self were defined as the interiorization of community, then the boundaries between me and another would be much less sure ... and 'others' would include not just other people, because community, as I see it, is something more eco-

logical, or at least animistic. A psychic field. And if I'm not in a psychic field with others — with people, buildings, animals, with trees — *I am not* (italics mine). (p. 40)

As Donald Evans points out in his book *Spirituality and Human Nature* (1993), the level of openness required for this state of consciousness requires a surrender of the will. This pooling of our energy with others raises the quite reasonable fear of being taken over by others. There is no shortage of examples of how powerful personalities have indeed used the surrender of others to their personal advantage. It is one of the paradoxes of mysticism that one needs to surrender the self-inflating will that tries to control everything, without lapsing into infantile, dependent passivity:

> The message of surrender to God, received prematurely in a person's life, is almost certain to be misunderstood in a misleading and destructive way. It is confused with passivity, conformity, resignation, or submission to this or that person, group, or book. (Evans 1993, p. 94)

Genuine openness, according to Evans, involves a stance that transcends both ego and dependency. It is a delicate balance, however, and one that reflects my earlier concerns about "domains of validity." Clearly, surrender is more appropriate at some levels of development and maturity than at others. I believe that one of the most important educational issues to be discussed in the dialogue around holism, is the extent to which holistic educators should attempt to cultivate attitudes of surrender and receptivity in their students (see Kesson 1993).

When we juxtapose the conceptual fuzziness of holism, its tendency toward system-building, the consciousness-as-causality position, the a-historicity characteristic of most holisms, and the blurring of personal and communal boundaries suggested by interdependence, it is easy to see how the holistic mindset invites abuses of personal and institutional power. As we have seen over and over again, people often gravitate toward charismatic leaders as they begin to open up to intense inner experience. We are a spiritually immature culture, with few templates for mystical experience, few qualified teachers, and few support structures for spiritual exploration. Principles of mysticism are double-edged swords and, when understood from an immature frame of reference, can accommodate fascist tendencies; emptying the mind, for example, can allow one to hear the inner voice of intuitive wisdom, or the conditioned messages of authoritarianism. The exhortation to "be here now" can bring one fully and com-

pletely into the moment, or can cause one to neglect crucial historical data. The suggestion to "go with the flow" can be the highest expression of the Tao, or submission to a charismatic personality. Receptivity can be to divine guidance or to the persuasions of a consumer culture. All of these paradoxical tendencies are exacerbated by the particular historical moment in which we live.

Many of the ideas that inspire holistic thinkers originate in cultures characterized by ancient traditions, an abiding sense of rootedness and place, meaningful social connections, and shared, coherent worldviews. We, on the other hand, exist in a culture that is with few exceptions shallow, fleeting, mobile, fragmented, and alienated. Our desires have been shaped by more or less constant streams of images and persuasive messages. Our communities have lost their cohesiveness. We are attempting to orient ourselves spiritually in an historical moment distinguished by an increasingly unified world system, which is linked by powerful technologies of information and surveillance and dominated by a capitalist elite, and it is a system that has facilitated the implementation of bureaucratic control over every aspect of human life. Acknowledging the impossible contradictions of our condition, Kovel (1991) poses a challenging question:

> Can we develop a notion of "being" radical enough to encompass spiritual possibilities, yet one which leads in the direction of emancipation rather than fascism ... or is fascism the logical outgrowth of spirituality in the modern age? (p. 39)

It is to this provocative question that I turn in the next section.

Toward a radical spirituality

Given the exhausting list of problems I have raised with the holistic worldview, one might conclude that I am an opponent of it. On the contrary, I believe that it is a likely, possibly even an inevitable evolution as we near the exhaustion of materialism and modernism. To sum up my critique of holism, I have suggested that most of its forms are rooted in the very modernist assumptions it proposes to overcome. A postmodern analysis would identify elements in holism such as the essential and eternal self, the totalistic view of history, the teleology of evolutionary progress, and the coherence of its metaphysical systems as modern, Western ideas, rather than as elements of a radical new postmodern paradigm. Postmodern criticism has identified the ways in which these modernist ideas have supported oppression, hegemony,

colonialism, and the exploitation of people and nature in the service of growth, "development," and economic expansion (see Sarup 1993). Thus constrained in part by the paradigm it proposes to overthrow, holism remains vulnerable to the consequences of other modernist ideologies (such as state communism and imperialism).

The problematic relationship of specific spiritualities and fascistic tendencies is a crucial question because of the global nature of the prophesied events. In the book *Spiritual Politics,* McLaughlin and Davidson (1994) state that

> Group consciousness is the next step for humanity, as we expand our identification from our family, to our community, to our nation, and finally, to the planet. (p. 296)

The description they furnish of this universal perspective is compelling. We shall each become, they suggest

> fully oneself and fully united with others. Unity in diversity is the solution; respecting individual differences but affirming commonalities. (p. 293)

There is no question that in order to begin to solve the pressing global problems facing humanity, we must develop what Peter Russell calls a "global brain" — with the capacity to think beyond individual and national self-interest, to discern the systemic nature of events and phenomena, and to identify with an increasingly expanded frame of reference. I am certainly partial to the idea of the peaceful evolution of our collective consciousness. As a cautionary note, however, we should be mindful of the tendencies, within an ideal of unity, to gloss over or suppress difference, to reject critique as negative thinking, and to avoid conflict in the interest of false harmony. Jim Moffett, in his book *The Universal Schoolhouse* (1994), affirms spirituality as a process of "identifying with other people and creatures, and ultimately with the All, yet cautions that

> unifying must not occur by destroying or swallowing up the lesser wholes that it embraces — the cultures, subcultures, and individuals, all of which are entitled to their own integrity. Within the unification, there needs to take place decentralization. (p. 295)

Few spiritual thinkers concern themselves with institutional analyses or the structure of the economy. I suspect that this might be related to faith in the "consciousness-as-causal" doctrine (if we can just get everybody's neurons reorganized, everything else will straighten itself out!). I think this is a crucial weakness of the holistic worldview. Economic analysis has been "left in the hands of the Left," who end

up sounding like economic determinists because of their continued commitment to structural analysis. To Kovel (1991), however, the dynamic that underlies the symptoms of an alienated society is specific to our form of economic organization:

> it is capitalism which has created modernity in such a way that traditional spirituality has been eroded. And it is capitalism that remains spirit's greatest antagonist. (p. 9)

In late capitalism, characterized by the tacit realization of looming scarcity and a corresponding hunger to accumulate and hoard, the market can and will assimilate any emergent human need into its system. Authentic desires emerge, become commodified, are incorporated into images, products, and experiences, and sold back to the desirous body, neutralized and robbed of their force. The market offers enormous possibilities for individuation and identity construction, effecting a new kind of freedom that does not have the capacity to threaten the existing political order and its power relations. We need only note the commercialization of the counterculture and its inscription into the logic of the market as a painful example of this process. It is a dynamic from which the holistic community has not been immune (as just one example of spiritual consumerism, note the recent market fascination with angels).

If as Kovel suggests, capitalism is Spirit's greatest antagonist, and if we take seriously the possibility of respiritualization, then Spirit must, in this historical moment, name, interrogate, and exorcise its demon. This suggests to me the importance of a spirituality that is at once open, universal, reflective, questioning, idiosyncratic, critical, courageous, appropriately irreverent, suspicious of grand systems and metanarratives, and rooted in the particularities of place, time, and community. It is beyond the scope of this paper to propose what forms of economic organization a radically respiritualized culture might assume, only to note that there are compelling models emerging in the literature of Green politics, (Prout 1989; Sakar 1989), workplace democracy and worker-owned corporations, and social ecology, to name just a few sources.

Schools as sites of transformation

In the new world order promoted by McLaughlin and Davidson (1994), they highlight the principles proposed by Alice Bailey more than 50 years ago that are central to her prescription for global organization. Fortunately, the principles preclude the imposition of standardized forms of government and religion; however, she does prescribe standardization in the sphere of education: "In one particular only should there be an attempt to produce unity, and that will be in the field of education (Bailey 1954, p. 319).

I won't go into detail about Bailey's educational ideas here, other than to say they promote generally sound principles of right relationship, world citizenship, and the development of spiritual faculties. I would suggest, for anyone interested in the educational agenda of many holistic thinkers, that they read *Education in the New Age* (1954), in which Bailey develops her ideas further. Clearly many holistic educators agree with her that a global educational mandate is called for if we are to stem the tide of devastation brought about by wrong thinking on a global scale. For me, however, given the problematics of the holistic worldview that I outlined in earlier sections of this paper, some central educational questions might be: How might we cultivate attitudes necessary to the survival and peaceful evolution of the planet — such as connection, compassion, empathy, and spirituality — while at the same time strengthening the will of people to recognize, name, and resist domination? How can we develop a unity without homogenization? How might we achieve a "global mind" without sacrificing the particulars of time, place, and culture?

After having been involved in educational reform at every level of activity (international, national, state, district, and building), I am more and more drawn to the politics of the local, for I believe that it is here where genuine and lasting change will occur. I find myself more inclined toward the decentralization of what goes on in schools, rather than any centralization, *especially* on a global scale. Certainly, given the tragic state of our planet, there are core ideas that we would like everyone to be exposed to: a sense of our common humanity, the celebration of and the cultivation of respect for difference, knowledge of the fragility of our ecosystems and awareness of how to establish right relationships within them, understanding of how systems of power and regimes of truth have historically operated to perpetuate inequities, etc. But aside from achieving some sort of agreement about broad, universal ideas, any paradigm shift in our way of thinking must evolve organically from particular cultural contexts. One major problem with holistic education is that it has often been so visionary that it has positioned itself outside the boundaries of people's everyday concerns, desires, and understandings. Effective

educational visionaries must always be prepared to work incrementally — to take the next small steps in the direction of a more expanded vision of education. And these steps are likely to be different in every context.

Another problem, as I see it, is the concern of holistic educators with changing the worldview of their students. Earlier, I noted the intransigence of worldviews, the difficulty of effecting radical shifts in perspectives, and the intractable politics of this effort. I continue to take exception with some holistic educators who wish to resort to techniques such as subliminal programming, suggestology, and other refinements of conditioning techniques to evoke a new way of seeing the world (Kesson 1993). These and other techniques that have fallen under the rubric of holistic education, whether they be named Whole Brain Learning, Affective Education, Accelerated Learning, or Visualization, can all be invoked to serve any master. There is nothing inherently emancipatory about any of them. They are only meaningful in a context of cultural examination, critique, and empowerment. We can expect that these ideas will be accepted as long as they don't threaten the status quo. They will be easily assimilated into mainstream education, as we have seen with cooperative learning — until they manifest their critical potential. Then we may see the battle over belief — as the powers that be rouse a conservative citizenry to oppose unorthodox impulses. Perhaps we should shift our focus away from initiating students into a new worldview and toward helping students become aware of how their way of seeing the world has been shaped by a multitude of mostly unconscious influences.

Chet Bowers (1984, 1987) has helped me to understand the complexity of how our worldviews are thoroughly encoded in our language, our social relations, our body movements, our architecture, and our institutions. One of the important roles education can play, according to Bowers, is the making explicit of what has been taken for granted, which creates "liminal moments" or opportunities in which worldviews might be renegotiated. One of the greatest educational problems we face today is the apathy and nihilism that many students express. The enormous scale of world problems and the seeming impenetrability of the power structure combine to foster a sense of hopelessness and disempowerment in them. We must help them to see that worldviews and world events are created by human beings, and that it is within the power of human beings to create alternatives. This requires, first, a critical analytic, a deconstruction of "what is" to make way for "what might be," and only then, a reconstructive vision inspired by idealism, hope, and a language of possibility. This is an enormous educational and political project and will require the collaboration and cooperation of educational and political critics and holistic visionaries.

> *We should help students become aware of how their way of seeing the world has been shaped by a multitude of mostly unconscious influences.*

Krishnamurti, one of the eminent spiritual philosophers, spoke wisely against the conditioning of our minds by *any* political or religious ideology. In all of his writings, he illuminates essential cognitive tensions between openness and critique, receptivity and analysis, reflection and judgment. We must, he says, ask questions and doubt everything on this earth — our conclusions, ideas, opinions, judgments — and yet also know when not to doubt (Krishnamurti 1953, 1972). His pedagogical intent is the genuine liberation of the mind. All who share this intent might heed his wisdom. Deconstruction, carried to excess, consumes and discards spirit in the process (Kovel 1991, p. 230). Critique without hope can back us into a corner of despair. The holistic vision, absent reason and a solid grounding in concrete, historical reality, is irrelevant. Each of these positions alone is incapable of effecting genuine transformation. Together, they might transform the world.

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Social Transformation and Holistic Education
Limitations and Possibilities

David E. Purpel

Educators must begin the task of redefining the social, economic, and political ideologies that support education with imagination and humility.

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I believe that the term "educators" has had a misleading and problematic effect, for it has enabled us to participate in the fiction that educational issues have a reality of their own apart from their social and cultural context. At its most distorted, the term "educator" can mean a person who is an expert on what and how students learn, i.e., a skilled technician or craftsperson who specializes in what happens in the classroom. This distortion has at least two important troubling dimensions: first, there is the myth that the educational process can be separated from the historical and social context, and second, there is the absurdity that educators are primarily, if not only, educators.

Educators, like everyone else, are responsible for the creation, preservation, and/or re-creation of a social system or, if you prefer, a community. Whatever else people are called upon to do, they have the inevitable, agonizing, and exhilarating task of constructing ways in which we are to live with each other. Each of us participates willy-nilly in this extraordinarily vital process, however unaware we might be, however tiny or major our impact, however beneficial or destructive the contribution.

Some people (e.g., educators) are lucky enough to be in positions where they are explicitly called upon to articulate and act upon a vision of the good life. I often tell my students that there are no such things as educational issues, there are instead a number of moral, spiritual, philosophical, psychological, social, and cultural issues that get expressed and acted out in educational settings. In that same spirit, let me add that there are no educators per se, but more profoundly, there are moral and spiritual leaders who exercise their responsibilities in the context of educational settings. These moral and spiritual educators presumably have some strong ideas as to what

is involved in imagining and developing a life of individual and communal meaning and their particular work has two aspects: 1) the creation of an educational community that in critical ways reflects that broader vision; and 2) the creation of teaching and learning activities that can nurture and nourish that vision. The real issue is clearly not what specific term we use to call ourselves but more importantly, how we name our work, and I would suggest that the naming must reflect our awareness of our deep and intense involvement in the inevitable, awesome, and continuous process of creating community. Indeed, John Dewey has defined education as "the making of a world."

Certain processes and institutions are inevitable in developing community, most notably a moral framework that informs a political and economic system that creates and distributes the rights, responsibilities, and rewards of citizenship, i.e., a system of justice. However, what holistic educators know only too well is that these political and economic policies and institutions interact with other important dimensions of our lives and, moreover, we must insist on an education that seeks to integrate *all* facets of human life, being sure to avoid a one-sided or distorted vision of human being.

There is, of course, some intended ironic criticism here since it has been my view that, by and large, holistic educators have tended to focus much more on the personal and spiritual than on the social and moral dimensions of education. This is ironic to me because I believe that in their zeal to rightfully point out how conventional educators have a truncated vision of learning, holistic educators tend to substitute an equally truncated, albeit more aesthetically satisfying, vision of learning. It is quite true that holistic educators are making an enormously important contribution to our society and culture by emphasizing such neglected areas as the intuitive, the artistic, the creative, and the mythopoetic and for that they deserve our thanks and approbation. What is spectacularly exciting is that the conceptual framework of the current holistic education movement provides for the possibility of a *truly* holistic education — one that seeks to integrate the inner self with the outer self and thereby connect the personal with our social, cultural, moral, political, and economic contexts.

Not only must we be wary of a narrow professionalism that renders our work as being in "the field of education," we must also be suspicious of formulas that proclaim the importance of "keeping politics out of education," as if that were even possible. We must also guard against the preciousness that seeks to keep us all shielded from the harsh realities of social injustice and political oppression. Perhaps most importantly of all, we must have the courage to confess to and witness the ways that we and the educational system are part of a system that has created, sustained, and legitimized this injustice and oppression. Not only must we be fully aware of our political, economic, and social contexts, but we must reaffirm and renew our commitments to our social vision of the just, loving, and joyous community.

To be an educator without a social vision is like being an artist without an aesthetic and to be a holistic educator without a social vision is to be like an artist without a soul. However, it is not that easy since what we want is not any old social vision but one that enables us to transcend to a consciousness of beauty, love, and compassion. Indeed, it is vital to be reminded that conventional education does in fact reflect a social and cultural vision and in so doing, it serves a particular political and economic ideology. Let us then take a look at the relationship between the dominant educational discourse and how it is related to social, political, and economic considerations.

The dominant ideology puts an incredible amount of emphasis on the difficulty that the U.S. has had in maintaining its military and economic primacy in the face of foreign competition and that our prosperity depends on our reestablishing that supremacy. It is this ideology that drives the current reform movement that stresses so-called higher standards, greater mastery of knowledge, greater reliance on test scores, and more demanding instructional techniques. This orientation is neatly captured in President Clinton's 1994 State of the Union speech in which he said in the context of voicing support for alternative forms of schooling that such efforts are worthwhile "as long as we measure every school by one high standard: Are our children learning what they need to know to compete and win in the global economy?" This is hardly ambiguous and its bluntness and vulgarity should hardly be surprising since it represents, I believe, mainstream public opinion and the primary focus of professional energies.

In an increasingly global economy marked by extraordinarily intense competition, corporations are engaged in a frenzy of efforts to, if not gain an edge, at least survive. Mergers, buy-outs, downsizing, lay-

offs, union-busting are obvious manifestations of this hysteria spurred on by the fantasy of enormous wealth and power as well as the nightmare of being wiped out. This kind of vicious competition has contributed to a very significant reduction in the number of satisfying job opportunities and to incessant and cold-blooded efforts to reduce personnel costs. The result is a sense of unease and anxiety among us all as we become increasingly vulnerable to economic misfortune, threatening not only such material things as savings, medical care, and educational opportunities but also our hopes and dreams for peace and justice.

What *must* be understood is that these trends are reflected *in* and facilitated *by* current educational policies and practices, or at the very least, that is what most of our political and educational leaders are advocating. Schools, community colleges, and universities are all being asked to teach more technical and vocational skills, to be more selective and demanding with students, to test more, and to create closer partnerships with business. This is *not* about nourishing souls, it is not about individuation or even about encouraging learning. It *is* about harnessing educational institutions to the President's vision of "competing and winning" in the race to be the richest and most powerful nation of all.

The thrust behind the establishment of state-financed and state-controlled compulsory education in the 19th century (which was strongly resisted by a number of different groups for a variety of compelling reasons) was to require a common school experience for all children in an effort to create a common American culture. They would be required to pray and read the Christian Bible and learn the traits expected of the WASP middle class: piety, respect for authority, cleanliness, obedience, perseverance, hard work, civility, and delay of gratification. Such traits not only constituted the ethos of the dominant cultural vision but not surprisingly meshed with the requirements of the new industrial order with its insatiable demand for compliant and reliable workers. I would submit that this agenda still operates even though it is clear that the rhetoric has been somewhat altered in response to changes in the form in which these issues are currently framed. There is at least one major exception to this generalization and that, ironically enough, has to do with the emphasis on democracy, which had a very clear, strong, and urgent place on the agenda of 19th century advocates for compulsory common schooling. How

different it would be if President Clinton had suggested that the one standard for schools be not "winning in the global economy" but instead nourishing and deepening the spirit of democracy.

Response

If we have anything in common as professionals, citizens, and humans, we have responsibilities and we all have the ability to respond. If educational institutions do, in fact, have an effect on society, then presumably they can be a force for positive transformation as well as for the maintenance of the status quo. How then are we as educators to respond to the social, cultural, and economic crises of our time particularly if we are to accept the premise that we are inevitably involved in them whether we like it or not? To borrow from a familiar slogan — can we move from being part of the problem to being part of the solution?

I must necessarily begin with a confession that I take the tragic view of life, i.e., I see our lives as fated to involve heroic and virtuous struggles that ultimately end in failure. I resonate with the Sisyphean experience of meaning and dignity deriving from continuous and never-ending engagement in the task of creating a better world in the face of an awareness of its futility. This is based not only on my own perhaps impoverished inner spirit but on an analysis of the effects of various social movements for reform and political struggles for genuine revolution and transformation. The story of such efforts certainly contains many truly inspiring sagas of courage and determination as well as solid and enduring successes. Yet many of the gains are short-lived and even if some problems are resolved, new even more difficult ones appear. The story of public education in America is surely a case in point for, in spite of the imagination and perseverance of thousands of dedicated and talented educators and the availability of any number of wonderful ideas and programs, the sad reality of the matter is that, in general, schools are less creative, less playful, less joyful, and less stimulating than they were 10 or 15 years ago. We have made very little if any progress in reducing hostility, violence, racism, sexism, homophobia, and warfare. Poverty and homelessness persist while the standard of living and sense of security continues to erode even for the middle class. Our economists seem, in spite of their brilliance, unable to either understand or manage an economy that is cruel and relentless. Welfare programs seem to be counter-pro-

ductive, pesticides turn out to be deadly to humans, and antibiotics produce ever stronger, more dangerous viruses.

I do not see this view as necessarily cynical or despairing because for me it is very strongly tempered by the majesty of human persistence in the teeth of this storm of resistance to our earnest efforts. I joyfully join with those who would damn the torpedoes, light candles, or fight the good fight or who use any other cliché that celebrates the human impulse to participate in the covenant of creation. Indeed, I have to admit that I scorn the view that pessimism is an excuse for passivity and inaction. However, having said that, I need also to confess my parallel antipathy

Educators are social leaders, cultural advocates, moral visionaries, spiritual directors who choose to do their leading, advocating, visioning, and directing in institutions labeled schools and universities.

to sentimentality, i.e., a consciousness of mindless optimism that is a product of blindness, denial, wishful thinking, and fear. My position is that we must not be daunted by the magnitude of the task of creating a just and joyful community, but we must not add to its difficulty by underestimating what is involved. I am continuously energized by the Talmudic admonition that even though the task is not ours to finish, we are not free from the responsibility of engaging in the task.

Secondly, the task of creating cultural and social transformation is greatly magnified by two powerful, if not embarrassing, realities: 1) in spite of all our crises and fears, the dominant ideology of growth, achievement, success, privilege, individualism, and conquest is extremely alive and well and thrives in most if not all of us; and 2) relatedly, there are no broad alternative ideologies that are accessible to the public that could compete with the dominant ideology. The spirit of free enterprise and the sanctity of the concept of market are triumphant, virtually uncontested (especially with the collapse of the Soviet system and the weakening of the social democratic movements in the West), and venerated not only as

ultimate truth but as a thing of beauty. There can be no greater indictment of our entire culture and particularly of our entire educational program than this shocking state of affairs — that with all our knowledge and with all our creativity, imagination, and sensibilities, we find ourselves without a serious competitor to a system that is killing us with its popularity. If nothing else, this speaks to an immense failure in imagination but at a deeper level, it represents the triumph of one set of spirits over another. The spirits of individual gain, self-gratification, hedonism, competition, and possessiveness are beating the pants off the spirits of interdependence, peace, joy, and love. Our culture demands ever more products, thrills, innovations, titillations, scandals, sensations, daring-dos, outrageousness; it is ever more mean-spirited and vengeful, increasingly paranoid, violent, and destructive. The dissenting elements of the culture surely provide a great deal of criticism but precious little in the way of affirmation. Ironically enough, one of the few groups offering some alternative is the Christian Right, which, however, insists on wrapping the banner of capitalism around the Cross. It, therefore, becomes an imperative that educators accept their responsibility to participate in the process of not only providing and using the tools of cultural and social criticism but nurturing and expressing the impulses of affirmation. Criticism without affirmation not only is a contradiction in terms but carries with it the destructive elements of sterility and paralysis. At the same time, let it be said that affirmation without criticism is not only intellectually suspect, it is fraught with the possibility of dogmatism and self-righteousness.

At this point, it is essential to temper my pessimism about the absence of alternative social-political-economic paradigms by celebrating the enormous amount of energy and talent that is being expended in the effort to make for a more just and peaceful society as expressed in innumerable projects and movements. I have in mind comprehensive and ambitious programs as reflected in the ecology movement with its myriad projects in recycling, consciousness raising, educational activities, legislative efforts, political lobbying, and activist campaigns. There are many parallel efforts in other realms — concern for child abuse, civil rights, the handicapped, and world peace, women's rights, liberation movements for any number of oppressed groups, the labor movement, gun control, concern for the homeless, for refugees, for the starving, and, this is

the main point, far too many to mention and to know. The spirit of the sixties was not born in that era, it was and *is*, a reenergized and renewed expression of the American and human tradition of giving a damn, of responding to ancient and deeply felt impulses to transcend existing limitations to a consciousness of love, joy, and peace for all, and of the celebration of the mystery and beauty of life. That spirit is very much alive in the 1990s as reflected not only in major programs like the ones I have just mentioned, but also in the innumerable and unpublicized daily acts of social responsibility, communal involvement, and personal engagement such as doing volunteer work; political campaigning; comforting the sick, the afflicted, and the wounded; speaking up at PTA meetings and in legislative bodies for reform; writing letters to the editor; and, just as important, actively witnessing the pain and suffering in the land. Such efforts must be strongly recognized, joyfully celebrated, and widely disseminated for a number of very important reasons beginning with the necessity to provide support and encouragement for those involved. In addition, it is vital to resist the rising tide of understandable and somewhat justifiable despair that is being fanned into a consciousness of futility by a campaign of disinformation that claims that the 1960s was really about drugs, sex, and rock and roll and that the flower children of that era are now all stockbrokers. Those who want to hold on to the present paradigm want very much for us to believe that we have lost our sense of idealism, hope, and commitment and it is vital that we give the lie to that self-serving slander.

We must also be in touch with these positive movements and activities in order to join with them, to form coalitions, to learn from them, and to contribute to them. In a broader sense, what I am strongly suggesting is that educators need to align their work with other groups and movements as an important part of their involvement in and responsibility for the continuing development and creation of community, culture, and society. In this context, I want to reiterate my notion that we must work to broaden the concept of educator to go beyond someone skilled in classroom and school activities to one who connects classroom and school to a social and cultural vision. Educators are social leaders, cultural advocates, moral visionaries, spiritual directors who choose to do their leading, advocating, visioning, and directing in institutions labeled schools and universities. We must always be mindful that the public

and most private schools were not and are not set up for deep social and cultural transformation; actually it's the opposite, for they function primarily as preservers and conservers, as forces of stability, continuity, and predictability. In this sense, we as educators are already aligned with particular social and political forces and if we want to teach "against the grain of history," it would make a great deal of sense to do so explicitly, consciously, and deliberately. It also makes sense for those of us interested in working for social transformation to team up with like-minded people who happen to operate in different but complementary realms. In this way, educators can participate in the dialogue, help shape the strategy, and develop the policies that provide for a far greater degree of articulation between educational and political, social, economic, and cultural matters. This makes sense for two other reasons — first, it would be more honest and forthright to acknowledge the inherent interconnections and, second, this process is going on anyway but without the significant proactive involvement of the profession. It is no accident, for example, that many if not most schools are now replete with computers for they are there because particular businesses and industries planned for them to be there. In other words, educators are usually called upon to figure out how to use their expertise to further the goals of certain others — politicians, economists, business leaders, and cultural leaders. I say that it is time that educators be involved in the process of which social, economic, political, and cultural goals need and ought to be furthered.

One very important implication of such an analysis for educators has to do with the significance and limitations of particular curriculum and instructional practices, especially those that are appealing, humane, imaginative, wise, and constructive, i.e., the good kind. Alas, I have concluded with many others that such wonderful ideas and programs as cooperative learning, peer teaching, whole language expressive writing, and nature walks will by themselves have little impact on social and cultural transformation unless they are integrated into a holistic concept in which the boundaries between education and society become very blurred. We must end the delusions of single variable research, namely that we can isolate and separate educational elements and that a limited amount of significant change on a small scope will ultimately lead to significant change on a grand scale. No, my friends, the answer is not

more imaginative curriculum and more sensitive instruction when the question is how education can contribute to the creation of a more just and loving world. The answer lies more in seeing such work as absolutely necessary but clearly insufficient; in connecting our classroom to our spiritual and cultural visions; and in accepting the reality that our social, cultural, economic, and political structures are integral and inevitable elements of the school curriculum. If we insist, however, on using a discourse that posits a sharp distinction between society and education, then I would have to say that changes in the culture and society will come much before changes in the schools and not vice versa. There is yet another possibility and that is to be far more humble and modest about the significance of our work as educators, which seems always appropriate if not potentially liberating but nonetheless has the danger of being implicitly irresponsible and collusive. It is, however, possible to hold on to the requirements of both humility and responsibility by seeing ourselves as part of a larger struggle not only in collaboration with others but in connection with those who precede and follow us.

Having said all that, let me hasten to add that working to improve and enrich the lives of students within the school boundaries is a vital and necessary part of our work, and when we do so, we are striving to respond to our highest moral and spiritual aspirations. In fact, it must be said that life in the classroom *is* the real world in those moments; not only a preparation *for* life but *part of* life itself. We must therefore affirm, support, and honor those who have worked and continue to work courageously and creatively on a day-to-day, week-to-week, year-to-year basis for an education that is loving, nourishing, and stimulating. Such work sustains and warms us all and undoubtedly contributes not only to short-range gains but to longer lasting ones as well.

We can here again take a cue from holistic education by being mindful of the differences and connections between microcosm and macrocosm. In a very profound sense, every moment in the classroom is a sacred one and has within it the possibility of transcendence and connection. In that sense, the classroom itself becomes an arena for the struggle or, if you will, a place that invites the possibility of transforming the banal to the profound, the vulgar to the beautiful, and the profane to the sacred. Alas, it also provides the possibility within the power of the alchemy of education of turning gold into dross and

innocence into savagery. Indeed I believe the stakes are that high, and if they are not, we needn't bother and fuss so much over our work, but the fact that they are endows our frustrations with the mark of tragedy and our perseverance with the glow of majesty.

What more can be done?

I want now to speak more directly to issues regarding what we as educators might do to respond to our social, political, and economic crises (notice I did not say educational crisis) in addition to striving to connect enriching and life-giving classroom experiences with other complementary cultural and social movements. I especially want to address the matter of the particular contribution that those in holistic education could make to this effort. Before I get to that, however, I want to mention what I believe is perhaps the most important contribution all educators can make to the well-being of our society and culture and that is the matter of informing the public. As I have stressed, education in a democracy is ultimately a matter of public policy and, as such, its shape and content must be determined through public dialogue, debate, and decision. Our democratic principles require that this dialogue and debate be guided by reasoned, informed, and open-minded processes. Unfortunately, I find the quality of public discourse on education to be appalling in its simplistic and reductionist analysis as well as the dreariness and conventionality of its visions of change. This is not inevitable for there is good reason to believe that public discourse in general has deteriorated over time as evidenced, for example, in what appears to have been a very sophisticated and impassioned public debate in the mid-19th century over the issue of mandating publicly financed compulsory schooling. The current sad state of public discourse is by no means limited to cabs, barrooms, and talk shows but can be heard in legislative halls, the offices of government officials, the boardrooms of corporate America, and the towers of academe. The quote from the President's State of the Union speech that I cited is noteworthy not only for its crudeness and vulgarity but for its resonance with mainstream, middle-class public opinion. Indeed, when President Bush announced his mindlessly shallow Education 2000 program, the Democrats complained bitterly that the Republicans had stolen their ideas! I regret to say that this deplorable state of public discourse on education has been aided and abetted by our profession in acts of both commission and omission. Although

it is not for the profession by itself to make public policy on education, it has a vital role in informing, shaping, and clarifying the dialogue and debate. It can do this by virtue of its expertise and experience by providing thoughtful, thorough, and critical reflections on the issues and by insisting that the public take these reflections seriously. In this way, the profession can act as the intellectual and professional conscience of the public. However, it is my experience that the profession withholds a great deal of its insights and understandings from the public and is more likely to provide material that is more technical than substantive, more sentimental than critical, and more distracting than candid. I see nothing to be gained and a great deal to be lost when the profession plays the role of enabler in the public's fatal addiction to avoidance and denial.

As educators and citizens, we may often feel overwhelmed by the magnitude of the transformative task to the point of despair and paralysis. Willis Harman, the president of the Noetic Institute, in response to the question of what individuals might do in the face of the enormity of what is required, has provided a useful and succinct framework for action. He makes three basic suggestions: 1) Each of us needs to engage in a process of inner transformation by reflecting on our identity, our inner struggles, our personal agenda, our individual denials and avoidances, and the way we mess up our best intentions; 2) Each of us should participate in some kind of worthwhile local activity such that we have a chance to make some kind of discernible difference and to get some clear and speedy feedback on our efforts; and 3) Each of us should confront the reality that our whole social system, including all its destructive and dysfunctional forms, is supported by beliefs that we individually and collectively choose, accept, and sustain. He says that it is his experience that the ability to admit that the beliefs that we have bought into (such as our enthusiasm for a consumer economy) are actually contributing to our crises is the most difficult of the three suggestions for people to adopt. This is probably because it requires us to face our own complicity in unnecessary human suffering and the exploitation of nature (Harman 1991).

What I especially like about this elegantly simple model is the way it provides for an interactive, dialectical process that connects the inner self, the social persona, and the outside world, thus providing not only for the breadth of concern but for personal responsibility on a human scale. It allows us the space

within which we can both do and be, reflect and act, and be decisive and contemplative; and to deal simultaneously with short- and long-term issues. I want to suggest that we add another dimension to Harman's framework, namely that which deals with the importance of grounding our work in a frame-

*P*erhaps our most pressing immediate task as educators is the development of a pedagogy of hope and possibility.

work of ultimate meaning, that which integrates the inner being, social being, and the culture. This, of course, assumes the existence of meaning, of some force or energy that provides coherence and wholeness to our existence. Whether the search for such meaning is delusionary and quixotic is surely not clear, at least to me, but it is quite clear that we as a species continue to engage ourselves in this search with incredible energy, imagination, and passion. What we yearn for in this process is to relate and connect what we do on a day-to-day basis to that which has enduring consequence, for in so doing, we can avoid drabness, emptiness, and idolatry.

The role of holistic education in social transformation

With this extended model in mind, we can now discuss the particular and critical ways in which the holistic education movement could significantly contribute to redemptive social and cultural transformation. The most important contribution lies at the very heart of the movement and that is its root metaphor of wholeness and interdependence with its rejection of dualism and alienation and its affirmation of connection and integrity. A passion for harmony, peace, and wholeness can only deepen the connections between our inner and outer selves, between individuals and the community, between the material and the spiritual, between humanity and nature, between Planet Earth and the universe, and all the other possible betweens and amongs. Peace, justice, love, harmony, and meaning are each and all indivisible — they are neither to be rationed nor circumscribed; none of them individually sufficient, all of them necessary, each of them identifiable, and all of them blurrable with each other.

I am convinced that a key, if not central, educational element to the possibility of social and cultural transformation is the nourishment of imagination. One way of regarding our current crises is to see them as failures of imagination, as an inability to envision, for example, an economy without poverty and where there can be meaningful work for everyone, or an international order that can be maintained without recourse to violence, or a social system based on sufficiency for all rather than luxury for a few. Holistic educators need not be convinced about the importance of imagination for not only have they continuously and passionately argued for the necessity of encouraging the creative process but they have also demonstrated their faith in the extraordinary and untapped genius that resides in human imagination. It is time to direct the incredible power of fantastic, fanciful, and daring flights of imagination not only to the arts and letters but to fresh new social and economic visions, to developing more aesthetically pleasing ways of living together, and to designing more creative and life-giving social institutions.

However, when we consider the connection between the elements of holism and imagination, it becomes time to exercise extreme caution and to be in touch with our requirement of humility. What I mean here is that the impulse to image and create a coherent and whole vision of meaning, purpose, and destiny is as irresistible as it is dangerous, inevitable as it is futile, and redemptive as it is idolatrous. Indeed, in our current intellectual climate we have come to see, for better or worse, all cosmological, social, even scientific formulations and visions as acts of human imagination and construal. In this perspective, we see narratives, paradigms, contexts, contingencies, and particularities rather than dogmas, truths, eternal verities, certainties, and grand theories. This orientation has been both liberating and harrowing in that it has helped us to renew the importance of human agency in its constructivist sense. However, it has also made it virtually impossible to fully and totally affirm a firm and sustaining framework and rationale for our cherished beliefs. The death of certainty cuts two ways — it undercuts both dogmatism and conviction, both rigidity and steadfastness, and in so doing, it sponsors both diversity and relativism. The incredibly powerful research on issues of race, class, culture, and gender has revealed not only that an immense variety and diversity have been lost, hidden, and/or suppressed

but that our lives have been largely guided by a particular vision of particular and privileged groups. The good news is that this vision as a human construction, as an act of human imagination, is not inevitable and hence can be replaced. The bad news is that we don't seem to have a replacement of commensurable appeal and power. We are between a rock and a hard place for on one hand we see the necessity and feel the reality of a coherent worldview but on the other our intellect and history remind us of the dangers and foolishness of grand narratives. We value and revere the power of the human imagination but realize that it is able to produce evil and destructive designs. We see the necessity for boldness and transformation but recognize our limitations. We want to discover meaning and truth but recognize that there is extraordinary diversity in how they are named. We want to act but we are unsure and unclear as to what to do since everybody and everything seems to be right and/or wrong. We want to be sensitive to diverse views and perspectives but are fearful that we can be paralyzed by fairness. Is it possible to have strong convictions without being self-righteous, to be audacious without being grandiose, and to be imaginative without being idolatrous?

The theologian Walter Brueggemann has directly addressed such questions as they relate to Christianity in his book, *Texts Under Negotiation* (1994). Brueggemann insists that it is the church's role to preach rejection of our current materialist and present-oriented vision and to replace it with a worldview that accepts divine creation and ultimate redemption. However, he clearly recognizes the obstacles and offers a far more modest and humble process of change based on the metaphor of *funding*. "It is not," Brueggemann writes, "in my judgment, the work of the church ... to construct a full alternative world, for that would be to act as preemptively and imperialistically as all those old construals and impositions. Rather, the task is a more modest one, namely, to *fund* — to provide the pieces, material, and resources, out of which a new world can be imagined. Our responsibility, then, is not a grand scheme or a coherent system, but the voicing of a lot of little pieces out of which people can put life together in fresh configurations."

He goes on to say that this new world is not to be given whole in one moment but, "... is given only a little at a time, one miracle at a time, one poem at a time, one healing, one promise, one commandment.

Over time, these pieces are stitched together, all of us in concert, but each of us idiosyncratically stitched together in a new whole — all things new."

I believe that such a formulation can be applied to education and that we can be bold and visionary in our endeavors yet humble and modest in our expectations. As educators we certainly have pieces, poems, miracles, promises, and commandments to offer as part of the new collage and stand ready to stitch them together with offerings of other groups and individuals. Holistic educators have their own ways of contributing to this funding, feeding, nurturing, nourishing, and legitimating project, and it is vital to affirm them even as we are aware of their piecemeal quality. It is surely no small thing to be part of a quilt especially if we are talking of a new quilt of harmony, justice, and meaning.

How then might holistic educators contribute to the fund of pieces, materials, and patches that will constitute significant portions of that quilt in process? Let me count the ways. There is the matter of spirit — the concern for the soul, the divine, the mysterious, the inner self, the tacit, and the unconscious. There is the openness and insistence on legitimating diverse ways of knowing — aesthetic, intuitive, and kinesthetic. Holistic educators put special reliance on developing close and warm human relationships not as instruments of manipulation but as essential to human meaning and existence. Children, and for that matter people, become the center of concern not as in self-centered but as foci of connection to each other, the community, the planet, and the universe. Holistic educators are among the very first to affirm the ecological consciousness that stresses the vulnerable but vital interconnections among all forms of life and as such have much to contribute even further to the struggle to sustain and nourish Mother Earth. They are also unique in their insistent and heart-felt invitation to joyously celebrate the wonders of creation and the continuous miracle of life. This optimism, hope, determination, and energy is literally refreshing and renewing, a much needed antidote for the nay-sayers and grumps the likes of me.

I also urge holistic educators to extend another one of their unique capacities, i.e., the genius of being able to reach out and touch others. In this case to help break down the barriers among other educators committed to transformation, albeit with differing orientations, e.g., those in critical pedagogy, those in feminist groups, and those working in the area of curriculum criticism. Perhaps their concern for wholeness and their openness and optimism could enable them to be a principal catalyst for more harmony, complementarity, synergy, and integration among like-minded educators. The burden for this responsibility clearly does not rest only on the shoulders of holistic educators since other groups must come to move away from their positions of smugness and preciousness and have the sense to broaden and deepen their understandings in dialogue with those they have not really encountered.

Having said all that, please indulge me as I return to my previous condition of fear and foreboding. Even as I celebrate the optimism of holistic educators, I can't help but worry about the future. Do we have the time to rely on the emergence of a new collage, a transformed quilt, and a new whole? It is true that there have been dire predictions of calamity in all ages and it is true that we have survived any number of catastrophes. But it is also plausible that we may be running out of lives and that we ought to be extremely careful that we not be taken in by our resistance to wolf-crying. Many ecologists indeed have said that it is already too late to save the planet and many social critics see the inevitability of permanent violence and war created by the increasing gulf between haves and have-nots exacerbated by the population explosion and the depletion of the earth's resources. Our educational task surely includes providing a critical awareness of our condition but perhaps our most pressing immediate task as educators is the development of a pedagogy of hope and possibility. Each of us needs to wrestle with this task and to probe within ourselves for the source of renewing and reenergizing our own faith and hope without denying the magnitude of the dangers we face.

As for me, I find such energy in the prophetic traditions of the Bible and in its modern manifestations such as Liberation Theology. This tradition combines criticism and affirmation, anguish and hope, humanity and the spirit, this world and eternity. Reinhold Niebuhr (1935) has characterized the Biblical prophets as being able to "be confident that life is good in spite of its evil and that it is evil in spite of the good and in this way both sentimentality and despair are avoided." The prophetic tradition emphasizes a continuous collaboration between humanity and God in which both humans and God are free but interdependent and in which people are responsible to fulfill a divine destiny. I have to admit to some nervousness in using the G word, especially in an academic setting and given my own wavering

agnosticism. Harvey Cox has helped me in this regard by suggesting this formulation: "God [is] whatever it is within the vast spectacle of cosmic evolution which inspires and supports the endless struggle for liberation, not just from tyranny but from all bondages. 'God' is that power which despite all setbacks never admits to final defeat" (Cox 1973).
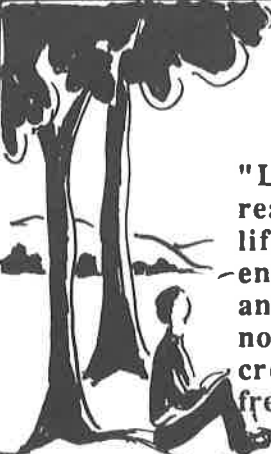
With that concept of God in mind, let me close with yet another quote from a theologian, this time the eminent Jewish scholar, Jacob Neusner. Neusner has translated and written a commentary on a book from the Talmud usually titled *Sayings of Our Fathers* but which Neusner translates as *Torah from Our Sages*. In a section discussing the insights of Rabbi Hillel, Neusner points to issues of hope as he examines Hillel's insistence that over time "God corrects the imbalances of life — pays back the evil and rewards the good." Although Neusner readily admits that this is hardly a description of reality, he goes on to say:

> We, for our part, must preserve that same hope for justice, even in the face of despair. We have to believe, despite the world, that God cares.... But part of the meaning of having faith in God is believing there is justice when we see injustice, believing there is meaning when we face what seems an empty accident. Ours is not a time for complex explanation. We cannot appeal to how things come out right in the end. We have been through too much. Ours is an age that demands simple faith — or no faith at all. All the standard explanations have proved empty. But Hillel's, also was an age that gave no more evidence than it does now that God rules with justice. Yet Hillel said it, and so must we: against it all, despite it all. There is no alternative." (Neusner, 1994)

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The Politics of Holistic Education

An Open Letter to Holistic Educators

Paul Morgan

Holistic educators are citizens as well as educators and they cannot ignore the responsibility to carry the holistic perspective beyond the classroom.

When the forms of an old culture are dying, the new culture is created by a few people who are not afraid to be insecure.

— Rudolf Bahro

I'm probably not the only one who associates holistic education with other like-sounding pursuits, from holistic gardening to holistic medicine and holistic veterinary care. Whether this amounts to innocence or guilt by association depends, I suppose, on one's view of people who resist seeing the world in mechanical terms. The holistic perspective is one I endorse in principle, so I don't consider such people flakes. Yet despite my genuine sympathies with holistic education, I am not yet a convert because of one stubborn objection. That objection is the perception of holistic education and other holisms as champions of what can be called the escape option. This option was mercilessly described 20 years ago by Jonathan Kozol in his characterization of Free Schools, which were the hope for alternative education at that time. Kozol's concern was that Free Schools were operating as escapes from responsible engagement:

> At best, in my belief, these schools are obviating pain and etherizing evil; at worst, they constitute a registered escape valve for political rebellion. Lease (sic) conscionable is when the people who are laboring and living in these schools describe themselves as revolutionaries. If this is revolution, then the men who have elected Richard Nixon do not have a lot to fear. They will do well to subsidize these schools and to covertly channel resources to their benefactors and supporters, for they are an ideal drain on activism and the perfect way to sidetrack ethical men from dangerous behavior. (Kozol 1974, 160)

Nixon is gone, yet Kozol would still have few kind words for any holistic school that resembled "an isolated upper-class Free School for the children of the white and rich" (p. 160). In a country desperate for brave people who can engage our collective problems, such retreat schools are "a great deal too much like a sandbox for the children of the SS Guards at Auschwitz" (p. 160). Kozol's comparisons may lack

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subtlety, but to those of us seeking political allies to challenge our country's two industrial parties, holistic educators are not an obvious choice; you have too much of an image problem. Like the Free Schools Kozol indicts, the counterculture of holism has been politically irrelevant, primarily because it has — perhaps unwittingly — made a virtue of disconnecting from the problems of those who literally can't afford the holistic alternative. Political influence may be scorned by those who are committed to a revolution-by-dropping-out, but it betrays a troubling attitude toward those left behind — those who are written off as casualties in a system of educational triage. Of course, this image of holistic education as rural safe havens for the white and the rich deserves a rebuttal, for it's more a caricature than an accurate reflection of the diversity within the movement today. Even so, the rural safe havens do exist, and these schools are a constant reminder that the problem with holistic education isn't all image; many of us are still not convinced that it isn't, as Kozol put it, "a registered escape valve for political rebellion."

Thankfully, Kozol will not have the last word on the role of holistic education in our troubled society. At a conference held in the fall of 1994 in New York called "The Politics and Economics of a Holistic Education," there were strong appeals for a holistic education that more actively engaged our collective problems. Yet, by reading the brochure, holistic educators may have felt that teachers were once again being asked to lead the revolution in the classroom *and* in the streets. Conference participants were challenged not to "avoid the hard tasks of social, economic, and institutional transformation that fundamental educational change requires." To me, this sounds like another proposal to eliminate free evenings and weekends. There is plenty of work for holistic educators to do, but taking on social, economic, and institutional transformation from the position of yet another fragmented interest group is simply too much.

This doesn't mean holistic educators are off the hook, though. You still need to align yourselves with political and economic alternatives that don't require you to compromise your values. For too long, however, this has meant first rejecting both the Democrats and the Republicans, and then seeing no other alternative, playing the game of single-issue, interest group politics.

Given the monumental task of reorganizing the entire industrial-mechanical culture around holistic principles, what path will holistic educators take? Will you give in to the temptation to focus on the holistic purity of your part of the world, at the risk of irrelevance? Or, will you take on the challenge of fundamental social change at the risk of compromising your ideals, thereby achieving little or nothing in the end? This is the dilemma that served as the premise for the conference, and it is the dilemma that I wish to redescribe so that, as holistic educators, you might consider your part in cultural transformation as actively affirming the political expression of holistic principles. By redescribing the problem, I hope to make it clear that the decision holistic educators must make is whether, as a movement or as coordinated individuals, you will align yourselves with an escapist politics that quietly hopes that the transnational forces driving the world will disappear, or take the courageous step of supporting a genuine political alternative that doesn't compromise the values inherent in holism.

Before suggesting some genuine alternatives, I want to unearth how some proponents of holistic education came to see their only choices as irrelevance or impurity. That is, how is it that an educational movement came to be seen as problematic due to a lack of political clout? Or, better yet, why do we blandly accept that economic, political, and institutional transformation are germane to educational discussions? The answer, I think, has two components: 1) the monopolization of the political process by two industrial-capitalist parties; and, 2) what Lawrence Cremin (1990) calls "the longstanding American tendency to try to solve social, political, and economic problems through educational means" (p. 92).

The first issue begins with the proposition that in the United States, our visions, our ideals, our greatest political and economic hopes, have been pushed out of most every public area of our lives and confined to the margins. Thus, one of the few places where vision and idealism are still alive in action is in our work with schools. In Kozol's terms, we can say that this is one of the places where idealistic steam can be released harmlessly. Since there is little serious mention of alternative politics, economics, or education in the national dialogue, and scarcely more at the regional and local levels, the hopes of people who live for more than profits and television are confined to projects that are radical in conception, but trivial in scope, primarily because they are unconnected to larger movements. Only in a country

where we feel powerless to do anything in legitimate public arenas are educational discussions considered an appropriate forum for the expression of political and economic ideals. Can you imagine Australians, Germans, or Danes talking about economic and political transformation at an education conference? No, they do it in their parliaments and in their town councils where, due to the diversity of representation, they can carry on real opposition and discuss issues that here would be instantly dismissed as beyond the pale. Only in this country are such discussions banished, with complicity, to academic educational conferences. This marginalization must cease. Before offering a possible way out, I want to comment on one other obstacle on the road to real transformation.

The problem of adults projecting onto children was one issue brought out in the introductory address by the conference's organizer, Douglas Sloan. He noted that when this projection is aimed at educational issues, education becomes just about everything except the unfolding of the child. We come to expect schools — teachers and children — to solve problems that the rest of the adult world is either unwilling or unable to solve. On the conventional political spectrum, this has been true for both the Left and the Right; the current use of education as a tool in misguided economic wars is only the most recent abomination. In the case of holistic education, the impression an onlooker might get is that the adults involved quietly hope their kids will someday bring about the radical changes that they feel powerless to make, or that they'll at least be able to live decent lives in spite of the system. This is also projection, and my feeling is that, along with Cremin, schools should not shoulder the burden of social change simply because adults don't feel empowered to do it themselves right now. Of course, there are parents and teachers who are politically committed, and they should be praised for their energy, but if interest groups and the two dominant parties seem to be the only avenues of hope, then there is ample room for more empowerment.

So if education should not be for the nation or the state, or another battleground for interest group politics, do we conclude that schools should be shielded from politics altogether? Was a politically irrelevant holistic education somehow the proper course? I want to summarize the points made thus far and then turn to these questions.

Why did holistic education come to be seen as problematic due to its political irrelevance? First, important questions that are excluded from the broader public arena have to surface somewhere, and these questions have, not surprisingly, emerged on the margins where critical, progressive thought is still alive. The result, though, is an agenda overload

> *The day advocates of holistic education swear off the escape option and start taking genuine political alternatives seriously is the day I will become a holistic education convert.*

and, hopefully, the awareness of a contradiction: holistic education can go only so far without fundamental transformations, yet these transformations cannot be brought about through the efforts of a small, narrowly focused group. To resolve this contradiction, there needs to be an understanding that transformation will require a broad movement with a comprehensive, holistic philosophy that embraces holistic education and other life-affirming movements. Second, holistic educators have carried on the tradition of investing education with great hopes for social change. It's not unusual to have great hopes for education, but when children are our only hope, then the projections, defeatism, and powerlessness of adult citizens are the problems, not insufficiently political schools.

This brings us back to Kozol's complaints about the Free Schools and the escape option. Now that holistic education is actively countering its image as a haven for the privileged, does it merely go the route that Kozol implies? This would entail digging in and putting schools on the front line of opposition and social change. The simple answer is yes, but not merely that. Kozol's view of schools is political, like that of other radical educational theorists who make a virtue of proclaiming the political nature of education. This is a truism, but what they make of it is more than what it should be. Yes, education is political, but it should not be the primary or even secondary means of political opposition.

If Kozol and others are opposed to the political options available to us in this country, they should, in addition to pursuing educational reform, take the courageous step of supporting and encouraging alternative political movements. One cannot escape this by invoking the specialization exclusion: "I'm an educator, not a political organizer." This gets no one off the hook. Yes, we are educators, but we are also citizens. Public work that is ceded to professional democrats with stale ideas is work that we need to be engaged in if we expect to resist fragmentation. We can't wait for the children to do it, and we should not expect them to.

Given the need for more active citizen involvement, the choices are to become either single issue specialists, an interest group that is set against other deserving causes, or reawakened citizens who, while continuing to tend the needs of the whole child, take the courageous step of affirming the programs of responsible, new paradigm political forces. Single issue politics, which would yield something like "Holistic Educators for Change," is just the business-as-usual option because it gives tacit approval to the present industrial two-party configuration that has neutralized effective opposition by dividing it. Citizens who should be concerned about jobs, environmental health, *and* education end up choosing a favored issue and then fighting with potential allies over scraps. These are false choices that will persist until people stop supporting parties and candidates that are the lesser of two evils. I believe it's time to reexamine what it means to be a citizen, of this country and the earth, and refuse to participate in the marketplace of competing causes. There are many problems on many fronts, and the only way to address them all is through collective learning, coordinated action, and a comprehensive politics. Today, the options for alternative politics include the Campaign for a New Tomorrow (African Americans), the 21st Century Party (Women), the Labor Party Advocates, the New Party, and the Greens. Of these, the Greens probably offer the most holistic vision, and they are committed to the kinds of political, economic, and institutional changes that would allow holistic education to thrive. The Greens are one new paradigm political force that you, as holistic educators, should seriously consider aligning yourselves with.

Probably the first objection to this proposal is that the Greens have an image problem of their own. They're popularly viewed as a collection of environ-

mentalists masquerading as a political party or as just another super single-issue movement like the Right to Life party. What Greens offer, on the contrary, is a comprehensive, holistic vision of a society in which grassroots democracy, social justice, non-violence, and ecological responsibility prevail. These are the four pillars of the international Green movement that have been expanded into the ten key values of the U.S. Greens: ecological wisdom, social justice, grassroots democracy, non-violence, decentralization, community-based economics, feminism, respect for diversity, personal and global responsibility, and a future focus. Note that these are not the values of a narrow environmental movement. Like most people, Greens are concerned about ecological well-being, but the primary focus is a way of living that is harmonious, productive, and sustainable. Green party platforms, which vary from state to state and town to town (respect for diversity), are more comprehensive than the traditional parties and have the advantage of offering substantive, not merely rhetorical, alternatives.

In both theory and practice, holistic education and Green politics make a strong match. To begin with, they have the same philosophical roots. Charlene Spretnak and Fritjof Capra (1984) wrote in *Green Politics* that the Green movement in the U.S. was sparked "especially by the rise of the holistic paradigm in science and society" (p. 194). The shared principle of holism is a crucial theoretical tie, but what should make the Greens particularly attractive is that they offer holistic educators concerned about political irrelevance exactly what is needed; it is a politics that will allow you to work for real transformation while retaining your purity and avoiding the pitfalls of special-interest politics:

> Green politics attracts people who have been searching for a way to transform new-paradigm understandings into political practice, people who were previously somewhat apolitical but now realize that single-issue citizens' movements are inadequate by themselves, and political people who were dissatisfied with their old party or movement and now embrace Green ideals. (Spretnak and Capra 1984, p. 217)

If holistic educators are serious about political, economic, and institutional transformation, then the Greens are clearly a potential ally. Throughout the country last year the Greens did better than any third party in the last 50 years, pulling more than 10% of the vote in several statewide races, including the campaign for governor in New Mexico. In Maine, in a four-way gubernatorial race won by an inde-

pendent, the Greens pulled 7%. Political alternatives are becoming a reality in this country.

The day advocates of holistic education swear off the escape option and start taking genuine political alternatives seriously is the day I will become a holistic education convert. There is movement in this direction, but it will not continue without faith and hope. If you're not convinced that holistic thought can survive away from the fringe, Spretnak and Capra (1984) offered encouragement, saying that "perhaps the most important lesson from the German Greens is that we do not have to hide our deepest longings and highest ideals to be politically effective"(p. 199). Instead of waiting for children to make the world whole again, you can begin today by actively supporting the holistic paradigm in schools, in the streets, and in the voting booths.

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Enhancing the Learning Partnership Through New School Forms
The Waldorf Experience

Christopher Schaefer

The form and structure of most Waldorf schools is designed to emphasize the partnership between teachers, administrators, students, parents, and friends in the community.

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What kind of institutions must exist for people to have the right thoughts on matters of social concerns and what kind of thoughts must exist that these right social institutions can arise? (R. Steiner)

Doing advisory work with different groups and organizations has deepened a number of my own personal convictions. One is the belief that there is no social transformation without a commitment to individual development and responsibility. If we are concerned about the federal deficit, we also need to look at our own use of credit cards; if we are concerned about poverty, we need to look at how we make and spend money; if we are concerned about alienation, we need to treat the garbage collector, the checkout clerk, and the person working in a toll booth in a humane manner. The private and the public world are interconnected.

A second, perhaps obvious thought is the recognition that our society, our social forms, reflect our consciousness and values. In turn, our society shapes our consciousness. We no longer build large cathedrals in city centers but rather office buildings and sports arenas, reflecting a shift in concern from the drama of salvation to a concern about jobs, money, and entertainment.

If our modern consciousness has lost a sense for the divine and the sacred, it also appears to have lost a sense for the uniquely human.[1] Despite the fact that we know early childhood to be the most formative period in human development, kindergarten teachers are among the lowest paid professionals. Despite a professed commitment to equality of opportunity, the funding pattern of public education discriminates against poorer neighborhoods, betraying the short-sightedness of our society and its egotistical and at times mean-spirited nature.[2]

Creating a more humane and equitable society will require both a change in consciousness, a more holistic image and valuing of the human being and changes in social structures, including school forms. Waldorf education contains elements of both: a curriculum based on a spirituality-informed image of the human being and school forms that foster learning partnerships in the school community. It is because Waldorf schools are different in form and content that they can stimulate new thinking in education.

Anecdotal evidence: A conversation with teachers

Having unburdened myself of some philosophical commitments, let me turn to a conversation I had with two public school teachers in an evening class. They are both women, one teaching in Westchester (NY), the other in Manhattan. They are both committed to teaching and love children, yet they despair about the future of education. The picture they both gave me, despite the differences in funding levels, is of a situation where they do not have the freedom to attend to the central process in education — their creative teaching relationship with the children. The school district specifies the types of courses and the course materials. Course materials are strongly skill-oriented, geared to achieving test results. The teacher's union defines roles, responsibilities, and hours of work. The school administration not only schedules classes and rooms, but sets out detailed criteria for teaching behavior. The teacher feels herself or himself to be at the bottom of an educational hierarchy in which true education and teaching creativity is stifled. The relationship with the children is undermined, the relationship with the parents is often blocked, the relationship with peers is made competitive, and the relationship with the administration is adversarial. A bureaucratic administrative apparatus, from school boards to superintendents to principals, determines the educational agenda, ruled by political and economic criteria.

These complaints, voiced in a tentative and caring way describe a commonly perceived crisis in education.[3] In many respects, it appears that the ethos and structure of public education combine to enhance the alienation, isolation, and powerlessness of teachers. Alienation because teachers sense that true education — what happens between the teacher and the student in the teaching moment — is not a central priority. Isolation because they are separated from the children, parents, administration, and peers by the structure of the system. Powerless because they are unable to effect meaningful change within this complex bureaucracy. This is not a recipe for educational success.

Educational reform and the Waldorf experience

I believe there are three central tenets of Waldorf education that are relevant to broader educational reform in our society. The first is the view that education should not be controlled by the state, that it should not serve political or economic interests.[4] This means developing a system of educational choice, equally funded, in which many different educational philosophies and systems are available to parents and children. Education can never be value-neutral, all education is based on an image of human being, of the educational process, and of the nature and purpose of knowledge. Therefore, let us seek a system in which each school articulates its educational philosophy and values and allows parents to make informed choices between the alternatives.

While this view may offend individuals of a liberal persuasion, it is important to acknowledge that public education is not value-neutral and that it does not provide equal access to quality education as Jonathon Kozol has shown in *Savage Inequalities*.[5] Waldorf education provides a quality education for about $7,000 per child, on the low end of per pupil public school expenditures today. Why can we not create a system where every child throughout the nation has equal access to a variety of educational opportunities and carries with them the equivalent of $8,000 or more. The critical issue is whether the choices, the access, is equal between low-income neighborhoods and suburban neighborhoods. If a portion of local, state, and federal taxes were pooled and awarded to different types of schools equally, could we not limit education inequalities, both within public education and between private and public education, while at the same time enhancing educational innovation. It is not my point in this presentation to argue the intricacies of educational choice or of voucher systems, but to indicate that Waldorf schools are based on an educational philosophy that suggests removing education as much as possible from bureaucratic state control, of providing parents with choice, and of giving teachers primary responsibility for the pedagogy and running of a school.[6]

A second principle of Waldorf education is the idea that education should serve human freedom and creativity, that education is not in the first instance about creating employable, skilled adults but helping children to become self-aware, creative, and responsible human beings. In Waldorf education, there is an effort to educate the whole child, the capacities of thinking, of feeling, and of will. Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education, not only described these three soul faculties in detail but proposed a curriculum in which each is addressed in a developmentally appropriate manner.

> In the first seven years of life, the child is primarily living in the will, learning nearly everything through physical activity. During these years, learning takes place mostly in an unconscious manner through the child's imitation of the activities of adults and older children. Between the approximate ages of seven and fourteen, the child's feeling life is the strongest, and all that is taught through imagination and the arts penetrates deeply. Human relationships are also of great importance at this age. In a Waldorf school, they are fostered throughout the relationship with the class teacher, who ideally remains with the class for eight grades, teaching all the main lesson subjects and developing a deep connection with the children and their families.[7]

In the high school, cognitive and intellectual faculties unfold and are challenged by special subject teachers.

A third principle of Waldorf education, relevant to educational reform and the main focus of this essay is the search for school forms that bring to conscious-ness and foster the right relationships between the partners of the school community.

The learning partnership in Waldorf education

Waldorf schools have existed since 1919 when the first school was founded in Stuttgart, Germany, by the Austrian philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner. There are now more than 500 schools worldwide with more than 120 in the United States and Canada. Each school is self-administered and linked to other schools through the Association of Waldorf Schools in North America (AWSNA). While there is no one specific school form, each school struggling to find the structures and relationships which best fit its circumstances, most full Waldorf schools (K-12) have the form shown in Figure 1[8].

Waldorf schools do not have superintendents or principals, although they do have chairpeople of the College or Council, of the Faculty, and often of the High School and Lower School. The College of Teachers or the School Council is usually the main decision-making body of the school, making curriculum and staffing decisions as well as deciding on important aspects of the budget and salaries. The College or Council usually sees itself as inwardly and outwardly carrying the main life of the school and meets weekly as do the faculty and staff. Membership in the College is open to full-time teachers and to administrators who have been at the school one year or more. The Faculty-Staff Meeting is a time for study and information sharing. It is often a place
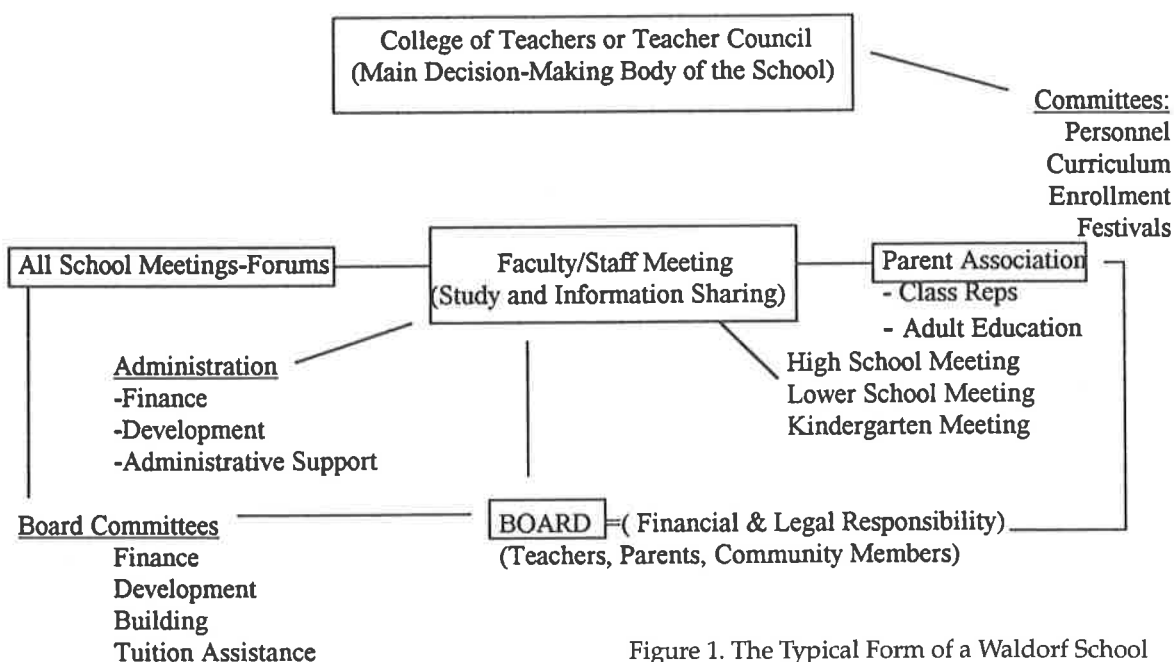

Figure 1. The Typical Form of a Waldorf School

where committees report and schedules are shared. The main faculty committees, reporting either to the College/Council or to the full faculty staff meeting are usually a curriculum committee, a personnel committee, a festivals committee, and a budget committee.[9]

Most Waldorf schools have a small administrative staff, a bookkeeper, one or two secretaries, a development person, and sometimes a main administrator. Most teachers are involved in administrative tasks as well, and for some up to a third of their total time may be spent in committee or administrative work. The administrative staff of the school reports to both the Board and the College and is seen as serving the educational process. It is the servant of the teachers and the school — not the manager, which has become commonplace in many schools and colleges.

In a full Waldorf school (K-12), there are also separate high school, lower school, and kindergarten faculty meetings.

Waldorf schools have a parent class representative who works with the class teacher in the lower grades or with the high school class advisor. Generally, there is also a parent Council or a PTA, which has a variety of functions — from planning adult education work to running fairs and special events and raising issues of concern at all school community meetings. Parents also make up the bulk of Board membership, providing the legal, financial, real estate, public relations, and fundraising expertise needed to develop the school. The Board is an active partner in the life of the school, needing to take responsibility for seeing that tuitions and donations are adequate to support the operating budget and working hard to provide adequate facilities.[10] While most Waldorf schools are decidedly middle class in North America, as they receive no state support, tuitions are quite modest by private school standards — ranging from $5,000 to $8,000 a year per child depending on the school's location and the grade level. Many Waldorf schools make a real effort to provide substantial tuition assistance, often between 10% to15% of their total operating budget.

Board committees usually include finance, development, building, and tuition assistance and are mostly composed of parents, former parents, or friends of the school.

In the typical Waldorf School form, the main decision-making bodies of the school are the Council or College of Teachers and the Board of Trustees. The College/Council carries the main pedagogical, internal responsibility and the Board, the main financial responsibility. Both groups and the main committees work with a consensus process of decision making.

How does this way of organizing a school community enhance the learning partnership in the school? I take the partners in the school community to be teachers, administrators, children, parents, and friends. A healthy school form is one in which the basic aims of each of these partners can be recognized and furthered. Teachers, I believe, want to be able to meet the children in a free and creative way through offering a curriculum that responds to the children's needs for an age-appropriate, stimulating, and holistic education. Out of their experience in education and their love of children, they want a level of freedom in determining the content and nature of the education and a say in who their colleagues will be. Ideally, they wish to have substantial freedom in the classroom and, together with their colleagues, a high level of responsibility for the education provided.

Administrators, if they have not been brainwashed by corporate models of education, want to support and nurture the educational process and be perceived as equal partners by teachers and parents for carrying out the myriad of administrative tasks required to have a healthy school.

Children want, first of all, to be met, to be seen by the teachers for the individualities that they potentially are and to be enthused for and with learning. I remember our daughter coming home from a new kindergarten after a few weeks and saying that the teacher did not see her. After visiting it was clear that the teacher did not see many of the children, a tragedy for education. Parents send that which is most precious to them in life, their child, to a school. They hope against hope that their child will be met, encouraged, enthused, and educated. They also want to be able to understand the education their child is receiving and to be able to support it financially and with their time, energy, and knowledge.

The friends, alumni, former parents, and supporters of a school also wish to have the possibility of helping, of getting involved, sometimes financially and sometimes in other ways. I remember talking to one woman, a committed supporter of Waldorf education and a former public school teacher, who had not known about Waldorf education when her children were young, but who now spends countless hours on the Board and on board committees helping a new Waldorf school grow in her community.

If this picture of what each of the learning partners in the school community wants is true — and it is based on many discussions with teachers, administrators, parents, children, and friends — then most school forms do not respond to these needs. Indeed they actively work against them. In public education, in particular, teachers have limited responsibility and freedom and are often ruled by an administrative bureaucracy that is politically guided. Administrators have become the school managers and teachers, the workers. The result is that financial and administrative criteria tend to rule the education process, not educational needs. The proper relationship between teachers and administrators has been reversed, distorting the nature of education. The result of this distortion and the size and complexity of the system is that many good teachers leave, that the needs of children are often not met, and that parents find it hard to develop a living relationship with the school.

In Waldorf schools there is an effort to foster the relationships of the learning partnership but not without considerable struggle and difficulty: Teachers do play the central role in determining the content and form of the education but they can be guilty of not valuing the concerned, and at times critical, parent as a true partner in the educational process. Furthermore, working without hierarchy raises the issue of how to evaluate performance effectively. Who evaluates whom and on what basis? A clear professional development and review policy and system needs to be in effect. In some Waldorf schools this is the case, in others dwindling class size and parental disenchantment is the spur to ad hoc but much needed action.

No method of education can guarantee that the teacher will love education and love children. However, in the Waldorf curriculum the class teacher in the lower school moves with the grade from 1 to 8 as the home room teacher, teaching many of the main block lessons, ranging from history to geography, English, social studies, and simple mathematics.[11] Specialist teachers in languages, music, singing, movement, and sports supplement the rich and imaginatively designed curriculum. As there are no standard textbooks (with children making their own books for each main block subject), the creativity of the teacher is called upon continuously. And as teachers accompany the children on their journey through the grades, they are encouraged to understand and nurture each child.[12] The absence of standard letter grades in the lower school, and the need for the teacher to prepare a report on how the child is doing against the teacher's assessment of the individual child's potential, further encourages this unique individual relationship between the teacher and the child.

Parents are involved in the life of the Waldorf school through class parent evenings in which the curriculum of a particular grade is discussed, through teacher visits in the home, and through parent participation on the Board and board committees, as well as the Parent Association.[13]

Administrators in a Waldorf school are the servants of the school community, not the managers, as previously noted. At times this leads to the opposite of what exists in most schools, namely that they are not perceived as being an equal and valued partner in the life of the school.

While not without difficulty, the form of Waldorf schools produces a school community of unusual vitality. Teachers, administrators, children, parents, and friends are engaged in the life of their school. The rapid growth of Waldorf education on this continent is a testament not only to the value of the educational philosophy but also, I believe, to the unique forms that Waldorf schools have created to nurture the learning partnership.

Essential principles of form

The principles of form underlying the "site-based" management of Waldorf education go back to the origin of Waldorf education in 1919. Central Europe at the end of WWI was in a state of major crisis with both the German and the Austro-Hungarian empires in shambles. Rudolf Steiner, as an educator and public figure, was at pains to suggest an alternative approach to organizing society. To this end, he issued an appeal to the German nation, wrote a popular book, *Toward Social Renewal*, and founded "The League for the Threefold Social Order" to spread his political and social ideas.[14] Central to his thinking was the removal of the heavy hand of the state from education. Indeed he saw all cultural life — schools, museums, churches, artists, research institutes, and universities — as needing to be independent of state control so that individuals and groups could create out of their own talents and professional insights. In the realm of culture he saw the importance of freedom, of competition between alternatives, and of choice. He advocated severely limiting the role of the state, not only from culture

but also from economic life — suggesting, like Peter Drucker, that it could do very few things well.[15] The central domain of the state, according to Steiner, was formulating laws and guaranteeing equality in the sphere of human rights. This sphere of rights he saw as including the rights to work, education, and medical care and the right to be treated equally before the law. If in cultural life he saw the need for competition, in economic life he saw the need for cooperation — the reality of people producing goods and services for each other through associations of producers, consumers, and distributors.[16] For Steiner, this threefold picture of society — of a free cultural life, a state dedicated to rights, and an economy concerned with effective cooperation in the production and distribution of goods and services — was an answer to the call of the French Revolution, for a society dedicated to liberty (cultural life), equality (state life), and fraternity (economic life). It was out of this social reform movement that the first Waldorf school emerged as a school for worker's children, removed from state control and initially supported by a factory owner, Emil Molt, and his friends.[17]

Steiner's ideas about the Threefold Social Order are the basis of the argument for school choice (freedom in cultural life) and for the strong role that teachers play in the life and running of Waldorf schools. The principles of the Threefold Social Order also underlie the way the learning partnership is exercised in Waldorf schools. All institutions have a cultural life (values, identity), a rights life (forms of decision making, contracts, agreements), and an economic life (wages, fees, tuitions).

The cultural spiritual life of a school is one in which the teachers play a dominant role. There is substantial freedom in the classroom within an agreed upon philosophy and curriculum of education. The teachers make all pedagogical decisions together and most personnel decisions, usually in consultation with other members of the school community. The teachers help parents and the other members of the school community to understand the

education and its underlying view of child development.

The rights life of a school concerns all members of the school community equally. The partners in this dialogue are teachers, administrative staff, parents, and friends (faculty, board, and parent association). The areas that the rights life covers involves such questions as moving the school, disciplinary procedures, dress code, salary and tuition policies, structure and principles of school governance, long-term planning, and the school schedule — all areas that affect the members of the school community in a similar way. In these areas, a democratic principle of consensus or of voting is practiced.

In the economic sphere, the principle of fraternity, of dialogue between teachers and parents, is worked with. The faculty submits a budget based on educational criteria and the board discusses what is possible and how high tuition levels can be, and makes modifications. Faculty and Board then reach agreement on the projected budget for the following year. In this sphere, the main partners are teachers, administrators, and parents who meet together to make the budget work. If in cultural life it is the teachers who help the parents understand the education, then in economic life it is the parents with their tuition and their expertise who help the teachers by making the education possible.

In the pedagogical life of the school, the dominant principles are freedom and what one could call individual or aristocratic leadership; in the rights life, equality and democratic leadership; and in the economic life, partnership (fraternity) and republican leadership. Republican leadership is not meant to refer to a political party but rather to a leadership based on competence and the appropriate delegation of tasks to committees and individuals who carry out work on behalf of the whole. These threefold distinctions are summarized in Table 1.

Let me now return to the idea that society and our institutions reflect our consciousness, our nature. I experience institutions as living entities, having an identity, a history, a set of relationships, and a form. Indeed in the same way as we have a body, a soul, and a spirit, the institutions we create also have these dimensions. No two schools are alike; each has its unique identity and history in which its spirit comes to expression. Each also has a characteristic set of human relationships: a mood of interaction, a style of leadership, a level of formality or infor-

Table 1
Threefold Distinctions

Threefold Social Order	Principle	School	Principle of Leadership
Cultural Life (Spirit)	Freedom	Teachers/College or Council	Individual
Rights Life (Soul)	Equality	Everyone/Faculty/ PTA/Forum	Democratic
Economic Life (Body)	Fraternity	Board/Dialogue with faculty	Republican

mality that defines aspects of its culture, of its soul life. A school also has a body: building, administrative, and financial processesthat need attention and nourishment. If our general health is dependent on a healthy body, soul, and spirit, so too is the health of institutions. In looking at institutional health, I often ask clients to look at the Dialogue with the Spirit (mission, goals, values), the Dialogue with People (staff, co-workers, clients, parents relationships), and the Dialogue with the Earth (building, finances, task division, work structures) in order to assess areas of strength and weakness.[18]

Steiner maintained that there are laws in social life as binding as the laws of mechanics. These laws come to expression in both the idea of the Threefold Social Order and in the form of Waldorf schools.

> 1. The cooperation and creativity of individuals and institutions is greater the more it is based on the principle of freedom in determining the mission, goals, and values of common work (Cultural Life, Dialogue with Spirit).
>
> This principle or law is expressed both in the concept of educational freedom and choice, which parents, teachers, and children have in a cultural life free of state control, and in the freedom teachers in Waldorf schools have in the classroom and in evolving their particular school within the context of a mutually agreed upon philosophy of education and curriculum.[19]
>
> 2. Agreement on rights, regulations, duties, and responsibilities in a society and in institutions is the more binding and fair the more it is based on the principle of equality and partnership (Rights Life, Dialogue with People, Equality).
>
> This principle comes to expression in the idea of a rights state limited to the articulation and application of human rights and laws, and in Waldorf schools when parents, teachers, and administrators are equally involved in building the school community, and in making decisions by consensus.
>
> 3. The meeting of human needs — both financial and for the proper development and use of human capacities — is the most effective where it is based on the principle of brotherhood and sisterhood (Economic Life, Dialogue with Earth-Sister/Brotherhood).
>
> This principle is expressed in the idea of an Associative Economic Life characterized by cooperation not competition. In Waldorf schools this principle comes to expression in the cooperative dialogue about levels of tuition (Faculty-Board), In a salary system that takes needs into account (for example, the number of children in a given family), and in a system of task and work division based on competence and recognition of mutuality.
>
> When these principles are consciously worked with as they are in some Waldorf schools, an unusual vitality, a high level of education and life, can be experienced

because the spirit, soul, and body of the institution and of individuals is nourished.

When freedom and responsibility is exercised and individuals participate in the evolution of a school's mission, values, and priorities, a joint dedication to a higher purpose emerges. This not only builds commitment but enhances human relationships and the building of mutual understanding. When understanding is present and expressed in arriving at agreements together, trust is built, allowing a collegial division of tasks. Without a joint commitment to common ideals, relationships suffer and this in turn undermines the work life of the institution.

Given the form of many institutions and of public education, the reverse of these principles is true. There is limited freedom for teachers and not a true discussion of educational mission and values. There is no true equality between teachers, parents, and administrators in arriving at agreements on rights and responsibilities, and this often results in relations becoming adversarial and agreements that are often not honored. The result is limited creativity, adversarial relationships, and pronounced individual or group egotism in the institution. Neither the body, the soul, nor the spirit of the institution or of individuals is nourished. The institution is not healthy and education suffers.

A further important principle of Waldorf schools is the principle of collegiality, of nonhierarchical forms. This is not due to the belief that collegial forms of decision making are more efficient but rather that hierarchical forms block the proper meeting between individuals, not allowing us to be effective partners on the path of mutual development. In the struggle to arrive at consensus in faculty meetings or on the Board, we are encouraged to understand the thoughts and values of one another and at the same time to bring to consciousness our own one-sidedness. We are encouraged, coaxed, and sometimes pushed to meet each other at deeper levels. For Steiner, the search for social forms that encourage people to meet at deeper levels was an essential aspect of social reform for he saw modern Western consciousness as increasingly isolated, self-conscious, and cut off from others and the world.[20] For him hierarchical forms only enhanced the isolated, increasingly egotistical nature of individual consciousness, blocking the proper unfolding of destiny.

In thinking about this question over the years I gradually came to the view that collegial forms of

decision making in organizations are both a mirror to our more antisocial sides and an invitation to develop interest and understanding toward others, as described in Table 2.

While I do not have the space to fully elaborate this picture, I will describe a few of the central ele-

Table 2
Collegial Forms of Decision Making

	The Mirror: Anti-Social Forces		The Invitation: Social Understanding
Thinking	Doubt/Critical Intelligence	↔	Interest in Others
Feeling	Likes and Dislikes	↔	Empathetic Understanding
Willing	Egotism	↔	Compassion/Love

ments. Our modern society and educational system fosters a critical, doubting intelligence with which we meet the thought and being of others. The media, in our consumer society, strengthens our awareness of individual likes and dislikes, making our perception of other's feelings more different. Our own egotistical nature is further enhanced by the many messages of a "me first" society. Although it seems perverse, our society strengthens the self-oriented, antisocial, and egotistical side of individual consciousness while it bemoans the isolating, fragmenting, and violent consequences of this development.

Nonhierarchical collegial institutional forms serve to make us aware of this antisocial, self-centered aspect of ourselves as we struggle to understand and work with others. Such forms serve to bring to our consciousness that which needs to be transformed if we are to become more loving human beings. At the same time, such forms offer an invitation to turn our thoughts outward to understand another, to reach out with our feelings, to empathize with the situation of the other person, and to place our will, our deeds, at the service of a group. In this way, collegial institutions of all kinds, and Waldorf schools in particular, serve our individual development while promoting social responsibility and community. In the short run, such forms are not more efficient, but in the long run they foster a level of dialogue, engagement, and mutual development and vitality that are to my mind the hallmarks of institutional health.

Conclusion

I have described the basic principles of form underlying the governance of most Waldorf Schools. Each school has its own adaptations — some have a college of teachers, others have more extensive parent involvement in school life and decision making. Many Waldorf schools struggle to make the economics work, having a high commitment to socioeconomic diversity and therefore giving extensive tuition remissions as scholarships. Salaries are often quite low and collegial relations not easy in a system that is formally nonhierarchical. Despite these struggles, or perhaps because of them, I think Waldorf education has something of value to share with the rest of the educational establishment. One is the spiritual development embodied in the Waldorf curriculum, the other is the social architecture of Waldorf schools, for it embodies principles that serve to nurture the learning partnership implicit in all education.

Notes

1. See Douglas Sloan, "Imagination, Education and Our Postmodern Possibilities," in *Revision* 15(2): 42–46, for an exploration of the modern mindset.

2. Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools*, Crown, 1991.

3. David E. Purpel, *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education*, Bergin and Garvey, 1989.

4. Rudolf Steiner, *Toward Social Renewal*. London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1977.

5. See J. Kozol, *Savage inequalities*, pp. 72-72, about Chicago.

6. Rudolf Steiner, *Education as a Social Problem*, Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, pp. 108-109.

7. See Joan Almon, "Educating for Creative Thinking: The Waldorf Approach," in *Revision*, 15(2): 73.

8. See D. Mitchell, ed., *The Art of Administration*, AWSNA Economics Committee, for a picture of Waldorf school forms, 1992.

9. Mitchell, *Art of Administration*, pp. 49-57.

10. Mitchell, *Art of Administration*, pp. 139-150.

11. Rudolf Steiner, *Soul Economy and Waldorf Education*. Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1986.

12. Steiner, *Soul Economy*.

13. Mitchell, *Art of Administration*, pp. 139-150.

14. C. Schaefer, "Rudolf Steiner as a Social Thinker," in *Revision*, 15(2).

15. P. Drucker, *The New Realities*, New York: Harper & Row, pp. 10-18, 1989.

16. Steiner, *Toward Social Renewal*, pp. 83-126.

17. For a detailed account of Emil Molt and the first Waldorf schools, see Christine Murphy, *Emil Molt, The father of a new education*, Edinburgh: Floris Books.

18. See C. Schaefer and T. Voors, *Vision in Action: Working with Soul and Spirit in Small Organizations*, 2nd Edition, Hudson, NY: Lindisfarne Press, 1995.

19. The formulation of these laws and principles is adapted from the excellent study by Christof Lindenau, *Soziale Dreigliederung, Der Weg zu einer lernenden Gesellschaft*, Verlag Friers Geistesleben, Stuttgart, 1983, pp. 19-29.

20. Rudolf Steiner, *Social and Anti-Social Forces*. Spring Valley, NY: Mercury Press.

The Many Rhythms of Time

Patricia Kearns

Reflecting on music can help students develop different perspectives on time, which they can use to deal with the pressures that they face.

In thinking about adolescents and how they relate to music, I kept coming back to my own experiences with music and my obsession with time. Overwhelmed by a teaching job, a full-time graduate school semester, a teaching assistantship, and a performing schedule, I found myself frustrated, exhausted, and amazed that most of the adults I know are handling workloads equal to mine. It seems that we have become a society of workaholics, placing less and less value on free time, leisure activities, and personal reflection; as a result, I think many of us, myself included, are blinded by the busyness of our day-to-day lives and have lost the sense of a long-term continuity in what we do.

The theme of time passing is one that occurs in many styles and periods of music, and the idea of using musical examples to express some of what I was feeling was one that appealed to me very much. However, my primary purpose for using music was to invite teenagers to discuss what *they* were thinking and feeling as they listened to and interpreted the pieces. My intent was that what the adolescents heard in the music should be a reflection of what was happening inside themselves, and I was afraid that by choosing a recurring theme of my own life, I would be holding up a mirror of an adult world that teens had not yet experienced and could not relate to.

My doubts about this theme were dispelled very rapidly by an incident with one of the eighth-graders I was teaching in a K-8 school in suburban Bayside, Queens. Normally an enthusiastic "A" student in music, this girl was suddenly in danger of failing my class. She looked exhausted and constantly worried, and when we discussed her low grade she nearly cried. Further discussion with her revealed that this 13-year-old had a weekly schedule that rivaled mine: in addition to a demanding academic schoolday, a typical afternoon and evening for her included a student council meeting, of which she was president; volleyball practice; a piano or dance lesson; investigating and choosing between several area high schools; and, somehow, homework. Overwhelmed

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by keeping up with the clock, she had been unaware that her grade in music was slipping. I realized that the adult trend toward over-scheduling and over-achieving is indeed affecting young people, and I decided to use the theme of time in various musical pieces to hear what adolescents have to say about clocks, schedules, the present, the past, and the future. By listening to what they told me about the music, I was looking for clues to whether or not other teenagers were frustrated by time, and whether experiences with music could be used to help them express and ease those frustrations.

Pieces

The musical examples I chose were recordings of three pieces from different musical idioms, all describing the passage of time. The students I interviewed heard each piece in its entirety, but were not aware of the titles or my own impressions of the music. The first was a rock song entitled "Time," by the group Pink Floyd, which depicts through lyrics and music the feelings of a person under a great deal of pressure to achieve despite his inability to find enough time to do so. The song begins with the ticking of a clock, followed by a cacophony of alarms sounding simultaneously. The lyrics express frustration at the way days and years pass by before we want them to, and despair that our time in any given place seems to run out before we have a chance to make a noteworthy contribution. Because I was specifically looking for adolescents' opinions on time, I played this song first as a kind of "dead giveaway" that would put my topic in the foreground. I believed this would allow me to subtly direct their discussions without causing them to feel that they were giving right or wrong answers or that they were limited to talking only about one topic.

The second piece was an orchestral piece entitled "Saturn: The Bringer of Old Age," from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst. This music also symbolizes for me the sense of time speeding up as we get older. The steady, heavy beats of the music sound like the ticking of a clock that gets faster and faster, until time is actually marching past us. At the climax of the piece, the chimes seem to suggest alarms ringing, as in the first song, signaling that we are running out of time. Curiously, the end of the piece calms, perhaps indicating an acceptance of old age, the limitations of time, and the approaching of death.

The last piece is a Native American flute piece by R. Carlos Nakai, entitled "Echoes of Time." I chose this piece for its contrasting peaceful mood, and because of its feeling of being outside of "clock time." For me, this music has a sense of the continuity of time from the beginning of the world to the present; away from the ticking of a clock, it suggests the freedom to look at our lives and reflect on past, present, and future as a whole.

Discussing past, present, and future: Are they a whole?

The four teenagers I spoke with were all students of mine: Christina[1] and Robert were two eighth-graders from my general music classes, and Orly, a 12-year-old, and Michael, a college freshman, studied with me privately. All of them were people who, at times prior to our discussions of the pieces, had expressed frustration or exhaustion caused by their schedules. Almost immediately, the theme of clock time was apparent in many of their statements as they related to the music. In response to the first song, Christina stated that the person in the music feels rushed, and that being rushed made her (Christina) feel pessimistic:

> My everyday life is very rushed, too; I think most people get upset about it, like when they have a report to do and they don't have enough time to do it. Most of us have to give up some things, like sleep or going out, to get everything done.

As an eighth-grader getting ready to graduate from a K-8 school and move into a new environment, Robert expressed the desire for more time with his familiar routine, even with the busyness that that routine demanded of him:

> This music is like time is passing and soon someone will have to say goodbye to some people. He doesn't want the time to go by, and he's depressed about it, but he knows he can't stop it from going by, and that's why he's singing the song, to make himself feel better.

The theme of clock time was also apparent in a more implicit way throughout my contacts with the four adolescents: the clashes between my schedule and all of theirs made it almost impossible for me to interview them. The eighth-graders had no free periods during the day, and even worked through their lunch periods doing community service for the school. Orly, a sixth-grader, was attending a Hebrew Yeshiva from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and had several hours of homework a night. Michael was a Columbia University engineering student, living from one exam to the next. Simply fitting in four separate sessions took many weeks: Time was obviously a dominating factor in their lives. I was curious to see what ideas these teenagers could give me about the

kinds of experiences that would help them cope with their prematurely high stress levels.

One thing that struck me in talking about music with the four adolescents was their complete willingness to listen to the music in terms of its own time. A piece is capable of suspending our sense of ordinary time, of relaying its own internal time-structure based on the relationship of the events that unfold throughout the piece. The way in which musical time passes is not necessarily a reflection of the minutes and seconds of our daily clock schedules; rather, the repetition and variation of ideas in a piece represents one of many rhythmic possibilities present in a culture (Hall 1983). Given our society's current fixation with speed and efficiency, it is not surprising that the form of music dominating contemporary charts is the 2½-minute pop song. Even ballads today rarely have a genuinely slow beat. However, slower, subtler rhythms — the kind whose cycles take years or lifetimes to complete — are also present in our culture, and although they are largely overlooked in our day-to-day lives, they find their way into other musical formats like the rock, classical, and Native American examples I described earlier. Music, therefore, has a unique ability to bring us in touch with different rhythms or types of time; this is why, when we have been fully engaged in a piece, we are sometimes unaware of how much clock time has passed (Langer 1953). The three older teenagers I spoke with became extremely involved with the music; despite the fact that our interviews were running over the 45 minutes we had scheduled, they showed no signs of restlessness and continued to talk until they felt they had devoted enough time to each piece to say what they felt was important.

Another revelation was that the adolescents I spoke with had a Janus-like tendency to reflect on both past and future. Janus, the two-faced Roman god with one face looking forward and one perpetually backward, was the hailer of the new calendar year and of all new beginnings (Rose 1961). Significantly, in starting anew, Janus does not lose sight of the old. Christina, Robert, and Michael philosophized quite naturally in this way: Christina spoke of thinking about things like what her life would be like twenty years from now and what it had been like five years ago, and Robert spoke constantly of the future, wondering what would happen. In "Saturn: The Bringer of Old Age," Robert described the thoughts of a character he imagined in the music:

This person is trying to explain what's happening to

him. He doesn't know what's going to happen to him, good things or bad things or both. He's thinking about his future, maybe a couple of years from now. He's seeing all the problems in the world, like jobs and diseases, and he's thinking about other people and the world and stuff like that. He's a regular person, wondering about normal things.

Michael, the oldest, spoke of the anxiety and tension he had experienced during "teenage rebellion," and the fact that he had gotten past those emotions to become a better person. With "Echoes of Time," the Native American piece, his thoughts took an even broader perspective:

This scene is before technology, when there was no noise pollution, and it was a better time then. As time progresses, I see this place just getting worse and worse, everything's automatic, like microwaves, etc. This piece is thinking about Nature and the beauty of the world, and it is remembering, showing nostalgia for a more peaceful time.

Orly, the youngest of the four, was the only one who stayed in the present tense and did not relate the music to her own experiences or emotions. She spoke vaguely of someone waiting for something to happen or going on a journey and leaving something forever behind, as if foreshadowing the changes that would soon take place in her development. She also struggled to articulate the idea of adults having "something that children don't have, something that takes a long time to get." Interestingly, she became bored and restless while listening to the pieces and she never projected herself into the music; when I asked her specific questions like "Can you remember a time when you felt this way?" she usually answered "I don't know," preferring to talk about the immediate events that she saw happening to the people in the pieces.

Research in development tells us that it is normal for young children to be concerned only with the present. Joseph Adelson (1972) describes the time perspective that children usually have until around age 13 or 14:

In the early years of adolescence the child's mind is locked into the present. In pondering political and social issues he shows little sense of the future. The past is not seen to weigh upon the present, via precedent and tradition, nor can the child perceive the manifold and varying potentialities within the present. The young adolescent will rarely look back to the antecedent sources of the present, and when he thinks of the future, or is forced to by the question we ask him, he can imagine only the immediate and direct outcome of a current event. (p. 110)

When signs of a wider range of temporal awareness begin to appear in adolescents, the past and the fu-

ture are seen as something separate from the present. Frankie, a 12-year-old girl in Carson McCullers' novel *The Member of the Wedding*, sees the past and the future as large periods of stability and the present as an unsettled, in-between time. Her belief is that once the current stage of strangeness is over, the future, like the past, will be logical, orderly, and unchanging:

> Her world seemed layered in three different parts, all the twelve years of the old Frankie, the present day itself, and the future ahead.... As she walked along, it seemed as though the ghost of the old Frankie ... trudged silently along not far from her, and the thought of the future, after [her sister's] wedding, was constant as the very sky. That day alone seemed equally important as both the long past and the bright future — as a hinge is important to a swinging door. (McCullers 1973)

Unfortunately, more and more adults seem to have a similar fixation on the present. Busy schedules and tense, anxious lifestyles result in many adults prolonging the in-between feeling of adolescence well into their thirties and forties, feeling that what they are doing now is a temporary phase that they must go through before stability can be attained. "When I make enough money to buy a new car, I will slow down and stop working so hard" becomes "When I buy the new house..." becomes "When I have saved up enough for early retirement..." and so on, with the picture of a glowing future being constantly pushed out of reach. Likewise, how often do we hear the words "I used to... (play tennis, go hiking, sing with the church choir) but I don't have time anymore"? Our society is tending toward an adolescent perspective of viewing the past and the future as constant and calm, and the present as a whirlwind of feverish change and activity. With every moment occupied, there is no time to think about how the past, present, and future are related, and we can begin to feel disconnected from the various events and stages of our lives.

Obviously we are in need of some way of uniting past, present, and future in order to maintain a larger perspective. Part of the reason for our temporal myopia is that time in our society is always being divided into smaller and smaller units, so that events can happen in fractions of a second (Schor 1992). Computers call up information faster than we can think and TV commercials bombard us with so many rapid, fragmented images that we almost need to process them subliminally. Compounding the problem is the fact that people in our culture tend to experience time as an irreversible conveyor belt; any

moment not tangibly or productively occupied is one that has been forever wasted. How different this is from a culture like the Hopi Indians', whose language has no past or future tenses (Hall 1983)! Yet, in spite of our obsession with clock time, it is ironic that our most rewarding, highest quality work is that which takes place when we are so involved that we lose track of how much time is passing. Maxine Greene quotes from Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* to suggest that only when clock time is made to "stand still" does valuable, creative-thinking time take place (Greene 1988):

> Father said clocks slay time. He said time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life. (Faulkner 1946, 104)

Once we have experienced this type of timelessness, we can begin to see that time operates on many planes in our perspective; indeed, like the Hopi Indians, we can sometimes think of time in a nonlinear way, with everything we have experienced and everything we will experience being an inseparable part of the present moment.

Learning to take time out from clock time

So what does all of this mean in terms of adolescents and education? Can we find a way to help them slow down and look beyond the present, a way that will stay with them into adulthood? If teenagers are to live and function in our society, it is necessary to teach them to operate within a schedule, to be punctual, and to do certain things efficiently. However, each person, like a piece of music, has his or her own internal rhythm that is separate from the rhythm of the clock; this individual time contributes to our periods of great accomplishment, our moods, and the pace at which we are able to function. We need to offer adolescents more opportunities for awareness of these other types of time, and to teach them to organize their lives, taking into account their own rhythms. According to Stephan Rechtschaffen (1993), director of the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, this does not mean that we should teach kids to stop being productive or goal-oriented, but simply that they should learn to modify their goals to find a balance between their accomplishments and their unstructured time.

Finding moments away from the demands of a schedule is a challenge that young people will continue to face as they reach adulthood and enter the working world. As adults, we often have no choice about the pace of our work lives and the amount of

time spent on the job (Schor 1992); if we want to stay employed, we must demonstrate some form of visible productivity by which our employers can measure our value as workers. Unfortunately, however, most people carry this emphasis on achievement into their nonworking hours, as well. As less tangible experiences — such as "wasting time" on the porch with friends or family — have become undervalued in our society, many people define personal meaning in terms of how much they can accomplish (Creekmore 1994). This leads to leisure time being filled with one event or activity after another, and often creates a personal life that is just as busy and stressful as the work week. Teens are taught very early that they are only as good as their accomplishments, as they are advised by teachers, parents, and college recruiters that good grades are not enough to get them into college. Hence we have kids like my eighth-grade student in the opening of this article, who are signing up for every available after-school activity in order to be "well-rounded."

Because our culture encourages us to stay busy, people tend to ignore the fact that we *do* have choices about how to spend personal time — that once the errands of the day are finished, it is not necessary to be visibly doing something every minute. Juliet Schor points out in *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (1992) that, for many, the sense of free time gets lost in consumer activities — shopping, traveling, dining out, using high-end sports equipment are all ways in which the media persuades us to use our time, but none of them slow down our pace or contribute to meaningful reflection. In fact, staying busy can be a way of avoiding time to reflect; living a life that is fragmented and full of activity is sometimes easier than realizing that our natural rhythms cannot keep up with our workaholic tendencies (Csikszentmihalyi 1994). When we pay attention to our internal sense of timing, however, these slower rhythms help us to accomplish things more smoothly and allow us to do our best work. Students need to experience the feeling of slowing down as a regular part of their lives before they can make better choices — as teens, and later as adults — about scheduling and the amounts of activities they take on.

The fact that the older adolescents I met with were willing to talk slowly and at length about the pieces, beyond our scheduled session, showed me that listening experiences were a valid means of transporting them into another type of time. Since they were at an age when they were beginning to see beyond the present moment, they welcomed the opportunity to step into the past or the future and express their reflections about their lives. According to Keith Swanwick (1988), professor of music education at the Institute of Education of London University, adolescents begin to show a stronger awareness of the expressiveness of music around age 15 and will relate to musical gestures on a personal, symbolic level. This was definitely true of the two eighth-graders, who were almost 14, and Michael, the 18-year-old college freshman; the act of listening and engaging in an emotional way with the music actually caused them to forget the passing of clock time.

Once the students had each heard something that they could relate to in the pieces, I asked them if they could imagine an original composition that they would create based on an idea the music had given them. Christina described a hypothetical piece she would write after hearing my three pieces, relating each one to her own life, and then deciding what she and the pieces all had in common:

> If I could write my own song, I think a flute would sound nice. The notes would be not too short and not too long, and it would be a little lively. I would be remembering when I was a little kid. It would have a sort of happy wistful mood, like you would want to be back there again. Mostly the mood would be happy, though, with just a touch of sadness.

Robert also said he could use the thoughts he had had while listening to compose his own song:

> If I could write my own song, I would talk about something, with words. It would have a happy mood, and I would talk about my life. I would talk about my future, but it would be like it had already happened and I was remembering it, remembering happy things.

Both answers express a desire to escape the present, which for them was very stressful, and look back to a "happy" age — even if that age hadn't happened yet, as in Robert's song. They talked about composing as an even more personal, reassuring way to look at and make sense of time. It is important for us to take advantage of teenagers' Janus-like tendencies to look both forward and backward and help them keep this characteristic alive as they reach the end of adolescence. Research in musical development shows us that if musical skills are not nurtured, they usually will not develop past a very basic level (Swanwick 1988). Common sense tells us that if we do not nurture the tendency to reflect and tie together different sections of our lives, adolescents will

eventually lose this tendency and become short-sighted adults.

Conclusion

Since the time that these four interviews took place, I have seen frightening evidence that the stress and over-scheduling that was a part of my adolescent students' lives is affecting preadolescent children at an ever earlier age. Loss of leisure time among adults is eroding the culture of childhood for children as young as three (Gibbs 1989). Instead of having time for imaginative play with peers or "hanging around" with their parents, children are shuttled from the morning babysitter to school to afternoon sports or activities, all of which are coordinated with the pace of adults' hectic lives. A recent article in *Omni* boasts that five- and six-year-olds in an experimental program in North Carolina doubled the amount of content they were able to cover when five weeks were added on to the school year (Tawasha 1995). The trend that adults are creating for children has an emphasis on doing more, and doing it faster. With this type of constantly structured scheduling permeating all age groups in our society, it becomes even more important to provide students with opportunities for slower, freer moments. Adolescents are at an age when they are beginning to take responsibility for their own schedules, and they can benefit greatly from knowing other options about how to use time.

Musical listening and creating were a valuable way for my older students to talk about their own rhythms: their emotions, their past "histories," their ideas about the future. Unlike Orly, the 12-year-old, they were at a developmental age that allowed them to be aware of larger perspectives, and connecting their ideas to the music gave them another way to experience some of the concepts they were already thinking about. Music is an accessible medium for teenagers; they accept it as a means of expression, and they are open to many different styles when asked to interpret the music their own way. If adolescents have regular opportunities to step outside of clock time, there is a greater chance that they will make room for other types of time — personal time, biological time, the times when there seems to be no time — when they are adults. Perhaps if people are taught to value unstructured time more highly, we could even find options to the over-scheduled, highly stressed working lives that have become the norm in our society.

Robert Henri (1958) expresses, in terms of a painter looking at a model's dress, the type of internal time that also happens in music and that should be present in our awareness of our lives:

> There is a past, present, and future in the fall of a dress. Don't arrange it. In the old days of long skirts the models used to wonder why I made them walk from the end of the room to the place where I would have them pose. They were to continue walking until I spoke, and then they were to stop and turn as though to hear what I had to say. It was not always a success, but eventually it would happen right, and the fall of the drapery would express the gesture of movement, the arrest, and the possible next gesture. There would be a past, present, and future, and there would be unity and rhythm in the dress. (p. 207)

This same unity and rhythm can be a part of adolescents' learning, as we help them to become thoughtful and healthy members of society.

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On the Postmodern Shadow of Whole Language

Theory and Practice and the Ecological Wisdom of Good Work

David W. Jardine and James C. Field

Standards that come from tradition, discipline, craft, convention, and precedent allow us better to connect, to know, and to interweave our knowing.

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Parent: For my [grade 5] daughter, it's not a question of whether she knows where her work is strong or when it needs to be improved. It's a question of her not feeling the need to improve her work *even though she knows she could*. Do you know what I mean? I am having a lot of trouble with her because she is perfectly happy to hand in work that she knows she could improve. She has been encouraged to talk only about what she *can* do, and this is the only thing she is told about her work by her teachers. She thinks that everything that she does is perfectly O.K. — it's all "can do." She never has to think about what she *should do* because of what she *can't* do. Um — that must sound funny. Maybe I'm not being clear. Do you know what I mean?

Researcher: Doesn't she like writing or think that what she's writing about is important?

Parent: No, that isn't it. She *loves* her writing — that's the problem. Do you see? Maybe if she didn't like it so much she would change it.

The above quote reminds us that there is an implicit and unavoidable difficulty and risk to the work we do in whole language. Our work flirts near wonderful, dangerous territories having to do with power and empowerment, with authorship and authority, with creativity and voice and silence, with narrativity and deeply qualitative features of reading and writing, with our selves being caught up with others in the reading and writing-shaping and being shaped by the text. As Lucy Calkins (1991) put it, whole language involves "living between the lines." It has to do with the wholeness and integrity of language and therefore with the wholeness and integrity of our living in language. Quite appropriately, whole language is linked etymologically to healing and health — a powerful, integral cluster of issues.

There is, however, a particular malaise being hinted at in the parent's words cited above. Whole language seems to be getting stuck in a peculiar place: simultaneously trapped in Romantic modernism *and* caught up in a particular version of postmodernism that works against its inner spirit and character.

In this paper we will be contending that whole language, given its fullest expression, has a strong affinity to what Charlene Spretnak (1991, p. 19) calls "ecological postmodernism." We feel that this affinity makes it possible and necessary for the whole language classroom to involve and invoke and protect the possibility of living with children in the wisdom of good work.

"Deconstructive" postmodernism and the modernist malaise of Whole Language: "Standing helpless before the child"

In the deconstructive version of postmodernism, all threads of sense and significance and orderliness and meaning are envisaged as of our own making, and the postmodern project becomes a sort of hyper-literate (Smith 1992), often ironic and condescending, *unmaking*: "deconstructions" aimed at unmasking the pretense of our beliefs, conventions, precedents, disciplines, traditions, and the like. What we are left with is a fragmented surface play of autonomous, free-floating signs that could *always* be understood or interpreted otherwise. As such, "in the deconstructive-postmodern play of disintegration and impossibility of meaning, one can merely strike self-conscious postures *as if* one's responses had meaning. Anything more would reveal a dated naiveté" (Spretnak 1991, p. 15).

In this version of postmodernism, all those "grand narratives" (Lyotard 1987) by means of which we could once, with confidence and clarity and little hesitancy, make pointed, often foreclosing judgments about the value and quality of work, children's or our own — all these have been, or are in the process of being, disassembled.

We suggest that the fragmentation typical of deconstructive postmodernism is underwritten by "deeply engrained cultural norms of separateness, reactive autonomy, and self-absorption … which devours the sense of grounded, responsible being." (Spretnak 1991, p. 15). In this milieu of fragmentation, "improving" one's written work makes as little or as much sense as *not* improving it, for the criteria for improvement have been shown to be arbitrary in

the first place. All that can be really done is to make the work *different* and *all* children's work is "good" in this sense: It is different, it is *theirs* and (so the rhetoric of whole language often goes) it is to be honored just as it is. Thus, a ten-year-old boy from a school proud of its "whole language approach" can, in response to the question "Are you a good writer?" say, "I don't know. My teacher says we're all good writers."

This boy's comments about authorship and quality might suggest that some children have seen through this smoke-and-mirrors psychologizing (one might even say "pathologizing") of the substantive work of education. Or this boy's comments might suggest that he has fallen for it completely and might be on his way to believing, as his teacher seems to believe, that "good work" is a sort of free-floating signifier that can only be used instrumentally, to make children "feel good about themselves." It no longer signifies anything *about the work done*, except through the invocation of arbitrary contexts of significations (e.g., curriculum guide expectations) that could always be otherwise. Differently put, the invocation of tradition, discipline, craft, or precedent as a move against fragmentation can only be done in the name of the assertion of power, domination, and control over others.

Consequently, against the background assumption of an autonomous self-as-author, tradition, discipline, craft, and precedent are only understandable *negatively*: they are not living, generative, and sustaining, but only foreclosing and oppressive. Little wonder, then, that in whole language there is such a rush toward "child-centeredness" (Edelsky 1992; Buchanan 1984; Watson and Crowlay 1988; Rich 1985; Pace 1991; Mickelson 1992): a rush away from speaking in any strong sense about tradition, discipline, and craft toward a sort of Romantic enthusiasm for the uniqueness, power, and "authorship" of each individual child. In its bloated extreme, we hear that "the child's perspective … *in the long run, is the only one that really counts*" (Lamme and Hysmith 1991, p. 634).

On the face of it, such descriptions of the power, authority, and uniqueness of the individual are heralds of "good news" — full of freshness, renewal, ebullience, and a sort of "relentless enthusiasm" (Smith 1988, p. 238). However, there is a shadow here. As adults, as teachers, we begin to find ourselves "standing helpless before th[is fully empowered] child[-as-author/ity]" (Arendt 1969, p. 181),

able only to perhaps "facilitate" (Edelsky, Draper, and Smith 1983; Newman 1985; Knoblauch and Brannon 1993) what he or she wishes to do, but no longer finding any good reason to believe in the authority of the traditions, disciplines, and conventions of language as having any compelling moral force in our pedagogical practices. As Lucy Calkins (1986, p. 165) herself warns, "out of fear of 'taking ownership' teachers can desperately avoid teaching." An interesting choice of words, for with this version of postmodernism comes a sort of fear and desperation. What appears to be new (i.e., deconstructive postmodernism) simply turns out to be a monstrous distension of the Romantic vision of the autonomous subject-as-author loosed upon a fragmented world in which, it seems, issues of "good work" inevitably devolve into questions of self-affirmation, self-expression, and fractious debates over personal preferences. Ironically, what was intended as a recovery of wholeness in language turns out to be premised upon the very fragmentation of wholeness that it was wont to overcome.

Ecological postmodernism and the wisdom of good work

We would like to suggest that whole language has an affinity to what Spretnak (1991) calls *ecological postmodernism*. This version of postmodernism requires that we clear away those deadening, destructive "grand narratives" that have spoken on behalf of univocity and foreclosure (it shares this movement with deconstructive postmodernism). However, with ecological postmodernism,

> one ... sees the passage beyond the breakdown of the ... assumptions of modernity as potentially leading to an ecological understanding of the world rather than a nihilistic disintegration of all values. Ecological postmodernism ... encourages us to ... no longer collaborate in the modern project of fragmentation, with its championing of certain fragments above all else. (Spretnak 1991, p. 19)

It suggests that what is revealed under narratives of severance and fragmentation is not a world of free-floating signs and a separate subject loosed from complicity in and responsibility for the world. Rather, through ecological postmodernism is revealed an old, earth(l)y wisdom of wholeness, interdependence, patterns: multiple, interweaving voices and a certain generativity and spirit. It is this sense of community that underwrites whole language theory and practice (Calkins 1986; Graves 1983; Harste, Short, and Burke 1988). And in this theory and prac-

tice — in this "community" (of readers/of writers) — there is a special place for the child.

This special place can be shown if we begin with a particular example. This story was written by a seven-year-old ESL child in a large, multi-aged, multi-grade classroom:

Coyote Made theEarth

One day Coyote was walking, then he look around. Coyote saw two ducks. Coyote asked them, "Is there nothing here except you?"
The ducks said, "There is something under the water." So one of the ducks went into the water. Coyote and the other duck waited for the other duck to come back up from under the water.
So the Duck did. They waited and waited and waited and waited. Then the duck came back up with the thing its mouth. "Just mud," said Coyote. "Say what a good idea. I can use that mud. I can make some people from that mud."
So Coyote started to make the people. After he was finished making the people, he started to make some animals. He made some bears and deer and lions and tigers and some birds. The Bear said, "Thanks for making me. But what should we do?"
Coyote said, "I will make a bird in the morning to wake you up. Dance with the bird."
Bear said, "Okay."
In the morning, the bird danced with the other animals. But the Bear would not dance. Coyote said, "What is wrong?"
"We need some sound," said the Bear.
"Listen carefully to the sound of the Earth. There is sound all around you. The Earth sings you a song. Dance and be happy, Bear," said Coyote.

— Anup Tuladhar (1993), Grade One

In this coyote story we do not hear simply "the child's voice." We hear as well the richness of the classroom he is in, and how well the fertility of the soil has been worked (these children were read countless tales of coyote and had wonderful, substantive discussions on them). We hear cascades of Native tales bursting through his words. We hear how learning sometimes involves imitation and repetition, sometimes creativity and "originality." We hear the work and wisdom of his teachers and the patience and care of teacher and child alike in going through such detailed editing and rewriting. And thus we hear, too, how engrossed this child must have been by coyote to sustain all this hard work. We hear *a whole world* in this tale. This child "owns" this writing as little or as much as the writing (as a *world*) "owns" him and houses and sustains the generativity and newness of his voice and *teaches* that voice to be strong. The whole language classroom is therefore not "child-centered" nor its in-

verse, but it takes up the work of this child with an eye to "the whole" of the generative *relations between* child, work, and world (of the child *and* of coyote *and* of Native cultures *and* of this classroom *and* of the multiple crafts, precedents, and traditions of language). And again it must be emphasized, the whole language classroom must be concerned with *both* the health of "the child" *and* the health of the multiple worlds (e.g., of language, of stories, of coyotes, of children, of teachers, of Native cultures) that house the generativity that the child portends.

Concluding remarks:
On the necessity of decapitalizing the standard

> [Our age is] marked by the stigma of the wound left in reality by the amputation of the Standard. [We] may be ready — or at least represent the transition to readiness — unneurotically, to get on without the Good-God-Gold Standards, one and all, indeed without any capitalized Standards, while learning to be enriched by the whole inherited inventory once it is transferred to the lower case. However, there is not need to get sentimental about all this, as all the problematic situations will not thereby have vanished. Indeed, there are great dangers here, especially in the possibility of uncritical, craven embrace of every kind of manipulation as equally holy (without privilege). We need to believe and enact the belief that there are better and worse ways to live. (Fekete 1987, p. xi)

We have been suggesting that, because of its affinity to ecological postmodernism, whole language is able and willing to enact the belief that there are better and worse ways to live with children in language. Whole language digs beneath the foreclosing "Good-God-Gold" standards into rich, fertile soils. "Good work" thus refers to a nest of *relations* that must always be renewed in the same way that ecosystems are continually renewing and reestablishing themselves through the arrival of "new growth." And living with children in the wisdom of good work means living with this wonderful "original difficulty" (Caputo 1987) of teaching and learning: that the question of what would be best for these children — whether Anup's text might serve something "good" in this class — must be answered, in part, by the active involvement of these children. That is, these children will have something irreplaceable to say in the conversation about the good of this work. The "tradition" that says that Anup's work is worthwhile is therefore not simply imposed on children (or teachers) as a given that goes without question but is, rather, delicately and contingently negotiated.

Thus, the whole language classroom still has standards. As a whole language teacher, I still prefer good writing, good interpretations, and good work from the child (and from myself — I myself must become immersed, for example, in the world of coyote if I am to understand the good of the work of the children in this class and if I am to do well by the tradition of coyote stories that forms part of our shared, inherited inventory). But now, these matters of "standards" ("good writing," "good interpretations," "good work," "doing well by …") have been re-placed back into the ongoing contingencies of the lives we live with children in the classroom. "Standards" (that come from tradition, discipline, craft, convention, precedent), once decapitalized, become soft protuberances that allow us "to better connect, to better know and interweave our knowing."

As such, standards become *inherently* pedagogic, inherently having to do with the ongoing, generative negotiations between the young and the old. Standards become interpretable, deeply *readable*, and thus become part of the real work of the whole language classroom. The working out of the question of what is preferable in the lives we live together in language is thus itself formulated as an issue of *literacy*, and literacy is linked back to a notion of "good work." It is this sort of living in the wisdom of good work with children (rather than some weak version of "child-centeredness") that bespeaks the wholeness of whole language theory and practice.

We cannot end without returning to the grade 5 child mentioned in the prelude to this paper. We have been suggesting that the malaise she seems to signal is not just her problem, that, in some quarters, whole language itself has slumped into apings of deconstructive postmodernism, which can lead to the loss of the desire for good work. Part of the reason for this is the ways in which whole language itself remains in the spell of naive, Romantic, *modernist* beliefs in an autonomous child-as-author — beliefs that, we have suggested, work precisely against its claims to "wholeness."

We cannot delineate ways in which this particular child might be reushered back into the wisdom of good work. That will have to be done in and through the contingencies of her life and those of her parent[s] and her teachers and the work she encounters. However, given the example of this child, we might, as educational theorists, begin carefully reflecting on all our talk of child-centeredness and "you're the author, you decide," and how we might be complicit in the malaise she is now bearing on our behalf.

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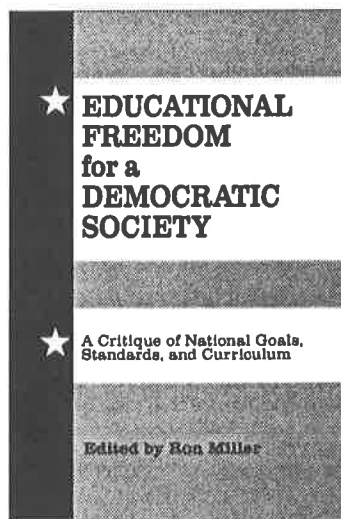
Book Reviews

Bring the World Alive: A Bibliography of Nature Stories for Children

Published by The Orion Society (136 E 64th St., New York, NY), 1995; 46 pp., Paper, $6.00

Reviewed by Cynthia Thomashow

Encased in the wondrous artwork of Debra Frasier, this annotated treasure chest of nature stories for children is a gift for parents and educators alike. Most of the books mentioned are considered best friends by my own children. We have spent many an hour sitting with stories like *Brother Eagle, Sister Sky*, and *Matthew's Meadow* reading and rereading the texts and immersing ourselves in the illustrations. Each interaction brings a new awareness or a new illustrative detail that further deepens our relationship to the story. *Bringing the World Alive* is filled with books that will have a long lifetime with any child.

Walking into the children's section of a bookstore these days can be overwhelming. A wash of color, enticing book jackets, myriad sizes, shapes, and topics; my wanderings through the sea of literary choices in this fast-growing market often leaves me overwhelmed and late for other appointments. Picking out books as gifts can be exhausting. This reference collection is a blessing. The descriptions are short and enticing. Now I can walk into a store feeling directed and informed.

As a professor of graduate students entering the environmental education field, this book is a welcome resource. I have my students review environmentally oriented literature at several developmental levels. We analyze the medium, the message, and a story's ability to develop ecological identity. This bibliography helped me expand my reference library for early and middle childhood. The books contained in *Bringing the World Alive* have a specific orientation. They are not scientific fountains of facts. They are picture books with narratives that reflect a child's view of nature. Each book is a literary jewel full of rich color and facets of wonder. Colleagues who teach young children have found the bibliography invaluably helpful in broadening their classroom collections of nature stories.

My daughter, who is 14, claims that books influence her relationship to nature by reinforcing a belief in wonder, the possibility of magic, and the essential quality of imagination. This spirit, found in many of the books in this Orion Society publication, walks outside with her into nature after she finishes reading. Books of myth, adventure, relational connection to the world, sense of place, and lyrical description open her experiences to wider possibilities.

Jennifer Sahn introduces this bibliography with a deep understanding of the importance imagination, creativity, and storytelling play in a child's connection to the Earth. The books described within these covers are not factual guides or how-to instructor manuals, they are celebratory and full of wonder. The book topics range from historical legends and myths to poetry and fictional adventures. Each book supports the belief that children relate to the world in developmentally unique and legitimate ways, through the telling of their stories and imaginatory play, as well as through their belief in the magic of what might be. We need to fill our children with hope to balance their exposure to environmental degradation. It is through active imagination and creativity, fed by a strong love and connection to nature that children will become empowered, environmentally responsible citizens.

Transformative Curriculum Leadership

by James G. Henderson and Richard D. Hawthorne

Published by Prentice-Hall Inc. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ), 1995; 164 pp., paper.

Reviewed by P. Bruce Uhrmacher

Imagine the following exercise: You recently read and have been inspired by the works of Maxine Greene. You believe that the vision below is worth deep contemplation and ought to be turned into a practical program. Think, how would you do it? Greene states:

> I would like to think of teachers moving the young into their own interpretations of their lives and their lived worlds, opening wider and wider perspectives as they do so.... I would like to see teachers tapping the spectrum of intelligences, encouraging multiple readings of written texts and reading of the world.... Such a project demands the capacity to unveil and disclose. It demands the exercise of imagination, enlivened by works of art, by situations of speaking and making.... Perhaps we can invent ways of freeing people to feel and express indignation, to break through opaqueness, to refuse the silences. We need to teach in such a way as to arouse passion now and then. (Henderson and Hawthorne, p. 1)

How could you help teachers move the young into sophisticated interpretations of their own lives? What

does it mean to tap texts and encourage multiple readings? How could you help those concerned with education to be enlivened by art and to use their imagination to unveil and disclose educational situations? How might passion be aroused, opaqueness opened, and silences silenced?

Trying to answer these questions gives you a sense of the task Henderson and Hawthorne have set for themselves. *Transformative Curriculum Leadership* has been written for the student who takes Greene's vision seriously. So, how do they proceed? The authors outline five interrelated, recursive phases of doing what they call transformative curriculum leadership. These include:

Phase 1: Enact constructivist activities in the classroom and other relevant settings.

Phase 2: Practice critical reflection on these enactments with reference to a comprehensive understanding of human liberation.

Phase 3: Promote curriculum design, development, and evaluation activities that support critically aware constructivist enactments.

Phase 4: Create supportive learning communities....

Phase 5: Practice action and formal inquiry.... (p. 12)

For our purposes, let's examine phases 1 and 2, since, space is short and these represent the groundwork upon which the latter phases are built.

Henderson and Hawthorne's conception of curriculum is one in which students must demonstrate comprehension of material, not memorize information. They must imaginatively solve problems, not merely follow procedures; they ought to be interested in inquiring into complex issues, "not parrot rehashed beliefs" (p. 18). Citing Brooks and Brooks's *In Search of Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms*, the authors agree that, among other things,

1. Students should be presented with problems that become increasingly relevant through active inquiry activities.

2. Inquiry material should be organized holistically, through the use of broad concepts to encourage diverse problem-solving styles and strategies.

3. Teachers must cultivate students' points of view.

4. Curriculum materials must be responsive to students' problem-solving suppositions. (p. 18)

To achieve these ends, Hawthorne and Henderson suggest that educators need to cultivate deliberative artistry — practical wisdom that consists of practical inquiry (tentative knowing and a conscious embrace of multiple viewpoints), pedagogical imagination (creativity), and critical reflection (in this case, a critical understanding of subject area issues). One important point to note is that Henderson and Hawthorne's plan begins in the classroom between teachers and students,

not in board meetings or in administrative offices; however, their approach does take into account the interests and expertise of parents, other teachers, principals, university faculty, and central office colleagues.

Phase two work, the authors tell us, encourages educators to reflect on the constructivist activities: "The teacher reflects on such basic questions as: Can I help students grow in self-knowledge? Can I cultivate a deeper social awareness? And can I encourage contemplative insight?" (p. 21). The authors suggest that specific principles about how to proceed in phase two cannot be prescribed given the idiosyncratic and contextual nature of schooling. General referents, however, can be suggested.

In their own work, Henderson and Hawthorne rely on notions such as *emancipatory constructivism*, which is guided by the *aesthetics of transactional artistry* and the *ethics of cultural democracy*. The authors want to create transformative leaders who see curriculum as a way to help students work toward two goals. First, transformative leaders should help students become members of a community of inquiry (e.g., mathematicians, social workers, lawyers, artists) and second, they should encourage students "to advance humanity's age old struggles with liberation" (p. 3). This latter point means that students should grapple with personal liberation (self-worth, identity, authenticity), social liberation (issues of equity, marginalization, oppression, and transpersonal liberation (spiritual possibilities). These two goals are, in part, what the authors mean by emancipatory constructivism.

Attaining this emancipatory vision, the authors tell us, requires an awareness of the aesthetics of transactional artistry and the ethics of cultural democracy. The former represents a conceptual framework that contains a theory of knowledge (Dewey and Bentley's transactional knowing), a guiding question ("how can students become passionate 'knowers' in their own way of what I passionately 'know' in my way" [p. 24]), and a mode of critique (educational connoisseurship and criticism) that may distill the essential features of classroom activities so that reflection may take place. The latter also represents a conceptual framework. Cultural democracy refers to a social perspective of democracy (Dewey's idea that democracy is "'primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience'" [p. 30]) and a form of critique called cultural criticism, which can be used to investigate ethical issues concerning dominant-subordinate relationships and power issues generally.

Thus, in order to translate Maxine Greene's vision into a program of practice, Henderson and Hawthorne outline five phases of work. In phase one, the teacher

and students are engaged in curriculum activities that must be employed with deliberative artistry (practical inquiry, pedagogical imagination, and critical reflection). In phase two, one reflects on what took place by asking whether the activities allowed for transactional knowing and encouraged cultural democracy. One may engage in educational criticism to answer the former question and cultural criticism to answer the latter. In all, one must remember that the schoolwide picture is to help students become members of a community of inquiry and to encourage them to develop their own liberatory possibilities.

Having briefly described some essential ideas, I wish to comment on a few features of the book. First, the text is filled with a provocative, but at times overloaded vocabulary. I firmly believe that educators need to continue to expand the language we use to talk about educational issues because, among other things, linguistic terms direct our senses, aid memory, and further our thinking. Henderson and Hawthorne create a rich vocabulary with suggestive possibilities: e.g., transformative curriculum leadership, deliberative artistry, and emancipatory constructivism. At times, however, the weighty language slows the reader down: "What's the difference between deliberative artistry and the aesthetics of transactional artistry?" the reader may ask.

Perhaps the larger issue is not the number of neologisms, but the brevity of the book. I sense that Henderson and Hawthorne worked hard to create a concise statement of their beliefs. I also believe that the book wouldn't have lost anything if it numbered several hundred rather than 164 pages. I pointed out that deliberative artistry requires pedagogical imagination, critical reflection, and practical inquiry. Each could have been written upon at much greater length than the eight pages allowed. Moreover, when one delves into practical inquiry, one learns that it involves narrative knowing and pedagogical tact, the latter of which requires a deep knowledge of children, of curriculum, of teaching, and of learning, a commitment to pedagogical virtues, and a deep caring commitment as well. The notion of pedagogical tact alone could be discussed extensively. My point is that in a longer text, one has more time to digest the various linguistic terms and the ideas contained within them.

I can anticipate that some readers might take issue with the author's combining constructivism with Dewey's transactional knowing, and educational criticism with cultural criticism. In regard to the former, the authors point out that their book tries to integrate some incompatible perspectives: "Imagine a jazz combo composed of creative, improvisational musicians interacting with one another to create compelling music, and

you will begin to understand the type of curriculum we are trying to advocate" (p. 2). In regard to the latter issue, I see no reason why one should adhere to one type of criticism. Multiple types of criticisms are needed especially since they work toward different ends.

Before closing, I'd like to point out that the book may be dense, as I've indicated above, but it is clearly written. Each chapter begins with an overview and ends with a summary. References abound (209 of them) for those who wish to study more. In addition, narratives of educational practice, written by practitioners, are interspersed and work well to exemplify the intellectual ideas. In the end, Henderson and Hawthorne have written an upbeat book filled with possibilities. They move readers into imaginative and wider perspectives of lived worlds. They tap into a variety of intelligences and encourage as well as practice multiple readings of educational worlds. They unveil the usefulness of educational theory and disclose imagined possibilities. In short, Henderson and Hawthorne have written a book that in its tone and creativity stands as an example of the vision they promote. Again, referring to Maxine Green:

> To engage with our students as persons is to affirm our own incompleteness, our consciousness of spaces still to be explored, desires still to be tapped, possibilities still to be opened and pursued.... We have to find out how to open such spheres, such spaces, where a better state of things can be imagined; because it is only through the projection of a better social order that we can perceive the gaps in what exists and try to transform and repair. I would like to think that this can happen in classrooms, in corridors, in schoolyards, in the streets around. (Henderson and Hawthorne, p. 80)

And, I would add, it can happen in texts such as *Transformative Curriculum Leadership*.

Son-Rise: The Miracle Continues

by Barry Neil Kaufman

Published by H. J. Kramer (P.O. Box 1082, Tiburon, CA 94920), 1994; 347 pages, hardbound, $20.00.

Reviewed by Laurie J. Katz

Imagine giving birth to a baby who appears to be very "healthy." As you begin raising your child, you share with friends and relatives the excitement of your child's first steps, first words, and first smiles. Somewhere during the first years of life something seems to go wrong. It's difficult to pinpoint exactly when the regression occurs but you begin to observe

your child forgetting the many things she or he has learned, exhibiting unexplained behaviors and withdrawing into his or her own world ... leaving you out. This experience occurred in the Kaufman family when Raun was about one year old. At that time he began exhibiting strange behaviors such as flapping his hands, spinning plates, and following shadows. Raun was diagnosed as having autism; a pervasive developmental disorder involving the presence of markedly abnormal or impaired development in social interaction and communication and a markedly restricted repertoire of activity and interests (DSM 1994).

Son-Rise: The Miracle Continues is the most recent book in a series Barry Neil Kaufman has written about his son, Raun Kahil, and the unique approach, the Son Rise Program, he and his family have developed for addressing children facing special challenges (e.g. diagnoses of autism, pervasive developmental disorders, cerebral palsy, schizophrenia, severe developmental delays, retardation, aphasia, attention deficit disorders, hyperkinesia, and neurological anomalies).

Part 1 provides an account of how the Kaufmans developed their program for Raun. Briefly, this approach involves: (1) an unconditional acceptance of the child's "inappropriate" behaviors, (2) designing a motivational therapeutic experience, and (3) developing a teaching program that simplifies every activity into manageable steps for the child.

Part 2 addresses Raun's development from about age three through his entrance into college. His growth is impressive as he graduates cum laude from high school and makes a smooth transition to college by participating on the debating team, in a co-ed fraternity, and taking courses like philosophy, biology, and theater arts. By reading about his successes, it is difficult to envision that Raun ever exhibited characteristics of autism.

This section also discusses how members of the Kaufman family participate in the development of The Option Institute and fellowship, which includes the Son Rise Program.

Part 3 consists of interviews with five families who have faced intense challenges with raising children having special needs. Kaufman selected these families as representing the hundreds of families who have exhibited positive changes in their lives by implementing the concepts from the Son Rise Program.

Son-Rise: The Miracle Continues — the title implies that some miracle or extraordinary occurrence made Raun "normal." Was the story of Raun and others described in the book a miracle or good intervention? Many of the techniques used by the Kaufmans with Raun, such as observing, recording, evaluating, establishing positive relationships, engaging in family-centered activities, creating motivating environments, and breaking down activities into manageable steps are important components in preparing personnel who work with young children having special needs (Bailey and Wolery 1992).

Research demonstrates that early intervention programs, whether occurring in centers, schools, or in the child's home, cause increases the child's cognitive, sensorimotor, communication, and social/emotional development (Bronfenbrenner 1975). In addition, outcomes of 280 demonstration projects under the Handicapped Children's Early Education Program funded prior to 1981 concluded that early intervention impacts on children's lives to the extent they can lead productive and fulfilling lives (Reaves and Burns 1982).

Indeed, the Kaufmans were ahead of the special education field. When Raun was first diagnosed as having "autism," P.L. 94-142 (now known as the Individual with Disabilities Act) was just being implemented on a national level. At that time the law only addressed persons with disabilities from the ages of 5 to 21. Not only was there little intervention available for younger children with disabilities, but a diagnosis of autism was perceived to be due to a cold and unresponsive environment, implying that the mothers had "refrigerator" personalities (Bettelheim 1967). These types of theories are no longer supported, and the concept of early intervention has expanded on a national level through the implementation of P.L. 99-457 in 1986.

The experiences of the Kaufmans and of the other families documented in the book have strong implications for the importance of collaboration between professionals and families in addressing the needs of children with disabilities. These families share how many of the professionals assumed the role of "expert" and negated any feelings or importance of the family in knowing and working with their child. Professionals left families with a sense of hopelessness and despair explaining that autism is "a lifelong disability," "unreachable" with "no cure." The Son Rise Program gave families the strength to be in charge of their child's treatment. Developing an atti-

tude that they can make positive changes in their lives as well as their child's promotes hope and the strength to intervene. The Son Rise Program promoted this strength by having families "accept" their child's strange or inappropriate behaviors; a concept that society has yet to embrace. Treatment of children with pervasive developmental disorders has primarily focused on changing the inappropriate behaviors or perceived deficits through behavior modification approaches. This notion of acceptance implies the importance of establishing a relationship with the child who has autism by respecting his interests instead of trying to discontinue or take away something meaningful to him. Greenspan (1992) develops this relationship between the teacher and child by explaining that the primary goal of intervention is to enable children to form a sense of their own personhood.

The Kaufmans spent at least ten hours a day for several years implementing an intensive program for Raun. Does every family need to spend or make arrangements for this type of intensive program in order to promote developmental growth in their child? Studies demonstrate that intensity of a program is critical in promoting development (Hoyson, Jamieson, and Strain 1984; Lovaas 1987). On the other hand, there are many families who are experiencing many stresses in their lives, (e.g., inadequate health care, housing, and nutrition) and are unable to execute this type of program.

In summary, the Son Rise Program is an approach that has helped many families raising children with severe disabilities. However, one must not interpret this approach as being the only type of intervention that will foster developmental growth. There are many aspects of this program that can be used with other interventions. A child's disability impacts on the family, necessitating the need for services/treatment to incorporate the family. Researchers and professionals in the field of early childhood special education are promoting philosophical changes in how professionals have been relating to families of children with special needs by encouraging professionals to empower families to make their own decisions (Bennett, Lingerfelt, and Nelson 1990; Dunst, Trivette, and Deal 1988) and to emphasize their strengths and capabilities.

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Reclaiming the Tacit Dimension: Symbolic Form in the Rhetoric of Silence

by George Kalamaras

Published by SUNY Press (Albany, NY), 1994; 255 pp., Paper.

Reviewed by John P. Miller

Professor Kalamaras has written a challenging and stimulating book. Primarily influenced by the Hindu tradition and the *Advaita-Vedanta*, he argues for a nondualistic approach to experience.

Kalamaras' thesis is that silence allows a nonconceptual awareness to arise so that there is an

> experience of simultaneity and complete identification with the process of the universe ... what the Hindu mystics call "the Self," or the "Brahman," or "the One." Again, it is an experience of unitary consciousness constituted, paradoxically, of diversity. And again, it is outside the realm of discursive language but not outside the domain of symbolic form. Consequently, it is ultimately not a transcendental state but rather one that is even further inside experience.... (p. 124)

Kalamaras argues that in the West we have been caught in dualistic thinking that is not comfortable with silence, paradox, and reciprocity. An example of this

dualism is the dialectic where there is a thesis and antithesis that must be resolved. Instead of the dialectic, Kalamaras cites the work of Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) who argues for the importance of dialogics. Dialogics is based on the assumption that "opposites inhabit one another and are, therefore, reciprocal and interconnected, not conditions of distance polarity that seek, sometimes antagonistically, resolution" (p. 27).

Kalamaras takes the concepts of dialogics, paradox, and reciprocity and applies them to his own work as a consultant to biology teaching assistants concerning writing across the curriculum. Central to this work was allowing for reciprocity and collaboration between himself and the teaching assistants. He attempted to move away from transmission pedagogy and setting ideas and concepts in opposition to one another. Instead, he tried to present the concepts as coexisting and complementing one another. He argues that "if we are to ever stop positioning the world through binary frameworks, we need to reperceive what it means to know by cultivating a dynamic interplay of both doubt and belief, connection and separation" (p. 55). In short, we need to be comfortable with ambiguity and chaos.

Kalamaras also refers to the importance of meditation. Meditation is another vehicle that allows us to be more comfortable with paradox. For Kalamaras, paradox can let everything become alive through reciprocity. Meditation, of course, uses silence as a vehicle for quieting the inner dialogue so that nonconceptual awareness can arise. Again, this awareness sees the interrelatedness of things rather than setting things in a binary framework. Kalamaras states:

> Through meditative practice one constructs knowledge of the interconnected and reciprocal aspects of the universe. Through an awareness of such reciprocity, the meditator is empowered and understands his status as the Supreme Self — that is, as participant in the processes of creation and destruction, and as simultaneously self and other. (p. 167)

Kalamaras brings together a wide and diverse literature in making his case as he makes reference to a variety of sacred texts, literature, and quantum physics. The book is occasionally hampered by academic jargon. Continual use of words like "bifurcation," "dialogics," and "objectivism" mean that this book will be limited to an academic audience. I personally would have liked more discussion of the practical implications of his theory. However, I believe that academia needs to listen to Kalamaras. He presents a view of language, pedagogy, and change that is broader and more inclusive than present postmodern approaches. I have also argued for more integrated and less fragmented approaches to teaching at the university level (Miller 1994a, b) and believe that our highly fragmented and specialized approach to higher education is ultimately self-defeating and actually perpetuates human suffering. Kalamaras has presented a perspective that can help us overcome the modern disease of separation.

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The School Around Us: 25 Years

by Claudia Berman

Reviewed by Paula Denton

Back in the 1960s high schooler Claudia Berman wrote:

> Six hours of eternity, everyday,
> Spent in that brick building,
> Where his mind was transformed,
> Where the nuts and bolts were tightly screwed in.
>
> And when he left the building he would wander,
> Fighting inside to regain himself...

Many of us in our adolescence experienced those "nuts and bolts" and protested them. We became passionate about creating forums and structures to encompass our desire for peace, freedom, equality, and humanity. We wrote for underground newspapers, marched in demonstrations, and developed food co-ops, communities, and schools. We were out to change the world!

Just the other day, a sheet of paper drifted from my 16-year-old son's school notebook. I picked it up and read:

> Someday I am going to stay in writing lab and write until I am done for once. I do not care if the stupid bell rings....
> Someday I will do this. I will not listen to the voice of the institutional GOD when he tells us to transfer our minds to another subject after only forty minutes. They will not understand. They will tell me that I am a failure in school, that I will never make it with such disobedient behavior. I'll say that I have seen what happens to those kids who listen to such nonsense. What happens is they lose all interest in learning forever! Forever!

My son in the nineties still feels that urge for expression, that surge of caring, that longing for power, and that frustration with those who withhold the power. When I read my son's words, I wondered what good has come of the visions and energy brewed out of my generation. Was all of our dreaming, planning, and building for nothing? Were the idealistic projects and communities established by myself, my friends, and many like-minded people across the country and world to leave my son with the same frustrations that engendered all this work 25 years ago? Are we back where we started?

The School Around Us: 25 Years is a clear reminder that we have changed some of the world for the better, that some schools and communities honor children's dreams, visions, and creations. The book demonstrates that, for those willing to expend the effort and time, truly democratic, idealistic institutions can grow and flourish and live on into the nineties.

The School Around Us, or SAU as it is known, began with a group of adults in 1968 who had the wisdom and courage to listen to children. As my son and Claudia Berman felt stifled by their public schools, so did a group of high schoolers in Kennebunk, Maine, in 1968 and 1969. Some of their parents and teachers began to search for what could be done to change the educational process to better serve and honor these students. The School Around Us was the forum through which this work and discovery evolved. The work still evolves.

At SAU, honoring the process of learning as it occurs through rich interaction with the natural and social world drives both curriculum and community. This requires a respect for the individual differences, needs, and interests of all the children and adults that make up the community. The school's goals (cultivation of personal responsibility, compassion, a sense of justice, cooperation, social skills, problem solving skills, confidence, and love of learning) place SAU squarely in a holistic philosophy of education. Experience itself is the curriculum and change and growth the desired outcome of the school. The children and their parents, teachers, and friends all find themselves vitally involved in SAU's life. This is truly a school as a community and community as teacher.

Author Claudia Berman taught and parented in the school for more than ten years. Her book describes, defines, and reflects the guiding philosophy of the school. The book focuses more on how things happened than on what happened, on process rather than product. Developed originally as a master's thesis, it incorporates a huge amount of information arising out of SAU community surveys, interviews, documents, speeches, and letters. In the spirit of the democratic community, she calls her book a forum. Her primary mission seems to be to describe the ongoing process of creating, maintaining, and adapting the school to changing times and populations while maintaining its initial inspiration. She does not present the school as a finished model.

At its beginning one founder, Ellie Dow, rallied parents who had concerns with area public schools with the words, "We can't ask them to be the change we are looking for. We have to be the change ourselves." Since then, SAU has stood for the ideal of democracy, freedom, and equality for all adults and children. This determination to stick by its vision has given it great strength. It has also caused conflict and anxiety and created enormous work. This small school, which seems to have ranged in size from 10 to 25 families, continually struggles with material resources, parental agreement, support, and governance issues. Despite this, the many examples of student work and projects and the quotes from a range of members of the school community shine with an exhilaration of insight, commitment, and joy in learning.

For the children, much of the curriculum develops around thematic topics and projects. The work of creating and performing a play, planning and delivering a service to the larger community, exploring a local pond, or even building forts and sledding trails all incorporate the acquisition of traditional "basic skills" into the broader goals of the whole child. Teachers and children also spend a lot of time planning, discussing, and resolving conflict. Since most people, including many SAU parents, do not recognize this type of study as academic, the staff has developed explanations and checklists itemizing the rich learning that occurs through these activities.

The parents and other adults involved with the school have their own learning agenda. The development and maintenance of the school itself forms their curriculum. SAU operates as a parent cooperative, with governance based upon the same ideals as those of the children's curriculum: freedom, equality, and respect for the individual. The parents make all decisions by consensus. The difficulties associated with this process hold the key to the intensity of both

positive and negative feelings on the part of all involved with the school. As Berman notes:

> It has taken the school's entire history for it to grow to the point of using consensus, teaching consensus, and understanding the time and patience needed for successful use of consensus. In order to bring every participant into the decision, the process is long and slow. There is no way around the time-consuming aspects. But people engaged in the process have the opportunity to learn about themselves. Consensus decision making engages the whole person and challenges each person in areas which need attention and growth. When a group is committed to using consensus, the process can build community. When the commitment is missing, the community can be torn apart.

For those of us who have worked with this format in similar organizations, the chapters on history, leadership, fund-raising, and evolution of philosophy can remind us of our own frustrations, enormous hard work, occasional failures, and moments of transcendence. Berman documents the problems as faithfully as the successes.

In the spirit of the rigorously democratic, consensus oriented institution that it represents, *The School Around Us: 25 Years* draws upon a multitude of surveys and interviews with past and present community members, documents and letters written and filed in archives, and artwork and poetry by teachers and children. While the student artwork and the poetry enhance and give greater context to the information, the enormous amount of data, viewpoints and details presented sometimes overwhelms the reader and tends to be repetitive of a few recurring issues such as the pros and cons of the child-centered philosophy and difficulties with leadership. The author makes a noble effort to represent all involved fairly and evenly, but like consensus building, it can cause tedium and a feeling of impatience. More interpretation and consolidation of her central points with fewer direct quotes and documents would help readers who seek a point of reference, comparison, and inspiration in their own work rather than the detailed documentation of one specific school and its participants.

As the honest and conscientious documentation of one group's efforts to effect positive change in the world through one small school, this book assures us that this dream is difficult, possible, and sometimes glorious. As Berman notes, "SAU is working to teach children how to create a new society with different messages." In this grand plan she indicates that it succeeds, not only with children, but with adults as well.

Measuring Up: Standards, Assessment, and School Reform

by Robert Rothman

Published by Jossey-Bass (San Francisco), 1995.

Reviewed by Giselle O. Martin-Kniep

Measuring Up examines the historical shifts in thinking about testing in the United States and describes some of the current local, state, and national efforts related to the use of alternative assessment measures of student achievement.

The book includes seven chapters, most of which revolve around current attempts to implement the use of alternative assessments and standards at the local, state, and national levels. The first chapter describes the assessment efforts undertaken by Littleton, Colorado, and the controversies and changing policies that such efforts have produced. This chapter adequately contextualizes the history of the assessment-related reforms in Littleton and depicts the range of perspectives for and against these reforms, some of which ultimately led to a retrenchment in the school-reform agenda by the school board. This chapter ends with additional examples of assessment-related initiatives from other local schools in the country, such as O'Farrell School in San Diego and the Pittsburgh Public Schools in Pennsylvania. The latter efforts are characterized as resulting in enhanced learning for students and in the use of assessment as informational and instructional devices.

Two of the chapters deal with current testing practices and their consequences for schools, teachers, students, and the public. Chapter Two describes the history of testing in the United States and how our use of tests became entrenched. This chapter describes some of the factors that have contributed to the growing use of tests. A noteworthy figure presented by the author is that our 41 million students take 127 million tests a year, that is, more than three tests per year per student. Rothman also documents the extensive use of tests in a variety of areas and the significant amount of time that teachers spend preparing students for taking these tests, even though there is significant evidence (which is addressed in detail in Chapter Three) that what is measured by tests is not always sufficiently related to students' achievement of the material assessed.

Chapter Three explores the effects of tests on student learning, the limitations of traditional testing practices in terms of measuring learning, and the deleterious effects of tests on teachers and students. Some of the issues discussed include: (1) the inherent biases associ-

ated with the design and use of specific tests, and (2) the use of norm-referenced judgments, even though norming is done too infrequently to be truly representative or useful. The deleterious effects of tests mentioned by Rothman are that while norm-referenced judgments allow us to compare student populations, they are of limited value in terms of depicting what students actually know or what they can do with this knowledge. Other problems associated with current testing practices revolve around the need for secrecy in terms of the test items, scoring criteria, and even scoring practices. Such secrecy prevents students from using these tests as opportunities to learn from their mistakes and diminishes the possibility that teachers use these tests to monitor or improve upon student learning.

The chapter also addresses the extent to which teachers deviate from sound practice in order to ensure that students receive high scores on tests. This deviation is characterized by three problems. One of these relates to the excessive amount of time that teachers devote to preparing students for tests, especially among students who are considered to be of low ability or who are from minority groups. The second problem lies in the fact that most tests overemphasize basic skills and knowledge, which leads to a deemphasis on the teaching of critical thinking and contextualized knowledge. The third problem concerns the resulting narrowing and decontextualizing of the curriculum and of learning as a whole This decontextualization is characteristic of standardized and traditional tests, but is inconsistent with current views of learning and with the range of demands required by increasingly complex working environments.

Two of the book chapters deal with statewide assessment reforms. Chapter Four describes state initiatives in Vermont, California, and Kentucky. According to Rothman, the motivations prompting assessment-related reform efforts in all three states include the development of a high-quality testing system and the need to improve instruction and achievement of students with low skills. Kentucky appears to have the additional motivation to develop an assessment system that is aligned with recently developed explicit standards for student performance. In all three states, high costs and problems associated with developing high levels of reliability in the tests appear to be problematic, yet Rothman's tone throughout the chapter suggests that efforts, such as the ones undertaken in the three states described, are a positive outcome of our current school reform agendas.

Chapter Five describes the national standards movement, first from a historical perspective and later in terms of recent political developments. The chapter is balanced in terms of characterizing the arguments for and against national standards and a national testing system. On the plus side are the arguments that we have no shared national standards and that whatever standards we have are too low, in comparison to those of other countries. On the minus side are inherent equality-related problems in schools within states and across the country, as well as an inherent resistance to uniformity that is so pervasive in U.S. culture. Nonetheless, according to Rothman, while the policy battles are still being fought, new initiatives, such as the New Standards Project and the College Board's Pacesetter, are gaining ground in terms of characterizing high-quality curriculum and assessment.

Chapters Six and Seven deal with problems inherent in transforming the ways we assess student achievement, both in terms of making changes to the current system and with respect to sustaining changes that are made. Chapter Six begins with a description of Pennsylvania's school reform initiative and of the controversies over the use of explicit outcomes for student performance, some of which relate to values and the affective domain. The author does a fine job of characterizing the complexities inherent in changing a school system. The sources of resistance to the Pennsylvania reforms include teachers (who felt that local schools would have too much flexibility), the testing community and members of the public (who were skeptical about the use of alternative assessment to validly elicit high standards), and some parent groups (who felt that it is not up to the school to have ambiguously stated and value-laden outcomes for graduation). One of the problems underscored by Rothman in the context of discussing the Pennsylvania reforms concerns to the fact that assessment reform is only one piece of the reform puzzle, and yet it appears that it seems to draw inordinate amounts of attention.

Chapter Seven highlights several of the unresolved issues surrounding assessment-related reforms. These include: (1) establishing the relationship between high standards and opportunity-to-learn or delivery standards; (2) balancing mechanisms to ascertain the validity and quality of alternative assessments, such as surveys, inspectorates, and analysis of classroom artifacts, with the costs associated with the development and implementation of such assessments, especially when compared to the use of more traditional tests; and (3) the increasing realization that changing the tests we use will do little to improve education unless significant resources are devoted to transforming the quality of curriculum and instruction. The latter point, I believe, is a crucial issue and one that requires more attention than is provided by the book.

Overall, *Measuring Up* does justice to much of the debate surrounding assessment-related reforms at the state and national levels and, to some extent, as in the case of Littleton, at the local levels. The primary shortcoming of this book lies in the author's assumption of the inherent value of these reforms even in light of the costs and of other barriers associated with their implementation. An alternative assumption is that however well motivated these reforms are, they are aimed at the wrong target. The right target is the classroom.

In fact, most of the assessment reforms described in the book are designed to measure the system as a whole, to serve as barometers of what entire states and the nation are doing. These reforms, by design, will not transform teaching, learning, or the quality of the interaction among those in the classroom. Indeed, improving the quality of the accountability mechanisms we have is no less than a waste of time if we do not first assure quality at the classroom level and only later worry about measuring it. The reallocation of resources away from state and national assessment efforts to local communities and to preservice and in-service teacher education programs might not result in neat comparison charts but could, in the long run, have a significant impact on the quality of education that our children receive.

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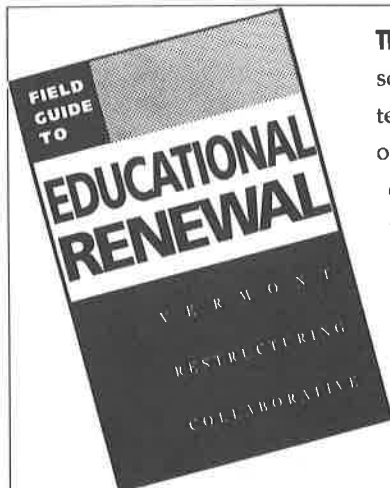
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