

# ENCOUNTER

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## Editorial

# Returning to Our Roots

## Remembering Why We Became Teachers

When I first decided to be a teacher, I wanted to make a difference in the lives of individual children, and through their unfolding, to humankind. I never wanted to teach math or history or science simply out of a love for the subject but for the contribution each subject could make to enhancing the possibilities for children to experience and understand more of themselves and the world around them. Perhaps naively, perhaps with unconscious wisdom, I shuddered at the thought that education should prepare the young, directly or indirectly, solely for employment. It seemed self-evident, and continues to be clear to me, that there is more depth and breadth in life than one's job and career, and that children need direction, support, and guidance to live purposive, fulfilling lives. Although education has long been associated with the knowledge and skills perceived as necessary for employment, I always had the sense that my teaching should focus more fundamentally on the needs and interests of children as human beings. Employment, I thought and continue to think, would follow healthy and whole human development.

Given this perspective, I was greatly distressed by the narrowness and superficiality of the educational reform efforts begun in the early 1980s and galvanized in *A Nation at Risk*. At that time, the federal government institutionalized education as a function of the economy and determined that educational policy should be directed by the perceived needs of the American corporate sector. The argument was made that the Information Age was upon us and that the nation needed a steady supply of "intellectual capital" to secure its position in the new global economy. The driving force behind reform at that time was rooted in the belief that the

relatively poor performance of American students compared to students from other industrialized nations on standardized tests would be detrimental to the national economy. However, for all the efforts of reform throughout the 80s and 90s, there has been little improvement in our test scores or our relative international rankings, but our economy has continued to expand at an unprecedented rate for almost a decade. If the economy was suffering a recession because of the mediocrity of American schools, then we are hard pressed to explain the unprecedented expansion we have been experiencing for more than a decade. The relationship between standardized test performance and the strength of the American economy (including the most productive labor force in the world) has proved false. Yet, the direction of reform remains unchanged.

The early focus on "excellence" has shifted to "standards" and standards have come to be defined in new standardized tests. Rather than recognizing the need to question the assumptions of reform in the light of the evidence, policymakers, guided by corporate partners, have reified the economic function of education and implemented standardized testing as a means of assuring "quality control." The rhetoric of the early 80s has evolved into the testing systems of the new century. The result is an ever-widening gap between the genuine needs and interests of children and the fictions that operate as fact in educational policy.

Where once a teacher could close his or her door and teach with a deeper sense of mission and purpose, they are now forced to comply with curricula and instructional methods tied to tests. All the while the distance grows between what children

really need to learn and what the tests actually measure. Adding insult to injury, those most dramatically affected will be those with the greatest needs and fewest resources. Children in poverty, those with broken families, those who do not speak English as their primary language will suffer most from high-stakes testing and in many cases, fail to complete high school. Children not living in poverty will still quietly suffer the disappointment and alienation but they will have the resources at hand that are needed to perform effectively. Schools in such communities will effectively meet the narrowed requirements with narrowed opportunities to learn and grow. Success.

The point here is not to suggest that teachers ought to take a more pastoral role or to deny the value of the guided growth of a disciplined, informed mind. Rigor is not the issue. Hard work is not the issue. Rather, our concern is that the approach we have taken to educating children is not educative. We provide children with facts and information, and we teach them the kinds of skills necessary to use information to solve problems. There is great value in such instruction, but the fact is that the lessons we teach are only incidentally educative. We very rarely structure our lessons with the idea that children can develop a sense of meaning, belonging, direction, beauty, or responsibility through their encounters with the world. Goethe argued that every fact rightly considered unlocks a faculty in the human soul. If he is correct, and we firmly believe he is, then as we create opportunities for children to experience the world with a deeper sense of purpose or meaning, we draw them forth, develop them as people. We educate. In essence, education is transformative not only informative. Through education children learn and become; they become through learning.

It is beyond the scope of this essay to offer specific suggestions of how and when to introduce

children to different subjects, but it would be appropriate to share some of the objectives we might consider as we prepare to teach children. If we serve children as children rather than intellectual capital, as teachers, we can seek:

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*I shudder at the thought that education should prepare the young, directly or indirectly, solely for employment.*

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- to awaken the Creative in each child through encounter with the Creative in the world
- to keep alive a sense of wonder by helping them recognize (quoting Emerson) "the miraculous in the common"
- to encourage awe in reflecting upon the elegant simplicity in the boundless complexity of all things
- to foster gratitude for all that is given and taken for granted
- to develop a sense of belonging and responsibility through work with soil, plants, animals, and others

As romantic as these ideas may sound, sentiment has no place. All of these objectives relate to what children may experience as a form of inner movement and growth. If teachers facilitate lively and imaginative encounters with the subjects covered in the curriculum—subjects sequenced in a manner consistent with child growth and development—then children can learn to see the symmetries and patterns, contexts and relationships within and between themselves and the world. They will begin to develop a sense of themselves and their relationship with the world just as a musician understands a piece of music. The meaning of each note and the silence between transcends the laws of physics. The creative impulse shaping every note and silence can only be grasped by means of inner activity.

Since the days of the Enlightenment, the models of knowledge undergirding education have been fragmented and detached. To understand the world, Descartes, for example, reduced it to supposedly indivisible pieces that he then reconstructed according to logic. Similarly, Bacon attempted to break the world into more empirical variables that he then could manipulate to achieve a desired end. In such cases, the growth of knowledge required that all phenomena be isolated from

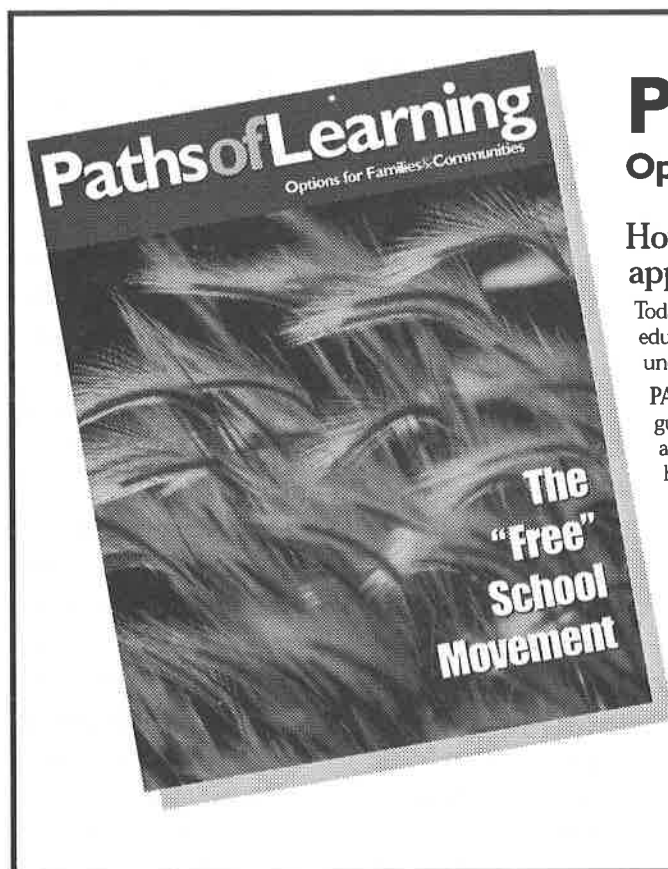
their contexts and that they be recontextualized according to set rules or aims. This way of constructing knowledge, however powerful, reduced our ability to perceive or understand things in their context, in their unity, in their meaning. Furthermore, this conception of knowledge separated cognition from the experience of being and becoming human. It separated our attempts to understand the world from our experience as mortal human beings enmeshed in social relationships and the larger world. In essence, it alienated us from ourselves and the world—much to the detriment of both. So goes our education. The isolation of human cognition from human experience in our epistemology serves as a foundation for educational policy that has nothing to do with children.

These things being said, epistemological issues don't make good headlines; test scores do. Seeming objectivity is often preferable to critical reflection. The problems we need to address in education are deeply rooted in our culture, from the

economic politics of corporate America to the epistemology of the Enlightenment. The issues we need to address are complex and interrelated, making it difficult to give a clear, succinct picture of how education is so often propelled by interests and ideas unrelated to the healthy growth of children. The central task for us at this point is to develop in ourselves a mode of understanding where we are alive in our imaginations, capable of seeing the flow of meaning in and through things, where we inwardly active learning and becoming ourselves. To the degree that we are successful, we can prepare children not only for employment but for lives of commitment and purpose; we can guide them to the full range of human capacities that they will need to call upon not only in the narrow confines of business but the whole of life.

It is important to remember why it is we chose to become teachers.

– Jeffrey Kane and Dale Snauwaert



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# Curriculum as Sacred Space

Sheri R. Klein

**Restoring enchantment, awe, wonder, and caring into the curriculum and classrooms will help children satisfy their innate thirst for meaning, direction, and connection to the sacred.**

Education should awaken the capacity to be self-aware. Life's pain, joy, beauty, love and ugliness need to be understood as a whole. The highest function of education is to bring about an integrated individual who is capable of dealing with life as a whole. (Krishnamurti 1981)

**S**acred: entitled to reverence and respect; not secular or profane; highly valued and important; dedicated or set apart for service or worship. The term "sacred" may be associated with religious traditions and rituals, religious sites of historical significance, or places protected by law or custom. Sacred spaces may be defined as places of power, where energies convene, and sites for healing. Sacred spaces are not limited to the domain of architecture as "prophets went into open spaces to open up inner spaces of the heart and mind" (Palmer 1993, 69). While sacred spaces may be associated with culturally sanctioned spaces, such as churches, museums, or synagogues, they also abound within the natural world in places such as rivers, mountains, and valleys.

Naturalist Pliny the Elder coined the term "geomancy" to describe the art of reading the subtle qualities of place, or "genius loci," the spirit of place (Pliny 1949). As an educator, I find that my geomantic abilities and attention to the reading of relationships translate to the reading of curricular spaces. While educational spaces that include curriculum are not usually associated with the sacred, I recognize the potentiality of these spaces to embrace the sacred. My work builds on Miller's (2000) call for education for the soul, Slattery's (1996) view of curriculum as a theological text, Pinar's (1994) view of curriculum as "currere," Orr's (1999) view of architecture as pedagogy, Dissanayake's (1990) view of art as "making special," Nodding's (1992) call for caring in education, and Lippard's (1997, 1999) views of space as lived culture to bridge my understandings

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of the sacred and the mundane, and education and life.

In *Lure of the Local*, Lippard (1997) defines space + memory = place; space is a place where culture is lived (p. 10). In a time when displacement is commonplace, and where our multicultural society searches for lost centers (Lippard 1997), what place may the sacred occupy within curriculum space? Viewing curriculum as space where culture(s) are lived, I begin with my personal search for connecting with the sacred in daily life and education. Meta-physical dimensions of curriculum, such as the sacred, are explored within the context of holistic education principles and postmodern curriculum theory. Advocating the posture that curriculum as sacred space can be recognized and cultivated, associations with the arts and pop culture are established and discussed. As I seek to recover enchantment, awe, wonder, caring in the curriculum spaces of my life, and my students' lives, I begin with my personal search.

### Connecting to the Sacred

My inquiry stems from my teacher supervision experiences, as I travel into many schools (rural, urban and suburban) to meet with my student teachers. Here, I find the bleakness within schools that Kozol (1993) and others speak about. I notice that the physical surroundings are repelling in their bland color schemes and antiseptic tiles, evidence of the omission of the arts, aesthetics, and grace from discourse and visual display. In high school classrooms particularly, I notice student boredom and disinterest. Orr (1999) states that "the design of buildings and landscape is thought to have little or nothing to do with the process of learning (p. 140).

Where are the spaces that can support the whole child and the "development of mind and body [that] go hand in hand with the awakening of the soul and the education of the heart"? (Gandhi 1980, 138). If we look into the worlds of children, one can find that they create sacred spaces. Children understand sacred in the way that they arrange their windowsills, lockers, dollhouses, sandcastles, and closets with special photographs, posters, dolls, stuffed animals, and toys. They find interior spaces to turn from secular into sacred. Gaston Bachelard (1971, 118) articulates about the power of the inner worlds of children:

Every child is prodigious.  
The child lives in his [or her] own fables.  
To enter into the fabulous fables it is  
Necessary to be serious like a dreaming child  
The fable does not amuse; it enchants.  
We have lost the language of enchantment.  
(118)

It is the lack of the sacred in curriculum spaces that I find disheartening. Fragmentation in the educational process is reinforced with continued emphasis on distinctions between mind/body, knowledge/values, and nature/culture, making connectedness difficult. Education has played a role in this fragmentation and alienation (Miller 1996) and "the current educational philosophies and structures mitigate against teachers and students becoming actively engaged in releasing the imagination" (Slattery 1999, 9).

This is a time of crisis of human affairs that may be described as the continuing destruction of the environment, family, and community, a world that "thrives on an accelerated pace of life, consumption, and production, more than an art of being" (Snowber 1999, 18). The spaces for children to dream and to be enchanted are difficult to locate in the space called curriculum.

For many children, childhood is a time of danger, pain, suffering, and experiences of domestic and/or community violence, hunger, and neglect. Immigrant children also struggle with experiencing uprooting, culture shock, and adjusting to new cultural and academic expectations (Igoa 1995). Each year, there are millions of children and adolescents who grieve the death of a pet, friend, sibling, parent, or grandparent (Nairemans 1997). Most recently, with episodes of school shootings, children have witnessed death and violence firsthand.

Children struggle spiritually and there is an undeniable thirst for meaning and direction among our children today. In the *Spiritual Life of Children* (1990, 308) Robert Coles states that "more and more these days we pay heed to the special problems of children ... the child's house has many mansions ... including a spiritual life that grows and changes."

Children have a spiritual life and a deep desire to connect with the sacred. As I engage my preservice teachers in reflective teaching practices, I encourage them to be creators of the sacred within their own

curriculum spaces: creating spaces for children and adolescents to dream, wonder, and imagine. I look to my own experiences as an artist as one model for creating curriculum as sacred space. The example I use is my studio—a space that I have “made special” by setting it aside for connecting, renewal, and enchantment. I will highlight my own aesthetic process as a way to understand “making special.”

Dissanayake’s (1990) view that making things special—taking the ordinary and making it extraordinary—is a human activity and biological need. She contends that “the earliest instances of ‘making special’ would have been recognizing specialness” (p. 184). In *What Is Art For?* she states that “making things special implies deliberateness. Moreover, one intends by making special, to place the activity or artifact in a ‘realm’ different from the everyday” (p. 92).

My studios have taken many forms through arrangement, location, and intent: from paper bags full of supplies and half-completed projects to art school classrooms, kitchen tables, and urban loft spaces. My present studio is a small oak drawing table nestled in a corner of my living room next to my treasured art books. On the table rests a vase from Finland, postcards, a drawing pad, a banker’s lamp, purple hand-dipped candles, driftwood, tempera paints, a miniature canvas, piles of scraps of papers and threads, oil crayons, small picture frames, a small box of multicolored sequins, a ruler and a paper doll made by a first grader.

On the wall above my table hangs several objects that include a painting on slate by a New Orleans folk artist that says: “No runny eggs, No runny grits, coffee,” a framed silk-screened T-shirt by Chicago artist Karl Wirsum, and a small green curio cabinet filled with erotic miniature sculptures from around the world. I draw inspiration from these pieces for the way they exude humor, joy, and spirit.

This table that I have defined as my sacred space serves in the creation of spirit drawings. I am using the Hebrew alphabet as a symbol system; the 26 letters of the alphabet speak to such sacred concepts as righteousness, divine support, revelation, contemplation, energy, home, goodness, heart, and faith. Return to the alphabet is a return to my visual heritage; the drawings become a pathway to contemplation upon the divine. Art making is a theological process

and a route to the sacred. In *My Name is Asher Lev* by Chaim Potok (1972), Asher, as a struggling Jewish painter, asks Yudel Krinsky, the family friend and local storekeeper, “How do you use oil colors? Is there a special way?” Yudel replies, “Oil colors is an entire Torah” (p. 124). Like Asher, I too realize that art making is a sacred and mysterious process. Imagery comes by doing. Letters are formed and re-formed. Drawings are in flux and in their ontological growth and form shifts emerge and disappear to let the pictures tell their own stories. This space I have defined for myself, though humble, small and tucked away, is a place where

It’s not what it seems  
I draw from the well of desire  
I am sure of uncertainty  
Lacy theories hold promise  
Rewards come on sandpaper  
Silence is full  
The world revolves on a thread of silk  
(Journal entry, 8/84)

### Sacred Links to Holistic Education and Postmodern Curriculum Theory

The space that I have “made special” offers me possibilities for transformation, restoration, and deepening intuitive and imaginative dimensions of my soul. What if the primary concerns of education were similar: fulfillment, wonder, awe, joy, caring, compassion, and enchantment? My own search parallels a contemporary search for connecting to the sacred that has been described as “a profound social revolution driven by strong currents of desire for greater meaning, well-being and connectedness that should not be underestimated” (Kabat-Zinn 1996, 3). As I view education, and art making, as a process that cannot be separated from the human spirit, I look to holistic educators who have confronted these concerns and emphasized connections between thinking, intuition, subject, knowledge, self, and community (Miller 1996). Proponents of a holistic education and curriculum recognize that there is a “spiritual dimension of human existence” (p. 8), and that attention to the human spirit is integral to curriculum and the educational process. While Purpel (1989) has challenged teachers to become prophets who orient the educational process toward infusing the sacred, Noddings (1992) supports the concept of

“schoolhomes” where schools can be places of caring and belonging.

The notion of the human spirit as integral to curriculum and the educational process calls for the creation of sacred spaces within the journey, walk, or questing that is curriculum. Quest: to pursue, to search, implies a walk that is enterprising and purposeful, like a pilgrimage, yet not without chance and possibility. Maxine Greene says that to engage in

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education is to “move out in search of meaning ... to pursue the self ... to learn” (Greene 1978, 199). As we move out in the walk/quest that is education, “how can we as educators take part in curriculum such that it becomes for us and for our students a willful and deliberate moving out in which the familiar becomes unfamiliar and the notion of ‘home’ forever transformed?” (Block and Klein 1997, 20). How can we recognize the presence of sacred within the walk that is curriculum, and cultivate it?

First, it is important to view curriculum as a space that *can* be “made special” with deliberateness. Space according to Lefbrevre in the *Production of Space* is “a collection of elements not articulated by architecture, but by the marriage of social, intellectual, political activities” (Schooler 1997). It also has elements of the physical, the aesthetic, and psychological. While curriculum may be viewed as complex and dynamic space(s), there are several ways that it

can be altered, with deliberateness, and with the intent to infuse the sacred.

### **Making Special: Paying Attention to the *Genius Loci* of Curriculum Space**

As an art educator, I am concerned with the physical and aesthetic dimensions of curriculum that include classroom and school spaces. The dismal, institutional nature of such spaces leads me to believe that the “design of schools work to impede the notion of school as a caring place and a dwelling place for education” (Klein 1995). These spaces, however, can be embellished and “made special” in a number of ways. First, the physical spaces can embrace sound, such as wind chimes, fountains, and sacred music from around the world. Aesthetic arrangements and placements of objects in cases, classrooms, and hallways can eliminate sterility and activate imaginative thinking. Situating objects and images in the classroom can invite reflection, dreaming, and enchantment. Paying attention to the feng-shui of school spaces and how lines, shapes, colors, textures, and spaces flow together can activate spaces for learning and being.

Every space has a spirit, including curriculum. Palmer (1993) suggests that to teach is to create a space that is open and hospitable. A personal connection to place is also needed for development of the sacred. Carlos Castenada (1972) on one of his trips with Don Juan was made aware of finding one’s spot, or sitio: sitting in a place to feel happy and strong. Creating time *and* space for students to reflect, pause, dream and wonder are necessary for finding sitio. How can we as educators assist students in both finding and creating their own sitio?

Multi-layered, interdisciplinary experiences that support connections between mind/body/spirit may be a beginning. Miller’s (2000) concepts for nurturing the soul include walking meditation, meditating on sounds, visualization, storytelling, creative writing, engaging in dreamwork through journaling, acting, writing poems, and engaging in the arts, service education, and earth education. He states that “a soulful approach to education can help bring vitality and a deeper sense of purpose and meaning to classrooms” (p. 10).

Creating curriculum as sacred space supports links to sacred art, music, literature, artifacts, and sites. In *Reclaiming the Spiritual in Art*, Perlmutter and Koppman (1999) discuss how the spiritual in art has been ignored and underestimated in contemporary art discourse. They explore contemporary connections between art and the sacred, looking to Disney World as a pop pilgrimage site, feminist visions of the sacred, contemporary altars, and art making as a form of aesthetic prayer. Many of the artists they discuss engage in performance art, video, photography, and earth art, which are quite marginalized if not absent from K-12 art curriculum. In addition, Lippard (1999) in *On the Beaten Track: Tourism, Art and Place* explores how tourism sites may be viewed as sacred, such as Ellis Island, national parks, antique stores, historical landmarks, roadside attractions, battlegrounds, and cemeteries. Her view that "the same place is the site of two very different experiences" (p. 2) supports the deconstruction of the sacred and questions such as: How is this space sacred? To whom? Who benefits by this space? Having students identify sacred spaces, places, people, and things in their lives, families, and communities (local and global) may yield soulfulness and the creation of *sitio*. While the sacred may be associated with safety and preservation, many sacred places are currently in danger of destruction (wetlands, farmlands, and national parks) due to corporate development, tourism, and consumerism. Having students explore the environmental, spiritual, and ethical consequences of desecrating the sacred can invite contemplation of the sacred as it intersects with ethical and social issues. Relationships between the sacred and the tragic can also be explored; for example, the fascination with celebrity murder sites as pilgrimage sites, Civil War battlegrounds, the Oklahoma City bombing site, or the tunnel in Paris where Princess Diana crashed.

### Concluding Thoughts

It is clear that current educational practices ignore the mansions within children and adolescents and the development of their imaginative and sacred lives. When the imagination is allowed to move to deep places, the sacred is revealed (Moore 1992, 289). Creating curriculum as sacred space offers hope and possibility for the development of education as a

soulful practice. There are many spaces in dire need of infusing with the sacred, our classrooms, our students' lives, and our own lives. Paying attention to the genius loci of our life experiences and the spaces we inhabit can bring about the necessary transformations that may reshape curriculum with more grace, beauty, and the divine. This requires an "understanding of and sensitivity towards environments [spaces]: physical, psychological, spiritual, and social as an integral part of postmodern proposals that inform postmodern curriculum" (Slattery 1996, 68). It also requires that educators engage in contemplation of the sacred and deeply commit to releasing the imagination of students, for in "bringing the sacred into our experience, the call to moral and ethical behavior becomes stronger and stronger" (Glazer 1999, 11).

Educational practices may then be likened to what Dewey (1934) called art as experience, as a dynamic, self-forming interaction (p. 579), or a work-in-progress. Creating sacred spaces means also tending to them, protecting them, nurturing them, "attending to the small things that keep the soul engaged...." (Moore 1992, 287, 300). Attending to the sacred may then be as simple as pausing—and being fully present in the moment as we search for our lost centers.

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# Breaking the Spell of the Mechanistic

## The Search for an Organic Way of Knowing

Diane Caracciolo

**The development of a robust imaginative consciousness is necessary to reorient us from a mechanical way of knowing that divides the world into objects and renders the mind incapable of understanding living relationships.**

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Lestat was standing again at the foot of the stairs, and I saw him as I could not possibly have seen him before. He had seemed white to me before, starkly white, so that in the night he was almost luminous, and now I saw him filled with his own life and own blood: he was radiant, not luminous. And then I saw that not only Lestat had changed, but all things had changed. It was as if I had only just been able to see colors and shapes for the first time.

When Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* appeared over twenty years ago it was wildly popular, and in the 1990s it continues to generate best-selling sequels and blockbuster films. The cartoon-like image of the oddly accented count has given way to such contemporary icons of male virility as Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt, whose characters are packaged in the imagery of spiritual ecstasy. Initiation into the realm of the unliving, we are led to believe, will awaken our senses and fill us with knowledge, power, and sexual magnetism unknown to our messy existence as vulnerable living beings. Why has the allure of vampirism taken hold of late twentieth century imagination? Perhaps the vampire represents a longing to escape the buzzing chaos of earthly life in a kind of unholy transcendence. Photo spreads of skeletal supermodels continue the disquieting idealization of the bloodless being that is neither living nor dead. Accompanying this gothic imagery is the ultramodern glorification of industrial technology, which seeks to control, sterilize, and manufacture the natural world. What such cultural markers point to is a disturbing, perhaps unconscious aversion for cycles of growth and decay, as evidenced by an alarming list of disappearing plant and animal species and genetic manipulations with as yet unknown consequences for our physical and ethical health. Although such antipathy threatens the integrity of life on earth, it remains on the periph-

ery of our modern awareness, coming out in violent fantasies of passivity and control. The authors examined here believe with David Orr that our environmental, educational, and moral crises can be traced to “how we think and the institutions that purport to shape and refine the capacity to think” (1994, 21). If this is the case, then we must begin to develop new ways of knowing that foster a living connection to the earth and release us from the spell of the mechanical, which is both unliving and undead. We can begin such an examination by looking at the origins of modern consciousness.

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***For the medieval mind, the universe is alive, animated with hidden meaning and ruled by love, so much so that even the worst sins of Dante’s *Inferno* are the result of excessive love or love turned awry by souls who have lost the natural good of the intellect.***

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How did a consciousness that began with such great intensity and curiosity directed toward the natural world arrive at a place where the cycle of life and death is so divorced from our awareness that the sustainability of the earth itself is threatened? In *The Discarded Image*, C. S. Lewis contrasts the medieval and modern perspectives with the simple image of looking up at the night sky:

[T]o look out on the night sky with modern eyes is like looking out over a sea that fades away into mist, or looking about one in a trackless forest—trees forever and no horizon. To look up at the towering medieval universe is much more like looking at a great building. The “space” of modern astronomy may arouse terror, or bewilderment or vague reverie; the spheres of old present us with an object in which the mind can rest, overwhelming in its greatness, but satisfying in its harmonies. (1964, 98-99)

For the medieval mind, the universe is alive, animated with hidden meaning and ruled by love, so much so that even the worst sins of Dante’s *Inferno* are the result of excessive love or love turned awry by souls who have lost the natural good of the intellect. The roots of our contemporary distaste for and denial of the living world may be found in an outlook that began at the end of this epoch. In *Death of the Soul*, William Barrett traces the fate of human consciousness from the advent of “New Science” in the seventeenth century to the modern nihilism of analytic philosophy and deconstructionism. Taking Descartes as his point of departure, Barrett explores the origin of the great split between mind and matter. Here the conscious I becomes central, the material world dubious. Still grounded in medieval theology, Descartes trusts in a higher power to marry the two. His conscious I, the *ego cogitans*, however, is a rational I only, divorced from the sensed world, the living body, and the life of feeling (Barrett 1987). Theologian John Cobb sees this mechanistic worldview as ironically allied to religion, and dualism as an attempt to avoid a “territorial clash” with the still powerful church. The realms of soul and spirit are left untouched while nature is wholly given up to the new scientists, who still see magical forces at work within the natural world, and, Faust-like, seek to “bend them to human use and control” (Cobb 1988, 103). By separating the natural world from the heavenly, the power of a distant God is magnified. When belief in a Necessary Being that animates the earth drops out, however, we are left with nothing more than dead matter to be manipulated without moral responsibility. (As Joan Dye Gussow states, “technology eliminates guilt” [1991, 73].) Cobb summarizes this transitional period between the medieval and the modern when he states, “Three movements struggled for supremacy during the seventeenth century: the fading power of Aristotelian philosophy, the continuing power of the ‘magical vision,’ and the emerging power of mechanistic thinking. The latter eventually won...” (1988, 102). Descartes’ universe is ultimately stagnant and passively acted upon. The self, as that aspect of human nature capable of experiencing meaning in the inner life and the outer world, begins to vanish. Split in two, the Cartesian universe becomes a chilling precursor to the

twentieth century world of artificial, automated intelligence fascinated by nightmarish images of the undead.

Barrett continues to trace how the disappearing self, now divided from the material world, continues to lose ground and substance in the eighteenth century. The British empiricists, particularly Locke and Hume, continue the theme of duality, attributing all ideas to sensation, with the soul existing somewhat tenuously outside of the sensuous world. In Kant, Barrett finds the "last great thinker in whom the intellectual unity of the Western mind is still held together" (1987, 63). With Kant, the mind is active, rather than passive, a synthesizer and organizer of sensory experience. Knowledge, however, is restricted to the sense-bound, and the mind, although active, is finite. Barrett quips that in Kant's philosophy, the "offspring turns against its parent":

The success of the physical sciences leads to the attitude of scientific materialism, according to which the mind becomes, in one way or another, merely the passive plaything of material forces. The offspring turns against its parent. We forget what we should have learned from Kant: that the imprint of mind is everywhere on the body of this science, and without the founding power of mind it would not exist. (p. 75)

Although Kant holds moral and spiritual intuitions, he posits no proof for a Necessary Being, who must forever remain beyond the understanding of human reason. The search for meaning to life and the self is also beyond our reach. The unknown cosmos and the human mind are alienated by our inability to comprehend the "starry heavens above," which we nonetheless gaze upon with admiration and awe, which in the centuries to come, turns to terror and bewilderment (p. 90).

In Kierkegaard, Barrett finds the idea of a genuinely concrete self emerging; however, when this effort to concretize the self is infected with empiricism, it is reduced to a mechanism. For it is in the modern philosophies of Sartre, Heidegger, and the literary deconstructionists that we find the most rapid decline of what Barrett terms the "substantial self." As though "traumatized by Descartes," the postmodern deconstructionist denies the self a stable, meaningful existence; all is relative and open to interpretation based on the linguistic linking of symbolic networks.

The human elements of time and place, such as the poet's biography, the possibility of a cogent body of work grounded in a human life at all, are rendered meaningless. We are, in Barrett's words, left "floating in the void" (28, 133). What forces enter the human stage to fill the void left by the substantial self may perhaps comprise the tumultuous story of our current century. For if dualism is a limited construct created to explain and control some earthly phenomena, then for better or worse, mind is still linked to the world at large, and our ways of knowing are intimately connected to the world which we create or destroy.

Wendell Berry's ideas provide a good bridge between the exploration of the history of modern consciousness and its actual consequences for life on earth. In *Home Economics* Berry shows the connection between our modern dualistic thinking and its negative impact on education, the environment, and community. Berry sees scientific materialism as ultimately limiting, since it relegates to the realm of the random and chaotic anything unexplainable by its methods and falsely divides man from nature at large and nature within:

To be divided against nature, against wildness, then, is a human disaster because it is to be divided against ourselves. It confines our identity as creatures entirely within the bounds of our own understanding, which is invariably a mistake because it is invariably reductive. It reduces our largeness, our mystery, to a petty and sickly comprehensibility. (1987, 141)

It is this "petty and sickly comprehensibility" that is the root of a modern hubris which refuses to acknowledge the powerful forces at work beyond the reach of logical thinking, forces that lie at the heart of life itself, and involve an essential relationship between humankind and nature. It is this inability to connect minds to nature that David Orr sees as one of the principle failings of education (1994). Berry's use of the word *margin* captures this necessary interrelation. He brings as evidence the story of two desert oases described in Gary Nabhan's book *The Desert Smells Like Rain*. In the first example, a "natural" bird sanctuary established by the park service brings about an eventual decline in bird life despite the absence of human "interference." In the second, bird

life thrives as a result of the interaction between the birds and humans, who bring an increased presence of seed and water. This story calls into question the opposition between man and nature created by industrialists as well as some conservationists and deep ecologists (Berry 1987, 13). For Berry it is the *margin*—the place where man and nature meet—that draws the eye and fosters life:

This is the phenomenon of edge or margin that we know to be one of the powerful attractions of a diversified landscape, both to wildlife and to humans. The human eye itself seems drawn to such margins, hungering for the difference made in the countryside by a hedgy fencerow, a stream, or a grove of trees. And we know that these margins are biologically rich, the meeting of two kinds of habitat. (p. 13)<sup>1</sup>

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It is in this meeting where life is most fertile. The splitting apart of the human and wild estates would appear in this scenario to foster death rather than life, in David Orr's words, *biophobia* over *biophilia* (1994, 131). Berry develops the idea of this meeting place between two domains most deeply when he describes the soil as "a graveyard, a place of resurrection, and a community of living creatures" (1987, 66). Industrial thinking quantifies topsoil, viewing it as a limited resource, and thereby denying its innate ability to renew itself. It is through this denial of the basic fertility and life-renewing quality of the earth that industrial thinking permits destructive actions such as strip mining and deforestation. One of Berry's "Six Agricultural Fallacies" is that agriculture may be viewed as an industry at all. Here he clearly places farming in the sphere of the living, and industry in the realm of the mechanical, the undead:

That agriculture can produce only out of the lives of living creatures means that it cannot for very long escape the qualitative standard; that is, in addition to productivity, efficiency, decent earnings, and so on, it must have health. Thus, the farmer differs from the industrialist in that the farmer is necessarily a nurturer, a preserver of the health of creatures. (68, 123)

An unhealthy disregard for the living world penetrates down into our food supply itself. According to nutritionist and educator Joan Dye Gussow, most of us would not know the difference between industrially manufactured, genetically manipulated food, and the real thing. Connected to this indifference to life is a fear of natural disorder and decay. According to Gussow:

The management teams driving the food industry do not see much long-term profit in fresh produce simply because of its natural variability (uniformity is the industrial goal), its natural tendency to decay and the vulnerability of its supply to uncontrollable climatic and other forces. (1991, 8)

In other words, such industrialists seek to create foods without conceding to the living world (p. 73). Some even look for control over the basic genetics of seed production. We learn in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article that Monsanto has developed the *Terminator* gene that biologically enforces corporate patents by making seeds sterile. According to author Michael Pollan, "Terminator will allow companies like Monsanto to privatize one of the last great commons in nature—the genetics of the crop plants that civilization has developed over the past 10,000 years—thus rendering small farmers even more dependent upon the large corporations that value the bottom line before public health" (1998, 92).<sup>2</sup> One is reminded here of David Orr's references to archetypal literary figures, such as Frankenstein and Ahab, as emblems of the modern drive to dominate nature at any cost. Perhaps the ultimate image of the corporate master controller is Dostoevski's Grand Inquisitor, who would enslave the masses with bread in order to protect them from the terrors of freedom. Perhaps it is ironic that a little over a century after this novel was first published with the famous inscription from John 12:24, we should learn about a biotechnology that renders seeds sterile:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.<sup>3</sup>

Monsanto's seed will fall in the ground and bring forth nothing. With the advent of the sterile seed, agriculture has truly entered the realm of the undead, alienated from the natural cycle of birth and death. That such value can be placed on purely monetary goals touches on the irony that in an age of so-called materialism, we actually despise matter, and love only what it achieves in the abstract. Like Monsanto's seeds, our economy has become in Berry's analysis, sterile. We do not value the thing itself, but see it only as a commodity to be exchanged for something else. Such an attitude is reminiscent of the protagonist in Susan Sontag's novel *The Volcano Lover*, about an obsessive collector:

Of course he is eventually going to sell the best of what he buys—and he does. A gratifying symmetry, that collecting most things requires money but then the things collected themselves turn into more money. Though money was the faintly disreputable, necessary byproduct of his passion, collecting was still a virile occupation: not merely recognizing, but bestowing value on things.... Collecting expresses a free-floating desire that attaches and re-attaches itself—it is a succession of desires. The true collector is in the grip not of what is collected but of collecting. (1992, 22, 24)

The collector's "free-floating desire" implies an indistinct love for the abstract, yet it also points to a basic human need for attachment. In the Cartesian universe, however, where matter and mind are split in two, love for the living is transferred to love for the unliving, for matter in the abstract. It would be hard to deny that the fetish for collecting and the cult of memorabilia, from beanie babies to homerun balls, has taken hold of our society, particularly in North America. It is not unusual to hear children admonished not to play with certain toys for fear of reducing their value as "collectibles." According to Berry, "Our present economy ... does not account for affection at all, which is to say that it does not account for value. It is simply a description of the career of money as it preys upon both nature and society" (1987, 144). David Orr sees this process of abstracting experience as an illness of modern education, which

needs to take "our senses seriously" by providing living experiences of the natural world:

The idea is simply that we take our senses seriously throughout education at all levels and that doing so requires immersion in particular components of the natural world—a river, a mountain, a farm, a wetland, a forest, a particular animal, a lake, an island—before students are introduced to more advanced levels of disciplinary knowledge. (1994, 96)

Berry proposes that in place of our sterile, abstract economy, we establish a "Great Economy." Berry's idea of the Great Economy derives from a conversation with Wes Jackson, who cites the "Kingdom of God" as his best image for a loving economy that places real value in material things. Acceptance of the Great Economy, which includes acceptance of human limits and a collaboration with rather than dominance of nature, implies a certain moral stance, since it would "particularize" virtue: "When the virtues are rightly practiced within the Great Economy, we do not call them virtues; we call them good farming, good forestry, good carpentry, good husbandry, good weaving and sewing, good homemaking, good parenthood, good neighborhood, and so on" (Berry 1987, 74).

Work within the Great Economy is participatory, in that it involves responsibilities to one's community. It is the opposite of what Berry calls the work of the "industrialized arts and sciences," which function as objective observers, "outsiders without responsibility or involvement." For Berry, the recovery of nature is identical to the recovery of culture. Time and again he reiterates that conservation of natural resources is not sufficient; instead, "good use," which he compares to classical virtues such as prudence, justice and temperance, is essential, for without them humanity turns monstrous. Berry sees a necessary interrelationship between "domestic virtues" and the wild, and believes that the love of matter—stewardship of the earth—is true spirituality. Such stewardship demands that a proper scale be brought to bear on our human desires. According to Berry, the ultimate irony of our attempt to control nature is our refusal to set any limits on *human* nature, for we live in a culture that "encourages and rewards unlimited selfishness." In relating the story of Lancelot

Clippinger, a successful Ohio farmer, and his prototype of "a good farmer of the old school," Berry speaks of how Clippinger limits his dairy operation to twenty-five cows, because "If a fellow milks twenty-five cows, he'll *see* them all." Here proper scale balances work with care and distinguishes stewardship from industrial processing. Such a sense of scale requires an aesthetic rather than an industrial sensitivity, one that emphasizes whether a new technology is "fitting," "unhealthy," or "ugly," rather than merely more efficient or powerful (1987, 68, 154, 17). It should be remembered that Clippinger's philosophy has practical implications, for at a time when small farms are failing daily, his is successful.

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***Berry describes a veritable Babel of departments in higher education, which in their overspecialization have lost the benefit of a "common tongue" and are incapable of communicating across disciplines.***

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Berry places the responsibility for our modern loss of accountable selfhood on higher education, which he compares to a "furniture storage business." He describes a veritable Babel of departments, which in their overspecialization have lost the benefit of a "common tongue" and are incapable of communicating across disciplines. The result is a loss of purpose destructive to the goal of higher education, which should be the development of whole human beings, rather than careerists disinterested in the larger ethical and communal contexts of their work. For Berry this loss of community is a tragedy for the university and the world at large. In his essay "Higher Education and Home Defense," Berry speaks of a class of professional "vandals" who, devoid of any connection to place or allegiance to community, having no home of their own, reek havoc on other people's homes. He states, "If education is to be used well, it is obvious that it must be used *somewhere*; it must be

used where one lives, where one intends to continue to live; it must be brought home" (1987, 52). Berry sees the modern educational dilemma as well as the ecological crisis as intimately connected to a limited way of understanding the world, a way of knowing that grew out of the scientific revolution and its preoccupation with reductive thinking. In place of the void left by the disappearing and rootless self, Berry develops what educational philosopher Dale Snauwaert terms an "ecological construct of personhood," one that is deeply connected to a particular place and community (Snauwaert 1990, 118). Such a sense of self gives birth to a participatory knowing rooted in living experience rather than abstraction.

Like Wendell Berry, David Orr sees the reconnection of people with place as one of the main tasks of education. Our ecological crisis, he believes, is the result of "poorly equipped minds," which no longer understand the harmonious blending of humankind with nature. In *Earth in Mind*, Orr forcefully implicates the "business" of education, which produces "manufactured ideas" resulting in a "morally sterile" and seriously endangered world. Our discipline-centered education has taught us to "think in boxes," rendering the material world—the true subject *matter*—alien to the point where many of us secretly prefer the artificial to life itself (Orr 1994, 35, 24, 95). In citing upward mobility as one of the six myths regarding the purpose of education, Orr states:

The plain fact is that the planet does not need more successful people. But it does desperately need more peacemakers, healers, restorers, storytellers, and lovers of every kind. It needs people who live well in their places. (p. 8)

Reform is too mild a word to describe Orr's challenge. He calls for a veritable "educational perestroika" (p. 17). When he speaks of the dangers and problems of education, he is not referring to the need for higher standards but to the violence our current system inflicts upon our sense of wonder and reverence for life. He seeks to replace careerism with a sense of calling and to redefine education as a transformation of the whole being, an awakening. In place of curricular fragmentation, he would recover an understanding of systems and a feeling for the whole.

In place of limited, reductive thinking, he would foster an original, childlike sense of wonder. In order to attain such goals, educators must rethink curriculum. Orr charges teachers to slow down and allow a deeper, more authentic experience to emerge. An entire region, such as a local river valley, could then become the source of new learning about science, local culture, and economy. Here the powers of observation and the other senses would be schooled. Such an in-depth experience, lived over a period of several months, could also become a wellspring for inner reflection inspired by what most good writers would recognize as spirit of place (Orr 1994, 24, 96, 48). Before we dismiss Orr's proposals as utopian or lacking in tough-mindedness, it would be well to remember that scientist and philosopher Michael Polanyi places the experience of wonder at the center of scientific discovery.

According to Richard Gelwick in *The Way of Discovery*, his work on the epistemology of Michael Polanyi,

We have come to an absurd position in this last part of the twentieth century; we have come to an absurd position where many are concerned about the preservation of life, while we have at large an understanding that equates living persons with complex biochemical machines. Before we can expect from science and government the kind of respect for and understanding of life that are necessary, we have to have in operation a mode of knowing that can acknowledge the distinctive character of living things.... The consequence of Kant's momentous work was finally to produce a theory very much at home in the world of Newton but unable to tell us about living things. (Gelwick 1977, 147, 144)

Such a "mode of knowing" is presented by Polanyi's revolutionary description of scientific thought as arising out of inexact and personal ideas. A gifted scientist himself, Polanyi sees the foundation of the lauded scientific method, the hypothesis, as fundamentally an intuitive guess, "closer to art than to rule following." This activity requires skill at looking at the unknown and seeing a coherent pattern, an ability to "jump from particulars to a meaningful whole." Polanyi borrows from Gestalt psychology in his focus on broad patterns; he differs however, in that for him this knowing is an "active shaping or in-

tegrating" of experience. It is the nature of this "jump" from the particular to the whole that embodies the entire realm of what Polanyi terms "tacit knowing" (Gelwick 1977, 43, 62, 70). In *The Study of Man*, Polanyi critiques the inadequacy of the mechanical model of life, in which rational thought processes are seen as impersonal and objective, with no "appetitive-perceptive center." He sees in computers the ultimate idealization of thought as machine. However, for Polanyi, human knowing is personal and "an act of comprehension invariably appreciates the coherence of that which it comprehends." In this philosophy, thinking is more akin to "connoisseurship" than computing (Polanyi 1959, 59, 81). In comparing the natural scientist and the historian, Polanyi finds that neither has a detached relationship to subject matter. Rather, personal affinities determine choices made in so-called objective research:

[N]o knowledge of nature lacks some measure of indwelling, of the observer in his subject-matter . . . the intimacy of this indwelling shows a continuous progression towards the fullest indwelling which has been rightly claimed to be a characteristic method of the historian. (p. 80)

Polanyi attributes the great discoveries of the human mind to this indwelling of knowledge and to the working of the creative imagination (Gelwick 1977, 13). Gelwick relates how Polanyi began to collect stories about the circumstances surrounding great scientific discoveries in order to uncover the discrepancy between the objective ideal of science and the actual experiences of the scientist. His most controversial case revealed Einstein's revolutionary ideas about space and time as having originated in the intuitive pondering of a boy of sixteen, rather than the study of objective facts (p. 27). According to Gelwick, Polanyi's philosophy of science "overthrows centuries of dichotomies that have separated mind and body, reason and experience, subject and object, the knower and the known" (p. 70). In Polanyi's epistemology we can begin to find a path out of the dark wood of Cartesian duality.

In describing his mentor, Gelwick says, "What made him differ most from those around him was his reverence." And in this feeling of reverence and wonder for "all of life" we may perhaps find a thread

that runs through the works discussed so far (31).<sup>4</sup> For these are capacities that arise from attachment to and dwelling with nature, attributes that have been compromised by our development of critical, reductive thought. Without this deep connection to life, the integrity of our sense of self as well as the integrity of the earth suffers devitalization. Divorced from life, we distract ourselves with collecting more and more information in a quest to control cosmic forces to which we no longer feel connected, forces that we fear will someday destroy us. (Running through a list of recent popular film titles points to a public imagination obsessed with cataclysm.) In many traditional cultures, however, we find a healthy union with the natural world. In his essay "Native North American Worldview and Ecology," John Grim speaks of the role of kinship between humankind and nature, demonstrated in the Crow-Apsaaloke prayers to their sacred mountains. For members of the Crow-Apsaaloke community, the earth is not an enemy to be feared and controlled, but a protector and sacred partner in life:

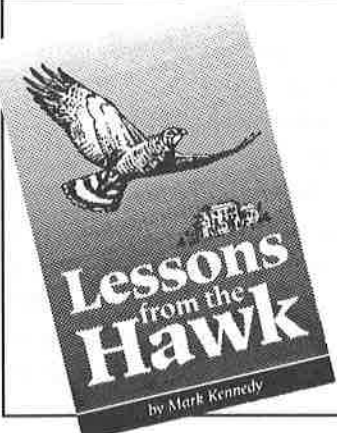
Countless examples can be adduced of the Native knowledge of herbs, plants, trees and fungi which were not simply understood as material techniques but as interactions with living, spiritually empowered beings. (Grim 1994, 47)

For many traditional cultures, as well as Western civilization prior to the end of the Middle Ages, the earth itself is animate. Although there is much that such life-affirming wisdom can teach the modern world, to assume that we can easily return to the ways of knowing of native cultures may be naïve. Many proponents of new age spirituality insist we throw out all rational thinking and dwell only on impulses arising from our feelings and intuitions. Such beliefs have engendered a new market for products and methods of self-improvement that propose to renew our connection to the spiritual world. Here we have the industrial wolf in sheep's clothing. For although the intended goal of such methods is enlightenment, their allure is often in the bypassing of the subtle and patient work necessary for forging new ways of seeing. Such quick-fix spirituality is like a siren song lulling us to an illusion of new capacities, while we actually shipwreck on the rocks of muddy thinking. It maintains the rupture between thought

and experience.

While it has been argued here that the advent of scientific thought has brought a host of problems, it would be wrong to lose sight of those positive attributes that have emerged along with critical thinking, such as the importance of individual rights, liberty, and social justice. It would also deny the place of cognition in the development of those very forces that can lead us back to a living relationship with the world. We can find the meeting place between feeling and thinking in the work of Polanyi, who points to the place of intuitive perception and creative imagination in the working of great minds as well as in everyday intelligence. In *The Wholeness of Nature*, Henri Bortoft's examination of Goethe's scientific methods, we find further support for an understanding of human knowing that recovers imagination and a sense of wonder within the very activity of cognition.

Bortoft's picture of wholeness is central to an understanding of Goethe's ideas. According to Bortoft, "Goethe's mode of understanding sees the part in light of the whole, fostering a way of science which dwells in nature." Rather than viewing the whole as an abstract concept arrived at through an examination of parts, he claims that it is present within the particular. One everyday example Bortoft gives to illustrate this idea is the activity of reading, where "the whole is present throughout all of the text, so that it is present in any part of the text." In this case, the whole—meaning—becomes an "active absence." Although meaning is experienced in relation to the sense world—the words of the text—it is in essence sense-free, invisible. Bortoft explains that the fault of



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empiricism lies in ignoring the ever-present activity of cognition in the creation of meaning. The dimension of mind is so pervasive that it becomes transparent, and to the empiricist, which is to say, the modern person, the sense object becomes the sole source of perception. According to Bortoft, however, "If we want to understand what scientific knowledge is, we have to learn to recognize the extra, nonsensory factor which transforms sensory experience into cognitive perception" (1996, 4, 8, 15, 50). Bortoft further states that natural phenomena are not truly revealed with depth of meaning until they are met by intuitive cognition. Such a meeting between the phenomenon and human consciousness creates a living experience as opposed to the manipulation of finished, abstract concepts, which only gives the illusion of content. This union of mind and matter would bring us knowledge of what physicist David Bohm terms the *implicate order*, where the whole is enfolded within the parts. Such knowledge is deeper and more profoundly true than that of the *explicate order* of unrelated objects, typical of formal, mechanistic thought (Davy 1961). Goethe's emphasis on the dynamic between mind and matter is reminiscent of Berry's image of the powerful margin between two estates, where experience is most alive.

The characteristic of cognitive perception found in Goethe's scientific method does not arise from passive observation; it is an intense *attending* to the natural phenomenon, an attention akin to contemplation. According to Bortoft:

Goethe believed that the organization or unity of the phenomenon is real and can be *experienced*, but that it is not evident to sensory experience. It is perceived by an intuitive experience—what Goethe called *Anschauung*, which "may be held to signify the *intuitive knowledge gained through contemplation of the visible aspect*." (1996, 21)

Goethe's *Anschauung*, therefore, is similar to Polanyi's tacit knowing, where perceptive depth and indwelling in the phenomenal world ignites intuition and imagination, revealing new realities about the natural world. Goethe's way of understanding nature proceeds from actual sensory experience of natural phenomena, such as prismatic colors, atmospheric conditions and plant life, rather than

from Newtonian abstraction and "mathematical representation." We first attend intensively to the natural phenomenon, and then we recreate it in detail in our imagination. As we move from the visible object to the mental image, our thinking becomes akin to perceiving; it becomes mobile and enlivened, in touch with the experiential moment. Such "exact sensorial imagination" helps us to enter into the

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***Divorced from life, we distract  
ourselves with collecting  
more and more information in a  
quest to control cosmic forces to  
which we no longer feel  
connected, forces that we fear  
will someday destroy us.***

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realm of the "coming into being" of phenomena, whereas formerly we only worked with abstract concepts—ideas formulated, so to speak, *after* the event (Bortoft 1996, 19, 45). According to scholar and poet Owen Barfield, the scientific method is inadequate for dealing with life and growth—with becoming. Barfield points out that by "sinking himself in contemplation of the outward form," Goethe arrives at an experience of the hidden activity producing a living form like a plant (Barfield 1977, 21). The metamorphic activity of plant forms, such as the change from leaf to petal to stamen, cannot be explained by cause and effect, but rather through the presence of the whole enfolded within the parts. The two stages of Goethe's scientific method—active seeing and exact imagination—serve to "deautomate" thinking, drawing our attention away from the usual "verbal-intellectual" mode which equates thought with abstract, uniform concepts cut off from immediate experience (Bortoft 1996, 66). In this approach to nature, we find an answer to the loss of meaning marked by William Barrett when he traces the development of dualistic thought, which views nature as a machine, stripped of all "sensuous immediacy" (Barrett 1987, 6). In Goethe's methods, experience informs us of realities in the living, qualitative world

without being reduced to Newtonian quantities. It is essential to emphasize here that difficult though it may be for the mechanistically trained intellect to accept, Goethe's scientific method does not arise from personal fantasy, but from the principle of exact sensorial imagination grounded on patient observation of living phenomena.

Such a non-mechanistic, non-dualistic way of knowing presents twin paradoxes not unfamiliar when discussing artistic activity, but perhaps new when dealing with scientific inquiry. In the first paradox, receptive knowing is filled with activity, with intention; in the second, indwelling within the sense world becomes a door to the invisible, formative forces within nature, the "active absent." It is not surprising that such ideas should come from an individual who was both poet and scientist. And how different is the activity of such penetrating imagination from Barrett's floating in the void. For in Goethe's methods, the self is not passive, but actively receptive, becoming an "organ of perception" that allows the phenomenal world to unfold within the realm of cognition (Bortoft 1996, 21). Such a method of knowing speaks forcefully to our current educational tasks.

The experience of authentic wholeness requires a new style of learning largely ignored in our schools and universities today. Typically, modern education is grounded in the intellectual faculty, whose analytical capacity alone is developed, mostly through verbal reasoning. One notes, for example, that science students are often not interested in observing phenomena of nature; if asked to do so, they become easily bored. Their observations often bear little resemblance to the phenomenon itself. These students are much happier with textbook descriptions and explanations, a fact readily understandable once one recognizes that most educational experience unfolds in terms of one mode of consciousness—the verbal, rational mode (Bortoft 1996, 23-24).

Bortoft and the other authors discussed here believe modern education encourages a mechanical way of knowing that divides the world into objects and renders the mind incapable of understanding living relationships. They implicate modern education in the worsening environmental crisis and the

crisis of morality and meaning confronting us at the end of this century. They charge us to recognize and develop an organic cognition and curriculum capable of perceiving and revering living relationships. As evidenced in the above passage and experienced by those who try to practice and teach such methods, this new way of knowing demands a degree of cognitive robustness and perseverance hard to find in modern life. Despite the energy with which most modern persons pursue material and vocational success, many are at the heart of it, sapped. Like the victims of Rice's heroes, the vampiric forces of mechanistic thinking within and industrial predators without drain our connections to the living world. The imagination, however, is muscular, and needs to be exercised. Polanyi's epistemology reveals that we really do *grasp* ideas. The creation of an educational approach that exercises the powers of observation and imagination is urgently needed. Unfortunately, many institutions of teacher education remain imprisoned within an industrial worldview focused exclusively on instrumentality and careerism. Barrett's comparison of Kant's philosophy to a spider spinning beautiful webs of finite knowledge yet remaining unable to move beyond them is an apt description of many teacher educators who continue to spin out theories and methods, yet remain unable to deliver prospective teachers from the web of mechanistic thought.<sup>5</sup> Bortoft states, "It is by first going into the full richness and diversity of sensory detail that the intellectual mind is rendered ineffective, so that we can escape from its prison into the freedom of intuition" (1996, 68). Curriculum can be transformed in such a way as to provide experiences in perceptive cognition. A basic curricular change such as presenting the phenomenon for experience, whether it be a poem or a natural observation, while withholding conceptual discussion, begins the movement into a more transformative education. Such schooling of the senses is required, not only in the sciences but also in the humanities, if we are to approach a more living thinking, one that would narrow C. P. Snow's famous gap between these two cultures (Davy 1961). Whereas most modern schooling skates along the surface of knowing, tapping little emotion and almost no true will at all, Goethean science shares with artistic work a dynamic plunging into the realm of

becoming through the exercising of the image-making faculty.

According to educational philosopher Maxine Greene, artistic activity is a necessary remedy for the passivity that confronts young people:

Provided with opportunities to speak about it, young people often express a desire to overcome their own passivity, their own *ennui*. They make groping efforts to bridge between their subjectivities and that which exists apart from them, to find ways of identifying with a reality that afflicts them like an alien presence. (Greene 1978, 186)

That passivity and boredom manifest in young people, despite a world seemingly exploding with information, is perhaps a symptom of the bombardment of mechanistic content. Deprived of ways to deeply understand the relationship of such content to living reality, the will becomes devitalized and the world turns into an alien presence, an affliction. Waldorf educator Betty Staley offers artistic activity as a way to activate the will and enliven the thought life. Activities such as drama, painting, and creative writing address those same vital capacities exercised in Goethean science—observation and imagination (Staley 1988, 157). For color, form, rhythm, and sound are visceral experiences that lead to invisible, intuitive knowledge of the world and one's relationship to it. Of these artistic activities, writing and speaking have become the furthest removed from living experience. Except for some writers, poets, and actors words have lost their immediate, sensuous connection and have become the slaves of instrumental, abstract thinking. In *Standing by Words*, Wendell Berry relates the loss of shared linguistic meaning to the disintegration of persons and communities. He critiques the tendency of many modern poets to become self-enclosed. Such isolation, he argues, robs poetry of its rightful focus on the world, obscures meaning, and renders itself irrelevant to the community at large, continuing the split between inner and outer realities (Berry 1983, 24). According to Robert Sardello (1994), when words again become visceral experiences, they are "a way to enter into the world that is at the same time a gateway into an imagination of the soul of the world." For Owen Barfield, words have a "sensuous and phenomenal

ingredient" which partakes in the ancient act of cognitive creation: "It was in the process of *naming* nature that man became aware of her." Barfield calls for a deep exploration of the history of words as a way of discovering the elusive bridge between subject and object, the material and immaterial, a way to develop the capacity to see living relationships (1981 431, 433).

In the Preface to Olive Whicher's work *Sunspace*, which uses projective geometry to explore conceptions of space, Owen Barfield states:

The reign of King Reductionism, and the laws by which he governs behaviour, will not be overthrown by convincing arguments alone, though it will not be overthrown without them. For what would have to be changed is not a system of ideas but an inveterate outlook. And that will have happened only when it has become a matter of everyday experience that the inner world of consciousness is on the same footing of reality as the world of things—that the former is not an attribute of the latter but correlative to it. (1989, xiv)

Along with Owen Barfield, the writers presented here provide convincing arguments for developing new ways of seeing and reconnecting to the natural world. They describe how the history of the past several hundred years has left the modern person cognitively lost in the world of sensation, mesmerized by the spell of mechanistic thinking. In the words of Wendell Berry, "The mechanical means by which we propose to escape the human condition only extend it; thinking to transcend our definition as fallen creatures, we have only colonized more and more territory eastward of Eden" (1987, 67). The kind of thinking that values power over affection and the mechanical over the living is not only alienating to the sense of selfhood, but also destructive to the biosphere in which we live. It infects our educational system, which is a part of a larger industrial megalith intent on controlling rather than understanding nature. The reign of reductive thinking has left us disconnected to cycles of growth and decay as well as to our own feeling of life. Such thinking inhabits a shadowy realm, desubstantialized and passive, and is a primary contributor to the earth's devitalization, embodied in Monsanto's sterile seed. The philosophers, educators, poets, and scientists

presented here point to the development of a robust imaginative consciousness as a way to break the spell of the unliving and build a bridge between the human mind and nature. We can only hope with David Orr that in the end, "humanity will love life enough to save it" (1994, 145).

### Notes

1. Berry's experience of the Irish countryside reinforces this accommodation between the two domains of the human and the natural: Human use, in imposing certain demands on the land, has accommodated itself to the land's natural shape and character, with the result that the countryside appears both natural and human. It is this balance of the natural and the human that makes a landscape look comfortable and comforting, and this is the work of an old kind of mind, of long attention and familiarity—a mind that is as different as possible from the industrial or modern mind. (1987, 13).
2. In October 1999, Monsanto announced it would not pursue the marketing of sterile seeds until a favorable public discourse occurs. Despite this announcement, genetic engineering of crops continues to raise concern. See Barnaby J. Feder, "Monsanto Says It Won't Market Infertile Seeds," *New York Times*, October 5, 1999, and Carol Kaesuk Yoon, "Squash with Altered Genes Raises Fears of 'Superweeds,'" *New York Times*, November 3, 1999.
3. Vandana Shiva states in *Biopiracy: The Plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (Boston: South End Press, 1997): "Regeneration lies at the heart of life and has been the central principle guiding sustainable societies; without regeneration, there can be no sustainability" (47).
4. Philosopher Rudolf Steiner presents the capacity for reverence as a necessary prerequisite in the development of higher cognition: What was once a childlike veneration for persons becomes later, a veneration for truth and knowledge.... If we do not develop within ourselves this deeply rooted feeling that there is something higher than ourselves, we shall never find the strength to evolve to something higher. (1947, 6-7)
5. The Postmodern school of thought within teacher education addresses the negative impact the Cartesian split has had on teaching and learning. Such explorations are encouraging, but we must be careful not to fall back on reductive thinking in our zeal to overthrow it. For example, in order to remedy the split between subject and object, some postmodern educators suggest we remove the object entirely from consideration in order to focus exclusively on relationships and patterns. This denial of the object, however, inadvertently encourages the split between mind and matter by denying the relevance of the material. For how are we to arrive at an experience of patterns without first attending to the phenomenon in which they live?

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# Foundation Courses in Education

## Their Purpose and Rationale

Mordechai Gordon

**Students of education should be required to think in terms of general *philosophical* goals and problems and not just in terms of concrete *instructional* goals and objectives, to constantly relate theory to practice, to move beyond a focus on “techniques,” and to reflect critically both on the purpose of education as well as what happens in the classroom.**

*Imagine that you are observing a fifth-grade reading class in which a student-teacher is teaching a lesson on poetry. The teacher begins the lesson by reading to the class a poem about the moon while the students sit at their desks with their heads down and their eyes closed listening to the poem. When she finishes reading the poem, the teacher asks the students to share with the class the kinds of thoughts or feelings the poem evoked in them. Several students raise their hands and voice a number of different responses like “sadness,” “fear,” and “a sense of mystery,” which are not questioned by the teacher. Next, the teacher plays an audiocassette of a man reading this poem and then asks the students the same question about what the poem evoked in them. A number of students contribute thoughts and feelings similar to the ones raised a few moments ago. Again, the teacher makes no attempt to question or “problematize” the students’ reactions. Finally, the teacher asks one of the students to read this poem, followed by the same routine of asking the students to share their thoughts and feelings with the class and a similar uncritical response by the teacher....*

*As I was observing this half-hour lesson, a question kept entering my mind: What is the underlying purpose of this lesson? Later, when I met with the student-teacher to discuss her lesson, I asked her this question, posing it in several different ways. For instance, I asked: “What, in your opinion, was the main goal of this lesson?” or “Why do you think it is so important to teach fifth graders a lesson on poetry?” She replied that this lesson is part of their curriculum and that is why she chose to teach it. When I challenged her to think about the possible underlying goals for a lesson on poetry, she looked at me dumbfounded and acknowledged that no one had previously asked her such questions.*

*Author’s Note.* In choosing to focus on the purpose and rationale of the foundation courses, I am deliberately steering away from the issue of the content of these courses. This is, in part, because the question of content is highly controversial, but, primarily, because my goal here is to delineate four issues that all foundation courses should address regardless of their specific content.

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This true anecdote is rather common, unfortunately, and points to a serious problem in the programs that prepare teachers: the lack of emphasis on

foundational questions in education. By foundational questions in education I mean questions such as: What is the main purpose of education? What does it mean to be an educated person? What is teaching and learning? Do teachers have a right to educate character? Whose interests are served by schooling? These are philosophical questions that ask students to reflect on some of the fundamental assumptions underlying teaching and learning at the very time that they are beginning to formulate and experiment with their own "philosophies of education." Foundational questions also raise important ethical concerns that challenge teachers to evaluate specific practices that are used in the classroom as well as broader educational, social, and political issues. Such questions call our attention to the first issue that needs to be emphasized in Foundation courses. My point is that students should be required to think in terms of general philosophical goals and problems and not just in terms of concrete instructional objectives. Whether they are designing lesson plans or writing research papers, it is crucial that students of education think philosophically and engage foundational questions.

### Thinking Philosophically

Thinking philosophically is not the same as problem solving; it is neither linear nor aimed primarily at finding a practical solution to a pressing problem. According to Martin Heidegger,

Thinking does not bring knowledge as do the sciences. Thinking does not produce usable practical wisdom. Thinking does not solve the riddles of the universe. Thinking does not endow us directly with the power to act. (Arendt 1978, 1)

Now even if we acknowledge that Heidegger is exaggerating here, I believe that he has hit on a fundamental truth about thinking. The truth is that philosophical thinking is not aimed first and foremost at finding practical results, knowledge, or solutions, but rather at clarifying a complex issue or problem that is being discussed. Think of the many Socratic dialogues that go around in circles and end without reaching a clear and definitive answer to the question under debate. Yet, while in these dialogues we never arrive at a precise definition of virtue,

friendship, or piety, for instance, we do get a better understanding of many of the ideas and misconceptions associated with these concepts. Thinking, in this view, is not evaluated by the product but rather by the process. It is a continuous process of doubting, questioning, critically examining, and revising our beliefs.

Yet, why is it so important that students of education be required to think philosophically? Several reasons immediately come to mind. To begin with is the idea that education in general and teaching in particular have been reduced in many public debates and schools to a technical endeavor of finding the most efficient means to achieve a set of prescribed ends. For example, in the recent discussions on "standards and educational reform," the fundamental questions about the nature and purpose of education have been largely ignored. As Jeffrey Kane notes, "the question now is one of means and means alone: how to provide educational experiences that effectively enable children to achieve the desired goals" (1998, 2). Moreover, Kane argues, the underlying epistemological, moral, ontological, and economic foundations of the new standards are taken for granted rather than debated. Since all efforts are aimed at discovering the most efficient methods of attaining these standards, there is almost no discussion taking place about crucial issues such as "what learning means to the learner in terms of the way he/she develops an understanding of self, other, and the world" (1998, 2). My experience as well as that of many other teacher educators indicates that if we do not challenge our students to engage such questions, they easily fall into the trap of equating teaching with being a "good technician." They may be skilled at writing formal lesson plans and controlling their classes, but know very little about what a worthy education means and how to cultivate it.

Another reason that teachers need to think philosophically is that if we follow Martin Buber, who contends that "education worthy of the name is essentially education of character" (1995, 104), then all teachers must view themselves not simply, or even primarily, as instructors in a certain body of knowledge or of a particular skill. Rather, they should conceive of their task as aiming at the person as a whole, including the moral, spiritual, physical, and affective

dimensions of our being, together with the cognitive aspect on which most schools focus. This means that student-teachers need to be prepared to address moral dilemmas that arise in the classroom whether or not they are part of the curriculum. For example, a social studies high school teacher who is facilitating a discussion on "Ancient African Civilizations" in a global history class should, at the very least, raise the following philosophical questions: What does it mean to be civilized? And how well are the leaders and people of our own society living up to this standard? This teacher should also take into account the emotional impact that a discussion examining "the integrity of Ancient African Civilization" will have on minority students in general and African American students in particular. If teachers do not pay attention to the moral, psychological, and political dimensions of the learning process, they have little chance of affecting the whole individual as Buber inspires us to do. Indeed, they may even do damage to their students by presenting an elitist notion of the concept of civilization and a very narrow, exclusively Western view of history.

### Relating Theory and Practice

The second issue that needs to be emphasized in Foundation courses is the relating of theory and practice. When I was a graduate student at Teachers College, the practice of education and teaching was rarely, if ever, discussed in my classes. It was assumed, I suppose, that "Ivy League" graduate students are generally not interested in questions of practice and if they are, they can make the connections between theory and practice themselves, after class. I strongly reject this assumption. Following educators like John Dewey, I believe that theory and practice are interrelated and that it is the teacher's responsibility to make their connections explicit. Throughout my college teaching experiences in both Israel and Brooklyn College, I have discovered again and again that students of education frequently find it very difficult to make these connections on their own. Thus, in my courses, I not only give many examples that illustrate the relationships between theory and practice; I also require students to practice making such connections in virtually all the assignments they do. In this way, the students are con-

stantly required to reflect on the connections of theory and practice with the hope that they come to realize that our philosophies shape the way in which we conduct our classrooms and that our educational experiences often help us revise and refine our theories of teaching and learning.

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***Thinking is not evaluated by the product but rather by the process. It is a continuous process of doubting, questioning, critically examining, and revising our beliefs.***

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To be sure, many of my students openly ask me to make these connections explicit and they constantly raise questions that indicate that they are trying to make sense of this issue. How else is it possible for students of education to fully comprehend the things they are doing daily in the classroom? Dewey argues quite convincingly that if modern science has demonstrated anything,

it is that there is no such thing as genuine knowledge and fruitful understanding except as the offspring of *doing*. The analysis and arrangement of facts which is indispensable to the growth of knowledge and power of explanation and right classification cannot be obtained purely mentally—just inside the head. Men have to *do* something to the things when they wish to find out something; they have to alter conditions. (1994, 61)

Thus, as Dewey asserts, it is only by experimenting with various teaching techniques and practices that students of education are able to gain genuine knowledge about teaching and learning, knowledge that is tangible and comprehensible to them.

On the other hand, it is only through the power of theory that teachers can make sense of what they and the schools are doing in the often harsh realities of the urban public schools. bell hooks makes this point very well:

Living in childhood without a sense of home, I found a place of sanctuary in "theorizing," in

making sense out of what was happening. I found a place where I could imagine possible futures, a place where life could be lived differently. This "lived" experience of critical thinking, of reflection and analysis, became a place where I worked at explaining the hurt and making it go away. Fundamentally, I learned from this experience that theory could be a healing place. (1994, 61)

Drawing on hooks's insights, we can see that only by theorizing are teachers able to interpret and make sense of the difficulties they encounter in their classes and schools. Theories provide teachers with a frame of reference and a language with which to

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***If teachers do not pay attention to the moral, psychological, and political dimensions of the learning process, they have little chance of affecting the whole individual.***

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name and critically analyze many of the problems they face daily. However, as hooks points out, theory is also a place of hope and healing. That is, theories provide teachers with a rich source of understanding not only of what *is*, but also of how things could be differently. Teachers and educators in general who are struggling to make a difference need to become theorists who can imagine and create alternatives to many of the oppressive ideologies, practices, and conditions in America's public schools.

### Challenge Versus Recipe

Thirdly, Foundation courses should stress what I call "the distinction between a recipe and a challenge." Many of our students come to us looking for recipes, for a bag of tricks that they can take with them and apply in their classrooms. They assume that if they can just acquire these techniques and skills they will be good teachers or at least survive in the New York City public schools. While I am not against teaching students some worthy techniques in classroom management, for instance, I seriously

doubt that knowing these techniques will make them good teachers or even allow them to survive in an urban public school. Of course, such an attitude is understandable given the technocratic, positivistic view of education and schooling that is predominant in our society. Ann Watts Pailliotet and Thomas Callister point out that

By making the educational process technical, we pattern the curriculum after a stair-step model of linear fact-by-fact learning, trivialize teaching as a series of generic "how to's" or formulaic "hints and tips," and too often reduce the act of learning to simple models of behavioral stimulus-response mechanisms. (1999, 166)

The problem is that such a view of education reduces the teacher's role to that of identifying and managing technical problems. Pailliotet and Callister argue correctly that this view not only fails to prepare new teachers for the realities they will face in contemporary schools and society; it also undermines the attempt to foster teachers who are reflective, compassionate, and ethically minded practitioners. Moreover, the technocratic view of education is in stark contradiction to the way in which most experienced teachers conceptualize their own role and work. Experienced teachers typically describe teaching as a very complex and difficult challenge that cannot be reduced to a bag of tricks or a number of proven techniques. Indeed, much of what makes someone a good teacher, like enthusiasm in the class and compassion for students, has very little to do with technique and may not even be teachable. The point is that it is crucial to encourage our students to think less in terms of teaching recipes and much more in terms of educational challenges. That is, we need to deconstruct our students' false assumption that good teaching involves merely the mastery of certain pedagogical skills. They need to realize that it is more like a craft or an art that involves constantly challenging oneself with new goals and ideas. As Joe Kincheloe and Shirley Steinberg assert,

Nothing is simple about teaching people to think critically; no set of easy steps can be delineated in some workshop conducted by an expert in educational psychology charging twelve thousand dollars per day. (1999, 239).

To get a better understanding of the distinction between the recipe versus the challenge approach to teaching, it is fruitful to look at some of their underlying assumptions. By the recipe approach to teaching I mean a way of conceptualizing teaching based on a mechanistic worldview and a behaviorist educational psychology. This is a reductionist approach to education in that it asserts that a highly complex and nuanced activity like teaching can be understood if we break it down to its constituent parts and then piece them together according to causal laws. Freire calls this model "the banking concept of education" and claims that it reduces the teacher's role to that of a depositor of information. In this view, the students become containers who are merely expected to receive, file, store, and recall the teacher's deposits. The problem with this concept of education is that it disregards precisely those qualities like creativity, inquiry, and transformation that make us truly human. Freire contends that ultimately,

it is the people themselves who are filed away through the lack of creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system. For apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other. (1994, 53)

In contrast, "the teaching as challenge approach" is based on an existentialist worldview as well as on some of the insights of critical pedagogy. Existentialists like Buber maintain that not only is every person a unique being in this world, but that "every living situation has, like a newborn child, a new face that has never been before and will never come again" (1995, 114). However, critical theorists like Freire have demonstrated that human beings do not operate outside of history and a social milieu and that our identities are greatly influenced by the existing power structures in the society. Taking these two insights together, we can see that teaching is a challenge in a twofold sense. It is a great challenge for teachers to respond to each student and every situation in the classroom in a unique way. And it is no less of a challenge for teachers to help students expose the ways in which "our identities are funda-

mentally shaped by our entanglements in the webs that power weaves" (1999, 14). Realizing these challenges requires teachers to exhibit qualities like creativity, spontaneity, imagination, presence, courage, and self-awareness. The advantage of this conception of teaching is that it enables us to avoid the dangerous tendency of reducing the teacher's role to that of disseminating information and preparing students to take standardized tests. Indeed, it dignifies teachers' role and profession at a time when teachers are coming under increasing attacks by politicians, administrators, and the general public.

### Philosophical Rigor

This brings me to the fourth, and final, issue that Foundation courses ought to include: challenging student-teachers to go beyond the banal exercises and rote learning and to demand that they display philosophical rigor. Philosophical rigor implies that prospective teachers need to demonstrate the ability to think critically, to question, to doubt, and to provide convincing justifications for their answers so that they in turn will require nothing less from their students. Teacher-educators should not be content with clichés and stock phrases when eliciting student responses. This is because such use of clichés and hackneyed phrases usually means that a person is avoiding thinking critically and personally about a situation. When my college students use such language, I often find that they have not really reflected on the meaning of a given cliché before using it. For example, when I ask my students about the meaning of equality as one of the principles of democracy, a common response is that "all humans are created equal." When I challenge them to explain in what sense human beings are, or should be, equal, many of them find it difficult to respond. My experience indicates that most students have not adequately reflected on the difference between universal equality (as an ideal that is difficult to define) and legal, social, or political equality (which is a standard that democratic societies strive for).

Moreover, I find that clichés and phrases are frequently used by students in order to artificially simplify a problem that is complex. Such language prevents students from viewing a problem from several perspectives and hence from gaining a deeper un-

derstanding of the issue. To continue the previous example, most college students who are asked about the significance of equality in a democratic society are able to point to principles such as equal rights and equality of opportunity. However, many of these same students have not critically analyzed the various meanings of these principles. They have never really thought about whether equality of opportunity means that everyone should get the exact same opportunities, regardless of differences of race, gender, nationality, and so forth. Or does it imply, on the other hand, that the government needs to intervene to give certain privileges to various sectors of society which historically have been discriminated against. In short, my experience with college students indicates that while most of them are able to identify democratic principles such as equality, diversity, and freedom, they lack a deep understanding of what these principles denote and how they are related. I am not suggesting that this lack of understanding is a problem, but merely that students use clichés and stock phrases to evade addressing questions critically. Professors need to be mindful that when students use ready-made, common quotes, they usually do not have an adequate understanding of the issue.

Dewey, who was vehemently opposed to the mind-numbing practices of traditional education, calls on educators to

cultivate the habit of suspended judgement, of skepticism, of desire for evidence, of appeal to observation rather than sentiment, discussion rather than bias, inquiry rather than conventional idealizations. When this happens schools will be the dangerous outposts of a humane civilization. But they will also be supremely interesting places. For it will then have come about that education and politics are one and the same thing because politics will have to be in fact what it now pretends to be, the intelligent management of social affairs. (1986, 334)

Dewey here points to another aspect of philosophical rigor, which has to do with the interrelation of education and politics. Education, as thinkers such as Paulo Freire insist, is never a neutral, impartial, or objective enterprise. Rather, we should always view the education system as part of a larger social, political, economic, and moral context. Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren are well aware of this point:

schools do not merely teach academic subjects, but also, in part, produce student subjectivities or particular sets of experiences that are in themselves part of an ideological process. Conceptualizing schooling as the construction and transmission of subjectivities permits us to understand more clearly that the curriculum is more than just an introduction of students to particular subject disciplines and teaching methodologies; it also serves as an introduction to a particular way of life. (1986, 228)

If we accept the view that politics and education, ideology and the curriculum, are closely connected, then it follows that philosophical rigor has to do with exposing the epistemological, political, moral, social, and economic assumptions and interests that support a certain view of education. This means that students of education should be required to reflect on questions such as: Whose interests are served by a particular view of teaching, learning, and intelligence? What kind of ethical issues are raised by the practice of tracking students? And who benefits economically and socially by the fact that many urban schools are crumbling or resemble prisons? Such questions are only seldom raised in teacher education classes and in wider educational policy debates. Yet, I submit that engaging such questions is at the core of displaying philosophical rigor and becoming a good teacher. Kincheloe and Steinberg are correct when they write that

such an undertaking is not merely an attempt to, in the words of conservative critics, “make students feel good at the expense of becoming educated.” On the contrary, it is a content based, discursively savvy, complex analytical educational process that requires a deep understanding of a wide variety of knowledge systems, the skills to critique them, and the cognitive facility to develop new insights to replace inadequate academic constructs. (1999, 242)

In my Foundation classes I call this undertaking “the practice of making the implicit explicit.” The point that I try to get across to the students is that it is absolutely crucial for them to make explicit the underlying assumptions of various historical pedagogical theories as well as their own views of education. Students who are never encouraged to examine their basic assumptions all too often come to accept the

theories and views they subscribe to as “natural,” inevitable, and unchangeable. Such students will most likely find ways to adjust to the existing state of schooling in America and become supporters of the status quo. They will only rarely gain those insights and critical abilities that will enable them to become transforming agents and educational reformers.

Above all, in the previous quote, Dewey is talking about the development of a “philosophical mindset.” And my main point in this essay is not simply that the four issues discussed are essential to include in Foundation courses. It is rather, more generally, that schools of education should be committed to fostering this philosophical mindset. I would like to conclude this essay with a narrative written by one of my students that, in my view, illustrates beautifully this philosophical mindset and how the Foundation courses in education are related to the life of school teachers:

*I used to say that I loved to teach and I truly did think that. When I was a child I used to place empty chairs and pretend to teach invisible students. At the age of thirteen, I taught my younger sister (who was three) to read, write, and do math. She skipped kindergarten because she was too advanced. I also enjoyed tutoring children at the church. It made me happy and gave me a great feeling of satisfaction when others did better on a test. Then it made me think: I could do this thing, teach. It is my forte, my talent, my joie de vivre (joy of living). I enjoyed it.*

*However, teaching high school has been quite an experience. [Being] faced with approximately 150 teenagers per day is enough to make anyone tear their hair out (mine is turning gray). It seems to me that I could never get enough done. Their snide remarks take 15% of the lesson time. They test you every day, in some way or other. They walk in without books, paper, pens (I never knew I had to be everyone’s mother). They try to concoct all kinds of ways to get out of class. “My stomach is hurting, I’ve got to go to the nurse.” They stand before you knock-kneed, twisting in every direction: “Ms. Wilson, I’ve got to go to the bathroom.”*

*I should be focusing on content at that level, not the human factor. The assumption is that by now they have already been taught to be humans and, therefore, now, all we have to teach is the subject. Nevertheless, the challenge for me every day is what can I do to improve the human factor so that I can get through the content in a given period of time.*

*The human factor in teaching is something I had never really considered when I thought I had teaching talent or ability. Now I find myself questioning whether I am a good teacher! What is a good teacher anyway? The ability to just explain the subject? Or is it the ability to get it across to your students and make it somehow relevant to their lives? Or is it turning your students into good people who are willing to learn the subject and achieve? Sure it was okay to teach my little sister and countless others whom I had known all of my life. But teaching others with different backgrounds, levels of aptitude, education, personality, etc.—in other words, trying to teach 150 teenagers— is mind-boggling.*

*Is it enough to teach the child who lives in a drug-infested area Math 1 or 2? His daily human experience is witnessing others taking drugs and well-dressed dealers with flashy looking cars. In terms of math, the dealer pulls out wads of bills before him and buys whatever he wants. One way or the other this will affect his character. Maybe he or she sees school as a waste of time. After all, what does he or she do? Sit everyday in a math class learning geometry, wondering how these calculations are supposed to get him or her flashy cars and a wad of bills. How do I tie it all in with the math, his daily experience? Shouldn’t I touch the person before I teach him or her? Wouldn’t this make him or her want to listen more intently, and therefore learn?*

*It becomes a fight of wills, and I don’t believe I am going to win. Somehow I have to win these students over. I have to show them what is in my heart. I want them to pass brilliantly. I want them to take their potentially bright futures and make it a reality. But I cannot do this without their participation. I have to show them that teaching is a partnership, not an absolute rule thing.*

*This is the challenge I face everyday. They are just kids. However, every time they walk into the classroom, they and I hold a small yet big part of their futures in our hands. That’s not kid stuff. I now know that my ability to deal with people may be just as important as explaining or communicating subject matter.*

I strongly believe that schools of education must be committed to cultivating teachers who, like Ms. Wilson, are able to ask philosophical questions, doubt, and critically reflect on education in general and on what they are doing daily in their classes in particular. Like Ms. Wilson, we need teachers who do not have all the “answers” but are struggling to find their own voices (identities) in schools in which

conformity to established norms, methods, and subject matter is the rule. Schools of education must foster teachers who are aware of the social, political, and cultural embeddedness of the education system and how it affects them as well as students from different backgrounds. Finally, we need teachers who, like Ms. Wilson, approach their vocation as a challenge and are determined to make a difference in the lives of their students.

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# Holistic Practices in Japanese Education

Giichiro Yamanouchi

**Educational renewal in a Japanese village school focused on restoring a sense of interconnection with nature and the rhythms of daily life.**

I was walking up a steep road towards a mountain pass. It was 1975; nearly one year had passed since I had been appointed as principal of Mushigame Elementary School. Since I had arrived at Mushigame village in the mountains, I had been feeling a vague uneasiness about my job, as the way of education for children living there was not working well. I was born in the 1930s and felt familiar with the village life. It was the Japanese traditional way of life, in which people were deeply connected to nature and their efforts in production and humble consumption were all merged into one prayer for the happiness of the community. But school education, it seemed to me, was breaking the existing interconnectedness of the local life with fragmented teaching of subjects disconnected from life. Teachers were rarely aware of the significance of local native culture; they did not know the historical reality of the community and placed urban values above the rural, traditional ones. I had been at a loss for educational goals for children that were in harmony with the local culture of the village.

I was tired and sat down on the side of the road. I was looking vacantly at the terraced rice fields on the mountainside. Terrace after terrace, cultivated and handed down from generation to generation, these fields marched up the mountainside to reach the sky. All of a sudden the view gave me the answer. In a moment, I was immersed with the vision of history and the whole process of the village life, including the human effort, growth, and achievement handed down from generation to generation, all in harmony with nature. I realized that such a process had also formed the villagers' robust physiques, patience, sincerity, cooperativeness, and creativity. Everything was interconnected and in harmony. I realized at the

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This paper was translated from Japanese by Keiko Hashimoto and Midori Sakurai. Hashimoto is an interpreter living in Kyoto, Japan and Sakurai is also an interpreter residing in Toronto, Canada.

same time that it was also connected to something bigger. I found the goal of education I had been searching for so desperately. It is difficult to verbalize the experience, as it was a realization not on an intellectual level but a level of inner depth. I was and still am greatly influenced by this experience. Since then, I have developed a new vision for education; in one word, it is to restore interconnectedness in education. For this purpose, I have created several interdisciplinary activities, which I call integrated activities, and tried to construct a holistic curriculum based upon them. I have also tried to bring the joy of learning and self-discovery back to the school. In this paper, I would like to discuss my philosophy and experimental practices toward holistic education in Japanese public schools.

### **The Germination of Holistic Education in My Practice**

#### **Problems in Japanese Education and in the Community of Mushigame**

With my first administrative job at Mushigame Elementary School, I was forced to face the sour reality of fruitless school past the university examination. Children do not spend time on their family's farm and most of their free time is spent watching TV. Children are losing opportunities for direct experiences in nature and their learning has become more disconnected from life. However, the effect of modern lifestyle has been slow and the villagers still keep their traditional spirit in daily life. In this community, every household participates in agriculture and is self-sufficient through growing staple foods such as rice, soybeans, and buckwheat; processing miso, soy sauce, and tofu; and using local trees for fuel. Also, rice straw is used for straw shoes, ropes, mattresses, children's toys, ornaments for annual rituals, and much more. Villagers keep the oneness with nature, which still has a significant effect on the villagers' lives and personalities.

In contrast, teachers in Mushigame Elementary School rarely experience the direct experiences of interconnectedness in daily life seen in the village. They are more familiar with the city lifestyle. Contrary to the village life, the city lifestyle is a disconnected life; people consume without seeing the production process. School education is practiced

mainly by the authorized textbooks and workbooks that are prepared in cities and academic subjects that are taught separately with no links to each other. Teachers tend to see textbooks as absolute. They also impose their fixed views on children that are disconnected from the wholeness of village life. Such a way of education in school does not help foster children's growth in harmony with the interconnectedness of the village but rather contributes to the breakdown of the existing connection, resulting in the repression of the holistic growth of children. To overcome such problems, I was searching for direction for local education. I often visited the villagers and solicited their expectations in education and learned about their handed-down wisdom and traditional lifestyle.

#### **The Beginning of Education that Utilizes Interconnectedness in the Community**

One day the grade one teacher told me her concerns about the language class. Children did not listen to her and even walked around the classroom during the class. Textbooks did not win their attention at all. I suggested that she leave the textbook for a while and find some other material related to linguistic activities. I offered an idea that the whole class visit an old lady in the village and listen to the local folklore from her. She liked that idea and took first graders to one old lady who knows a lot of local folklore that had been handed down from generation to generation in the village. Once the old lady started talking, all the kids did not say a word and became absorbed in the stories. Even after the storytelling was over, children stayed still and quiet as if they were still enjoying the lingering images from the stories. We discussed why this attitude change occurred in children. First of all, unlike the textbook which is mostly based on written language, storytelling was a more direct way of communication via spoken language, and it was easier to understand and simply more fun. Secondly, children enjoyed the images from the folklore. That quiet atmosphere activated and expanded the children's imaginations and helped them become more immersed in the story.

We both agreed that we needed to use spoken language more before we introduced children to textbooks so that children would be naturally more ready to understand abstract thinking. Realizing its

educational value, this teacher expanded this activity. She asked students to listen to old folklore from their grandparents. Children presented the stories in the class and dramatized them. Children also produced Washi, traditional Japanese paper, out of local flowers and plants and made picture books with stories. Children were fascinated with these rich and varied activities. Their learning became much more lively. Along with this process, the teacher came to have a deeper understanding of the local community and its educational value. This understanding led her to become aware of the inseparable relationship between the local culture and people's lives. She started to expand her view on teaching material beyond the textbook.

### **Creating Integrated Activities in the Center of Curriculum**

The historical realities of the village, its natural environment, culture, as well as local industries, all have fundamental effects on the personal growth of the villagers. Thus school education should utilize the unique backgrounds of the village as teaching materials and create experiential activities out of them. Locally oriented activities would raise children's awareness towards the connections between humans and nature, humans and community, humans and culture and history and industry, teachers and students and parents—all of which should form the cornerstone of school-based education. Integrated activities are intended to restore interconnectedness in learning and encourage children to fully use their five senses in direct experiences. Such experiences involve the whole being of the learners and inspire them to explore their capacities fully. Integrated activities allow children to respect their natural learning style and unique way of expression. That is the joy of self-discovery. The integrated activities aim at making learning joyful.

Each grade has different themes for the integrated activities. All the activities are designed to shift slowly and naturally according to the seasonal change and make full use of the existing connection in the community throughout the six years of schooling. Also, this theme is closely interwoven into academic subjects. Some of the examples of the integrated activities for each grade follow.

*1st Grade:* In spring, children and teachers explore the fields and hills around the school learning about insects and plants and playing with them. In the autumn, activities that use fallen leaves are implemented.

*2nd Grade:* Children listen to stories from elderly people in the community, retell the stories, make picture books out of them with plant dyes and dramatize it.

*3rd Grade:* Children and teachers breed silk worms, make the silk yarn, and weave it. They also experience the old New Year's rituals.

*4th Grade:* Children and teachers, assisted by volunteers from the community, harvest buckwheat and cook buckwheat noodles.

*5th Grade:* Children and teachers produce a rice crop and hold a harvest festival. It is an event in which students make rice cakes and invite all the other students, parents, teachers, and other members of the community.

*6th Grade:* Children and teachers breed colored carp, which is the main local business in Mushigame village, from the time of egg-laying until adulthood, and exhibit the bred fish in the Colored Carp Competition in the village.

### **Science Learning in Integrated Activities**

Fifth graders learn the process of growing rice in science class. Usually the teacher prepares an experimental rice paddy, which is a 1m x 1m small concrete square frame with soil inside. Children keep observations of the rice plant from branching to flowering to fruition. With scientific and objective attitudes, children cannot see the connection between observation and their daily life and tend to lose interest and concentration in that experiment. Moreover, under bad conditions such as small space, insufficient lighting and so on, rice plants are likely to grow weak and do not give out a sense of aliveness, which would become motivation for children to take care of them.

Fortunately, rice cropping is one of the main industries in this community and we could make raising rice more authentic in connection to science learning. While working in actual rice paddies, children were able to see what was practical and directly related to their lives. Children were excited and waited for a good harvest. Later they had a success-

ful rice cake party in the fall with their parents and people in the community. This became their great motivation and joy to continue to observe the rice scientifically. Children's enthusiasm made the activity more dynamic and influenced parents and other villagers. Parents also came to show strong interest and joined school activities. Children's learning also went beyond the scientific learning of rice. They paid much more attention to what their parents do in rice paddies, helped the family on the farm, and started to reexamine the value of local culture. Because of the integrated nature of the activities, they could not be done without the support of parents and community people. In practice, the teacher's knowledge and skills were as limited as the children's. The teacher had to ask for help and learn skills from villagers and thus learning became naturally reciprocal.

By placing the integrative activities in the center of the curriculum, the school became the place where people re-experienced the interconnectedness of life in the community and even functioned as a community center to connect the school, community, and each family.

#### **Planting and Nurturing an In-School Forest: Restoring Nature in an Urban School**

In 1986, I took the position of principal of Kawasaki Elementary School, which was my fourth such position since leaving Mushigame. This school is located in Nagaoka City, which is an urban environment. The streets are paved with asphalt, many buildings are concrete, and children lack daily contact with the earth and trees. I found this critical and something that must not be overlooked because not only is the healthy growth of children being stifled, but the earth is also being destroyed. Overcoming such problems is the fundamental task for us all to make society sustainable. This planetary crisis also suggests a possible role and contribution for the school.

#### **Creating a Holistic Space at School in an Urban Environment**

As a principal, I pondered how I could bring nature into this large city school. How could I restore the interconnectedness of life in a city school? The first thing that came to my mind was a school forest. A forest is a great representation of nature, with a

deep continual connection with other living beings. By raising a forest at school, I meant to recover the natural environment in the city and at the same time create a space for children to have direct interaction with nature on a daily basis. This would encourage children to feel interest and wonder about nature, help heal themselves, and foster their sensitivity toward joy and sorrow, which is the critical part of education, especially in urban cities.

The first step in raising a forest in the school was investigating the ecology surrounding the school. An area of ten kilometers around the school was surveyed, and the state of the ecology documented. On the basis of this survey, the number and types of trees to be planted were selected. The ratio of deciduous trees to evergreen trees was about 7:3. So many deciduous trees were selected because their changes throughout the four seasons capture the children's hearts, thereby strengthening the connection between nature and the students. Through dramatic changes of deciduous trees—buds in spring, blossoms, young leaves in summer, yellow and red leaves in fall, red berries, fallen leaves—people are more likely to experience the strong connection and oneness with nature. A random dispersion of the seedlings would emphasize the natural competitive coexistence of the trees and help the forest grow faster and healthier and live longer. Many people, not only from the school but from the community as well, participated in building the forest. This strengthened connections in the community. All of the teachers, students, parents, and others in the community who worked on the forest had a bonding experience that would not have otherwise been possible.

#### **Direct Experience of Nature Utilizing the Connection and Affection for Trees: Joyful Experience of Learning from the Forest**

What connection can be generated among children through creating the forest? I was a little worried about this new experiment; however, it turned out that my worry was needless. After planting the trees, the children came to school after a one-week holiday and rushed to the forest. One child touched a tree with care; the other ran around the mound. Another child was observing attentively so that he could see a slight change and growth in the tree. One

sprout or a fresh leaf would make them cry out and call their friends to share their discovery. Finally, they came in the classroom, but they could not hide their excitement and joy. They were so eager to share their discovery of that morning with the teacher and with each other.

Children continued to come to the forest spontaneously and eagerly. At breaks, lunchtime, and before leaving school, they came to the forest to touch trees and communicate with them. Their happy experiences of the day, sad events, and even the feelings that they could not share with anybody else were brought to the forest. Seasonal changes of the forest also attracted the children. The ever-changing beauty of the trees also encouraged connection and love for the trees. The extent and content of their direct experiences with the forest was beyond our expectation and imagination.

I have called it a forest, but in reality it was only a mound where young trees had just started to grow. Children already had the vision of a deep forest of 50 or 100 years old. Trees also drew out children's tenderness and care for life. At the deepest level, they seemed to experience communion with the trees. They started to find their particular trees and identify "My Tree." They took care of the trees, had dialogues as if "My Tree" was their counterpart. They expressed their love through poems, composition, songs, and dances. The surprise and joy of finding changes in the growing tree encouraged them to continue to write journals and communicate their excitement to teachers and parents. In the process of creating the forest, they grew more attentive and sensitive to the diversity of nature, and more open and spontaneous in learning and expressing. Moreover, they started to have insight on the life cycle based on their own careful observations. Eventually, it also led them to an understanding of the social problems of the global environment.

I now would like to introduce some of the activities of learning and expressions of the children. Some of them came from the children's own initiative.

#### **Birthday Celebration of the Forest (Second Grade)**

A child in second grade had the idea to celebrate the birthday of the forest. They discussed the idea in the class and had the Birthday Celebration of the For-

est on May 27, two months after the planting of trees, out on the ground in front of the forest. It consisted of a celebration, speeches to the forest, sharing of what they had observed, and a presentation of "Dear Forest" letters, songs, and dances. This developed into a monthly event and from the second celebration the children took the responsibility of planning and implementing the celebration. Before summer vacation,

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***H**olistic awareness and spirituality fostered through direct and vivid experiences in nature will lead us to create a sustainable future society for the survival of our planet.*

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as children would miss the forest for a long time, the monthly event was full of care and love for the forest. They wrote in their "Dear Forest" letters: "What are you going to do on the summer vacation?" "You will be thirsty on a hot day. I will come and give you water sometimes." "We will not come to school for a while. Please look after the school. Take care. See you again."

In November, when the leaves in the trees turned to beautiful colors, they held an event called "Gathering of Maple Leaves." One of the children wrote a poem, "We are the children of the trees," and they learned to compose a tune to it. The teacher of the class eventually made it into a song and the class sung it together. Moreover, they tried to choreograph a dance to the song and in the event, they performed the dance and song together on stage. Not only children but also teachers, parents, and residents who visited the school that day celebrated the growing forest from the bottom of their hearts. It was obvious that teachers were deeply satisfied with the children's varied and lively learning; they said on every occasion that they enjoyed the daily activities very much.

#### **Moral Learning Utilizing the Trees (Second Grade)**

One day, a teacher saw a bush called Akushiba stamped down by someone. Its twig was broken but

some of the children didn't care at all. She made use of the event as material for moral learning. She let children play the role of the Akushiba tree and the child who stepped on it. Wearing masks and playing the roles eagerly, children became more empathic and compassionate to the tree. The tree-playing children asked the class: "Please look after me gently." "Short as I am, I am living as you are. Cherish me." "I want water, too." This role-playing, along with other realizations, made children more expressive of their own ideas. Also, more children would talk to their own trees and became gentler and more careful even with the potted plants in the classroom.

One of the children would drop by her tree, which is called Komayumi, every morning and after school to pray and talk to it. One day, she saw a field bindweed entwine the tree. She told the tree, "Komayumi-san, a bindweed-san has come to play with you. Please be kind to her." She took the tree Komayumi for her counterpart or a dear friend. Her gentle and caring attitude towards life seemed to be fostered through her affection for the tree.

### **Cultivating the Insight for One's Inner Conflict (Second Grader)**

Children used to have oral performances of their "Dear Forest" letters in the monthly celebration of the growing forest. On one such occasion, a boy spoke up, "What is Forest-san thinking? I would like to receive a letter from the forest." His teacher advised him to become the forest himself and write a letter.

He was a strong, rather aggressive boy who was somewhat egocentric and used to have fights with other children and make them cry. He was becoming a lonely child as others kept away. He wrote a letter from the forest to himself. It said, "I am yama-tsutsuji (a mountain azalea). I heard you are regarded as a naughty boy in the class. Maybe you had better become a little bit gentler to others so the classmates will not call you a naughty boy. I want to grow fast. Do you like to grow up fast, too? I am surrounded by the company of other trees and enjoy living here. Do you have a lot of friends there? I am always watching over Kawasaki Elementary School. So you can feel safe here." He was able to have insight into himself by writing the letter. After that, he became more re-

laxed and enjoyed his school life more with his friends.

### **The Quest for Edible Fruits: Annual Observation of the Usunoki Tree (Fourth Grade)**

Since April, children in the fourth grade had observed the growth and change of the trees and continued observing all year round. They became more attentive in the process, not ending at superficial observation but proceeding to discussions. They gradually started to have a common focus on a particular tree called Usunoki as it was one of the most outstanding trees with apparent changes in its growth. They found fruits in June and wrote in their journals about the changes of colors and shapes of the fruits. In autumn, they waited with wild expectation to pick and taste the fruits, but one day they all disappeared. Moreover, other groups who observed another Usunoki tree also reported the disappearance of its fruits at almost the same time. This disappearance of the fruits made them wonder and look into the reason why. The following points were discussed in the class after the report: Did birds come and eat them up? Did insects living in the forest eat them? As Usunoki fruits are edible, did someone come and eat them? If birds or insects ate them, the seeds would be discharged and new shoots would come out in spring. In that case, we had better look for the shoots near the tree.

These discussions led them to study the reference books and quest for proof in the field. They actively participated in the research and as a result, grew more insightful of the interconnectedness of lives—trees, fruits, birds, and insects in the forest. They were so eager to find out the truth that a tiny piece of the fruit skin or a seed finer than a grain of sand created dramatic reactions among them. Finally they made their findings into a superb presentation, complete with their thoughts and feelings in the form of poems. In order to present it in the "Gathering of Ma-

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ple Leaves" in November, children enthusiastically prepared, discussed, and practiced for the event. It was one of the happiest and most active learning experiences for us all.

#### **Making a Booklet of Children's Opinions: Learning, Writing, Utilizing the Preservation Activities for the Forest (Sixth Grade)**

The trees planted by sixth graders are located in the central part of the forest, to which the access was limited for fear of hurting the roots of the young trees. In a summer retreat, the sixth grade executive committee suggested the idea of making a wooden path in the forest in order to allow for more frequent access to their trees and at the same time, make the access safer for the roots of other trees. But making such a path was difficult. Teachers as well as children did not know how to do it. Fortunately, the forestry association of the Nagaoka region offered us disposal wood and kindly processed it for our use to build the wooden path. Children and teachers worked very hard during that summer to build a 45-meter wooden path in the forest.

When they happened to read an article concerning nature and human activities in language class, the sixth grade children, who got more interested in environmental problems after building the path, started to express their own ideas. Using several different textbooks, they began by learning the present situation of our planet and studying the importance of the forest. They connected the building of the wooden path and other activities to the preservation of the forest in school. They interviewed the principal and teachers in charge of creating the forest and discussed it. The value and meaning of their activities became more clarified and interconnected, and their understanding was deepened and widened from a global ecological point of view. Finally, they chose their own themes and wrote down their opinions and statements. The following are examples of their themes: *The Lives in the Forest*; *The River Beside Us*; *What to Do with Disposals*; *Birds and Preservation of Nature*, etc. These were made into one booklet titled "Nature and Human Beings" and presented in the "Gathering of Maple Leaves." The booklet was full of keen awareness and deep insights articulated by children, which made many of the readers more hopeful for the future of our planet.

#### **The Potential of an In-School Forest as Teaching Material**

Based upon my experiences in this experiment, I would like to summarize the potential of the in-school forest for educational use in schools.

- Direct experiences in the forest can relax physical and mental tension in children.
- The space in the forest can offer children a meditation place where they can restore their true nature. It can also offer a quiet atmosphere for conversation with each other and with teachers.
- Diversity in the forest attracts children throughout the seasons and gives them the opportunity to interact and experience communion with other lives. This experience can be developed into a deeper and global ecological awareness.
- Through seeing a tree as one's counterpart and talking to it, children can foster the feeling of self-esteem and love. From this, the development of love for others or for the community can be fostered.
- Direct experience of the interconnectedness of lives in the forest can cultivate spirituality, which is the foundation for a sustainable society.

#### **The Potential of the School as a Networking Center in the Community**

In the process of this experiment, I realized that the school can also play a role in networking in the community. In creating the forest, I was offered a lot of assistance and support from the community, including the agricultural administration and a corporation as well as parents and neighbors. They were touched by the eagerness of children and school staff and recognized the educational as well as environmental importance of the activity and joined us. I believe that when the objective of school education is shared by the society, school can be more open and the community will enrich our educational efforts. We can build interconnectedness of education not only in school but also in the community for a common goal. Listed below are some of the groups that offered support:

- The Agricultural Administration offered us trees to plant as a supplemental project to their tree planting activities.

- The president of a manufacturing company was moved by the booklet "Nature and Human Beings" and donated a solar heater system to the school to encourage children to learn ecology.
- The Public Works Administration registered the riverbank adjoining the school as a model zone for environmental education. This registration enabled us to use the zone for our school projects. They also enlarged the zone to include the whole riverbank.

Taking into account that building a sustainable society is one of the main goals for education in the twenty-first century, I recommended that the in-school forest activities be at the heart of the school curriculum and develop other curricula utilizing it. The forest activities combine subjects in a creative way and help foster spontaneity and love of learning among children and cultivate a sense of morality and spirituality for a sustainable future society.

### **Principles of Curriculum Construction Oriented Towards the "Joy of Learning"**

The curriculum of school education should reflect interconnectedness in its construction. Interconnectedness should not only be reflected in subjects but also in their goals, contents, and methods. In Japanese public education, the curriculum should consist of academic subjects, moral education, and special activities, but it lacks the principle of curriculum construction based on interconnectedness. As a result, students must study each subject separately without focusing on relationships or links these subjects have to each other. We need to clarify and create interconnectedness in education and construct it into a curriculum oriented towards the "Joy of Learning." Curriculum should be an integrated system that results in the personal growth of learners. To make learning joyful, we have to offer students more opportunities to feel a sense of accomplishment in learning new knowledge and skills. Also, in multidisciplinary activities such as integrated activities, it is essential that children are completely absorbed in the experiences. We also need to clarify the contribution of academic subjects, moral education, and special educational activities (the three aspects of Japanese public education) to the learner's personal development. The "Joy of Learning" can be viewed in terms of three principles—the joy of being able to do, the joy of under-

standing, and the joy of decision-making. Each of these principles is briefly described below.

#### **The Joy of Being Able to Do**

*Content:* Sports, Music, Home Economics, Writing Letters, Numerals, Basic Skills in Daily Life, etc.

*Method:* Transmission, Practice

This is the type of learning that emphasizes the acquisition of skills. Teachers transmit not only the basic skills but also the method through which students may become more skilled themselves. The goal in this type of learning should be acquiring skills in a manner that gives the learner a sense of fulfillment and joy. They experience improvement of their performance and this joy gives them motivation to learn more.

#### **The Joy of Understanding**

*Content:* Language, Algebra, Science, and Social Studies

*Method:* Problem Finding and Solving

It is essential for learners to develop real questions on their own, rather than answering the questions asked by the teachers. By forming the questions on their own, children create connections to what they are learning. Thus, learning is not only understanding something new, but also rediscovering what they have already learned. By learning to ask deep questions they develop the joy of understanding that arises from exploring the questions that they have developed.

#### **The Joy of Decision-Making**

*Content:* Moral Education, Art, Life Study, Special Educational Activities, and Integrated Activities

*Method:* Encounter-Awareness, Decision-Making

The activities oriented to the joy of decision-making are those that require students not only to acquire knowledge or skills but also to choose values or take thoughtful action in response to their inner being. They are expected to foster their own holistic perspectives and insights to make such decisions possible. The main task for teachers in this case is to encourage students to connect to their inner being and choose their own values and support their choice.

Each type of learning pursues each type of joy in a direct manner. However, all types of learning are structurally interconnected and supplementary to

each other. The ultimate purpose for all the learning will be the joy of self-discovery and the holistic development of personality.

**The Forest in School:  
Holistic Learning for the Future Society**

As I mentioned before, I believe integrated activities such as in-school forest planting can play a central part in creating a holistic curriculum towards the joy of learning and self-discovery—in other words, the holistic development of learners. What is essential here are the direct and vivid learning experiences for the learners. Only such an experience can combine and enrich the related types of learning. The important factor for fostering such learning experiences is how the teacher looks upon and utilizes the teaching materials. This is especially true in creating integrated activities. Similarly, in the case of in-school

forest-raising, when the teacher sees the forest in a global, ecological, and spiritual perspective, it becomes teaching material for holistic learning.

Creating a sustainable society is one of the main goals for education in twenty-first century. I believe school educators can contribute to this goal through a holistic curriculum that emphasizes integrated activities such as growing trees in a school forest. Raising a forest can combine subjects in a creative way, help foster spontaneity and love of learning, and cultivate a sense of morality and networking in the community. At the same time, it can help children connect to their own inner being, the Earth, and the cosmos. I believe this holistic awareness and spirituality fostered through direct and vivid experiences in nature will lead us to create a sustainable future society for the survival of our planet.



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# De-Scribing the Discourse of “Transformative Praxis”

## Learning from Models of Holistic Mental Health

Christine M. Shea

**Schaef’s work with alcoholics and addicts provides a chilling touchstone of realism in contrast to the largely disembodied theories of transformative praxis proposed by American critical and constructive postmodern educational theorists.**

Sometimes one’s deepest, most lasting educational experiences occur in unexpected places. I’ve never questioned (or later regretted) those times when I’ve felt impelled to leave the university setting with its mandated curriculum and textbooks in search of more authentic, spontaneous, natural learning environments. Recently, one such sojourn took me for several years to the mountains of North Carolina, where the nation’s first and only comprehensive teacher renewal center was in its inaugural years. As a Center Fellow there, my job was to design and implement week-long humanities and liberal arts renewal seminars for outstanding K-12 career teachers in the state system. My job was a difficult one—to assist teachers in finding ways to reconnect with their own creativity and commitment to teaching. An increasingly bureaucratic, standards-based state curriculum had left many of “the best and the brightest” career teachers feeling entrapped, frustrated, and marginalized. Rather than provide the kind of professional salaries that the experience and education of these teachers would suggest, the renewal center appeared to some teachers as a kind of ungrateful tokenism from the state politicians. Mindful of these limitations, nevertheless, my work at this renewal center provided me with an ideal opportunity to learn firsthand about the nexus between social critique and transformative praxis.

In this paper, I would like to explore how the concepts of “social critique” and “transformative praxis” evolved historically and have been expressed in the work of leading critical and construc-

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tive postmodern educational theorists. I would then like to identify some of the problematic features I encountered with the work of these contemporary educational theorists and to present an alternative model of "transformative praxis" as it has been developing in the field of holistic mental health. In particular, the ideas of holistic mental health currently being developed in the work of Anne Wilson Schaefer will be examined. Schaefer's developing paradigm of holistic mental health is also more congruent with my own experience in a teacher renewal center about the kind of transformative praxis needed in our emerging postmodern American public schools and culture.

### "Social Critique" and "Transformative Praxis"

Early in their educational careers, Henry Giroux and Peter McLaren were consumed by the task to develop a "language of critique"—to develop a unique terminology to capture the kinds of exploitation and domination they encountered in the American public school cultures and structures. However, by the late 1980s, Giroux (1988a; 1988b), McLaren (Giroux and McLaren 1989), and other critical theorists began to receive increasing criticism—for not seriously engaging the postmodern discourse in their work; for becoming obsessed with the development of an obscure rhetoric of domination, oppression, and alienation; and for neglecting to consider more feminist modes of emancipatory and transformative praxis.

As a result of these criticisms, Giroux, McLaren, and others began to be more explicit in their writings about the need to build a genuine dialogue with other educational theorists, especially those employing liberation theology as the basis for their theories of transformative praxis. Giroux himself began quoting approvingly of Alcoff's words: "[Y]ou cannot mobilize a movement that is only and always against; you must have a positive alternative, a vision of a better future that can motivate people to sacrifice their time and energy toward its realization" (Alcoff 1988, 418; Giroux 1992, 149). Beginning in the early 1990s, Giroux, McLaren, and others began to work out in detail what a critical theory approach to transformative praxis might actually look like *in practice* (Gutierrez and McLaren 1995, 125).

Based on these discussions, the term "border pedagogy" was developed by Giroux, McLaren, and oth-

ers as a way to reconceptualize their earlier work in critical pedagogy in light of the emerging field of postmodern theory. In their book *Postmodern Education: Politics, Culture, and Social Criticism*, Aronowitz and Giroux explain: "In short, the notion of border pedagogy ... attempts to link an emancipatory notion of modernism with a postmodernism of resistance" (1991, 118; Pinar et al. 1995, 285). However, Giroux, McLaren, and others were careful to distinguish their new work in "resistance or critical postmodern discourses" from "those 'ludic' discourses which reduce agency to a multiplicity of playful signs ... [and] purport to invent experience and produce the arbitrariness and negotiability of reality" (Kanpol and McLaren 1995; Giroux 1992). I assume here that McLaren, Giroux, and others were attempting to distinguish their own developing critical postmodern theories from the more nihilistic and deconstructivist postmodern paradigm(s) popularized by Derrida (1981) and Baudrillard (1983), among others, that seemed to offer only a more pessimistic, negative, gloomy assessment of the human condition. The central question for those of us interested in developing a really viable and comprehensive theory of "transformative praxis" is this: How successful have their efforts been to conjoin a discourse of critique with a pedagogy of hope? Have these critical theorists identified the essential elements both in "the postmodern individual" and "the postmodern society" that need transforming? And lastly, have they utilized a transformatory praxis appropriate in terms of its democratic processes and adequate to achieve its explicit goal?

### Border Pedagogy as Transformative Praxis

An examination of how critical theorists conjoined four terms (i.e., "counter-memory," "radical democracy," "transformative incorporation," and "the transformative intellectual") to formulate the concept of "border pedagogy" is essential in helping us understand how they attempted to blend forms of oppositional critique with a heightened attention toward transformative praxis. Beginning in the early 1990s, these four concepts began to appear routinely in the work of the critical theorists—Foucault's (1977a) concept of "counter-memory," Mouffe's (1988; Laclau and Mouffe 1985) concept of "radical

democracy," Goldberg's (1993) concept of "transformative incorporation," and Giroux's (1988) concept of "the transformative intellectual."

First, the critical theorists thought that Foucault's concept of counter-memory would help them construct new emancipatory forms of political identity (Giroux 1992, 147). Giroux explained that within his earlier critical theory formulations, he had "overemphasized how domination works" and had overemphasized the absolutism of top-down bureaucratic control over the individual. Therefore, Giroux thought that Foucault's concept of counter-memory would function as a kind of "crucial theoretical and political corrective to this earlier work." In Foucault's work, the concept of counter-memory shifted emphasis away from an exclusive articulation of how elite control functioned in large bureaucratic structures (i.e., what he referred to as "the mapping of domination"). Instead, the term functioned to give voice to a more hopeful exploration of how "the victims" might engage in activities designed to decenter and/or redraw the borders of acceptable normative behavior, thereby envisioning a more activist (and transformative) oppositional minority group politics. In employing the term counter-memory, Giroux argues, he has not so much abandoned an analysis of the politics of domination so much as "extended its possibilities" (1992, 147).

Secondly, both McLaren and Giroux began to cite extensively Chantal Mouffe's (1988) concept of "radical democracy" as the one that best depicted their own notions of postmodern democratic processes. Of particular interest to these critical theory educators is how Mouffe framed his concept of radical democracy within a critical politics of difference. Specifically, Giroux argues that Mouffe's discourse on radical democracy provides the basis for educators to explore how social differences of class, race, ethnicity, sex, and gender identity might be politically constructed and validated within a transformative praxis that respects difference and honors cultural diversity. Giroux (1988) writes that it is important not to ground these postmodern modes of emancipatory praxis in the older modernist forms of consensus group liberalism, but to recognize the composite, heterogeneous, open-ended, and ultimately indeterminate character of these newer postmodern demo-

cratic expressions.

What Mouffe seemingly solved in his concept of radical democracy was the question of how to mesh diverse racial, ethnic, class, sexual, and gender-based democratic struggles (i.e., with their ideosyncratic political and social agendas) with the larger, democratic struggle to oppose *and* transform older authoritarian forms of power and control. As Mouffe (1988) writes:

If the task of radical democracy is indeed to deepen the democratic revolution and to link together diverse democratic struggles, such a task requires the creation of new subject-positions that would allow the common articulation, for example, of antiracism, antisexism, and anticapitalism. (p. 31)

The critical educational theorists, therefore, in using Mouffe's concept of radical democracy to undergird their own educational concepts of border pedagogy, understand that the concept is more than one that unites "the oppressed" through the multi-faceted politics of critique, but also one that demands a continuing confrontational and oppositional praxis within each cultural group. Mouffe (1988, 31) again explains,

For it is not a matter of establishing a mere alliance between given interests but of actually modifying the very identity of these forces. In order that the defense of workers' interests is not pursued at the cost of women, immigrants, or consumers, it is necessary to establish an equivalence between these different struggles. It is only under these circumstances that struggles against (authoritarian) power becomes truly democratic.

Third, Giroux and McLaren employ the term "transformative incorporation" (i.e., a term initially used by David Goldberg in his 1993 book *Racist Culture: Philosophy and the Politics of Meaning* to contrast to the well-known mainstream sociological concepts of *assimilation* or *integration*). According to Goldberg, transformative incorporation refers to "the dual transformations that take place both in the dominant values and in those of the insurgent group, as the latter insists on more complete incorporations into the body politic and the former grudgingly gives way" (1993, 220; Gutierrez and McLaren 1995). In the concept of transformative incorporation as a core con-

cept in border pedagogy, the schools are viewed as arenas for the oppressed and marginalized to contest and to resist the myriad forms of dominant culture imposition (i.e., of doctrines, practices, policies, and law) as a way to force (what Goldberg refers to as ) a kind of grudging submission,

Similarly, the job of the transformative intellectual within today's public schools is to help students become critically aware of the culture of domination that surrounds them, and to do so in a way that links the concept of empowerment to that of social transformation. For Giroux, this begins with the assistance of a transformative intellectual who helps "students acquire critical knowledge about basic societal structures, such as the economy, the state, the workplace, and mass culture (Giroux 1992, 150). Life in these postmodern cultures and schools is characterized as a series of ineradicable and inevitably conflict-ridden power struggles within and amongst the body politic. Social group power struggles are the defining motif of both the social critique and the transformative praxis; only "a pedagogy of hope" keeps the distant dream alive. Within this framework, the new terminology embedded in their notions of border pedagogy function as the new emancipatory language of possibility to be used in articulating and patrolling the ever-shifting borders of this new radical democracy.

### **Liberation Theology as Transformative Praxis**

While many contemporary educational theorists identify themselves within the general paradigm of postmodernism and with many of the same social equality, educational excellence, and democratic empowerment goals mentioned by the critical theory educators, not all of them support the same oppositional politics and confrontational processes utilized by them. David Purpel and Barry Kanpol might be mentioned as fellow travellers who have both written extensively on the question of how to conjoin a vigorous social critique to that of an emancipatory pedagogy of hope. Their writings provide a rich terrain of contrasting perspectives and alternative visions for achieving more authentic, meaningful, and socially just educational environments in our emerging postmodern society.

In the Series Foreword to his recent book *Issues and*

*Trends in Critical Pedagogy*, Barry Kanpol (1997) takes the critical theorists to task for failing to ground their political critique in moral possibility. In his opinion, critical postmodern theory is bereft of the language of the ethical or the moral; he passionately suggests that a language of hope must frame any postmodern discourse of change, possibility, and social justice. He writes,

Although challenging theoretically dominant social, cultural, and educational paradigms, these authors' [i.e., the critical theorists, particularly Giroux and McLaren] insights have sadly effected little societal transformation of the way out the growing despair of poverty, 'the melonoma of racism,' and the general malaise that attends a social system characterized as misanthropic and segregated by class, race, and gender. Critical theorists argue vociferously for American schools to secure a more democratic and egalitarian community; however, they rarely speak in a unified fashion to effect a program for social and/or political change and are seemingly at a loss for answers as to "how to fix things up" (1997, x).

He continues,

Mired in the postmodern quandary, they do not want to be labeled as technocratic strategists, essentialists, and/or pragmatics, so they offer no clear plan or normative framework to guide the changes they advocate. In many senses, despite the validity of their critique, critical theorists have become stymied by an intolerance for praxis. (1997, x).

In their recent work, Kanpol (1997) and Purpel (1989) have been identifying some of the fundamental pedagogical concepts in liberation theology as a starting point from which to articulate a more transformative and ethically viable alternative vision for the educational left. Kanpol writes,

an educational left vision must not only be grounded in critique which can at times be cynical, but also be cemented in what I call joy. The interactive dialectic of cynicism and joy represents a moving framework of emancipatory hope that I believe the left has yet to delve into. (p. 148)

Kanpol points out that while the critical theorists situate their concept of border pedagogy in the dynamic social processes of social critique and

transformative praxis, their conceptualization of these processes remains embedded in a traditional patriarchal linguistic and textual discourse and traditional dualistic images of metaphor and symbol. These traditionally patriarchal emphases omit any consideration of more feminist, spiritually-centered modes of critique and transformative praxis, and thereby prevent their critical paradigm from being authentically transformative in a constructive postmodern sense (p. 148). Kanpol (1997) contrasts his own notions of "a sense of the possible" with the critical theorists' language of possibility:

In the critical pedagogical tradition, a voice depicts the historical makeup and social experiences of individuals that have been at once alienated, oppressed, and subordinated.... A language of possibility allows students and/or teachers to both share and understand their respective voices in light of structural configurations such as race, class, gender, age, etc.... In short, this language of possibility seeks to understand such contradictions with the intent to use them as a tool for enlightenment and social transformation. (pp. 149-150)

For Kanpol, an authentically critical and constructive postmodern praxis must be *spiritually restorative* as well as *politically transformative*. As he (1997) explains it, "Understood in a different way, a sense of the possible connotes subjects using the higher powers of one's personal faith, for instance, to search for and elucidate a revolutionary praxis exuding the highest moral and ethical order" (p. 150).

David Purpel and Barry Kanpol are both critical but sympathetic insiders. The Introduction to Purpel's landmark book *The Moral and Spiritual Crisis in Education: A Curriculum for Justice & Compassion in Education* (1989) was written by Henry Giroux and Paulo Freire. In addition, as early as 1983, Henry Giroux and David Purpel co-edited a book entitled *The Hidden Curriculum and Moral Education*. Likewise, Barry Kanpol and Peter McLaren co-edited a 1995 book entitled *Critical Multiculturalism: Uncommon Voices in a Common Struggle*. However, the message of Purpel and Kanpol is a simple plea—it is time for those involved in the critical pedagogy movement to come to terms with the profound theological possibilities and implications of their work. What the educational left should strive for then, according to these

educational theorists, is a message that is both profoundly critical but is one "laced with prophetic and compassionate implications."

In separate but related theoretical work, Purpel and Kanpol have been urging the critical postmodern theorists to refocus and reframe their work in at least three ways.

First, Kanpol (1997) argues, in contrast to the critical postmoderns, that there is "little hope for group solidarity over transformative issues in the traditional sense." The best we can hope for, he tells us, is "various pockets of resistance and solidarity" that in their own unique ways act similarly to Mouffe's "democratic imaginary" (p. 59). People, he argues, are not merely seeking group solidarity; they are grasping for an existential reality.

Second, instead of speaking of transformative intellectuals, Purpel (1989) and Kanpol (1997) have been emphasizing greater attention to the prophetic tradition and to the image of the teacher as prophet. Kanpol writes, "I argue that the teacher as prophet is not only gut-wrenchingly critical of social surroundings, as a transformative intellectual, but also simultaneously passes on a message of transformative hope, enlightenment, joy and love, and mercy and forgiveness" (pp. 156-158).

Third, Kanpol (1997) and Purpel (1989) argue that in viewing the teacher as prophet, we are then free to utilize many biblical figures and biblical narratives as possible social guides to help us envision what an actual transformative individual and social agency might really look like for American society and schools. Kanpol cites, for example, the biblical story of the exodus from Egypt as the kind of joyful narrative that could be shared with children to help create a renewed sense of social and cultural possibility. For Kanpol and Purpel, it is the creation of the *idea* and *hope* for a visionary social community led by teachers/prophets that is the real task of postmodern education. This approach, they conclude, is better able to fulfill the efforts of all postmodern educators to achieve both a language of possibility and a sense of the possible—"one that is not mired only in nihilistic postmodern analysis," but rather, constructed around a spiritual lens (p. 158).

### Holistic Mental Health as Transformative Praxis

In exploring these critical and constructive postmodern theories of transformative praxis, I have been struck by how different they are from those being developed in the field of holistic mental health. It occurred to me that a fruitful dialogue could and should be developed with those who spend most of their lives working out more practical, transformative approaches to addiction and various forms of mental stress.

Anne Wilson Schaef has been a leading theorist in the codependency and holistic mental health movement for many years. She has published a series of books and articles dealing with addiction and the addictive process that have now become classics in the field—*Women's Reality* (1986a), *Co-Dependency: Misunderstood-Mistreated* (1986b), *When Society Become the Addict* (1987), *Escape from Intimacy* (1989), *The Addictive Organization* (1990), *Beyond Therapy, Beyond Science: A New Model for Healing the Whole Person* (1992), and *Living in Process: Basic Truths for Living the Path of the Soul* (1999). Together, these books provide a clear account of Schaef's evolving efforts to understand the nature of addiction in our society.

Early in her understanding of addictions, Schaef tells us that alcoholism was regarded as the best known and most documented of the addictions. Alcoholics were enormously isolated in their disease, and anyone who had any relationship with them tried to ignore their disease as much as possible (Schaef 1992). Slowly, she says, there was a growing recognition that the disease of the alcoholic did not exist in isolation; family members were oftentimes seen as potential saboteurs of the recovery process (1986). Then, there began to be an acknowledgement and belief that family members themselves had been equally injured by the disease of the alcoholic or addict; family members were also seen as victims of the alcoholic lifestyle. Mental health practitioners acknowledged that both the codependent and the alcoholic were in pain and that codependents generally needed their own help and support within the addictive environment, apart from the addict (1986). It was at this point, Schaef relates, that she began to understand that there existed an underlying addictive process that is learned in an addictive society and is basic to all addictions (1987).

Dr. Schaef now argues that there is an underlying disease process that is learned and based in society. We learn to be addicts (1987). The "choice" of which addiction may be determined by genes and/or body chemistry. Addiction itself is a process that is taught by the society and learned in the home and the school. Schaef's recent work eloquently articulates the problems and processes of addiction and codependency. Taking into account substances like alcohol, nicotine, and drugs in the public marketplace today, as well as behaviors like eating, spending, gambling, and sex, Schaef looks at addictions as part of an all-encompassing societal matrix.

Just as Foucault has analyzed the microwebs of power, Schaef has heightened our awareness of the microwebs of addictive behavior in our everyday lives. The system in which we live, Schaef concludes, is an addictive system. It has all the characteristics and exhibits all the processes of the individual alcoholic or addict. It functions in precisely the same ways. Just as with the addict, one has to say that the society has a disease (Schaef 1989; 1992; Schaef and Fassel 1990). It is the absence of any examination and critique of these microwebs of addiction that has been so neglected in the work of Giroux, McLaren, Purpel, and Kanpol. Schaef's analysis offers a sobering perspective on life in our American postmodern culture.

Regardless of whether we call the disease of this addictive system mechanistic science, consumerism, monopoly capitalism, or a patriarchal system of power, Schaef is insistent that we articulate its basic addictive process so that we can make a recovery. Schaef (1992) tells us that when she became aware that the function of addictions was to keep us out of touch with ourselves, she suddenly could see why a consumer-oriented society, a non-participatory scientific worldview and patriarchal organizational structures would result in an addictive society: "We have set up a society in which we need to be out of touch with ourselves in order to tolerate the society we have created" (p. 270). She continues,

I have often said that this addictive system is an illusionary system. It is built on the illusion of control, the illusion of perfectionism, the illusion of objectivity, dishonesty, confusion, crazy thinking, and abstractions and concepts that have become completely disembodied and are

not tempered by our experience or our beings. We have built that world on theoretical constructs that are unrelated to the world as it actually exists.... Is it any wonder that we feel we must give up reality in order to fit in? Is it any wonder that we need to anesthetize the pain of our loss of self, our connection with and our place in all of the created universe? (p. 289)

Mental health workers who have worked with a broad range of addicts know that the basic purpose and result of addictions is to put oneself out of touch with one's deepest self image(s). Addictions shut off the awareness of feelings and generally keep the addict shut off from internal processes and information. Schaefer confirms what holistic mental health professionals have been saying for a long time:

It is our body and bodily awareness, for example, that tell us when we are being lied to or manipulated. These messages do not start with our brains. They begin in our bodies ... and then move to our brain. If we don't know when we are being lied to, we are easily manipulated. Our bodies tell us when we know something is wrong or is unethical for us. When we are out of touch with that information, we are able to perform acts that are not in keeping with our basic belief systems. (p. 195)

In fact, when we are functioning within the grip of an addictive process, Schaefer (1992, 195) explains, we are not aware of our oneness with all things and our inner relationships with everything on the planet. She concludes, "We are non-participatory with ourselves and our environment and thus can and do exploit both." Thus, addictions are not only supported by a system that comes out of a non-participatory worldview, they are demanded by it.

Schaefer's analysis of the kind of transformative intellectuals, prophetic teachers, and transformative praxis needed to effect a recovery and a healing are dramatically different from proposals generated by the critical and constructive postmodern educational theorists. These alternative conceptualizations of the concept of transformative praxis are ones that seem better equipped to really help people heal from the effects of an addictive society and the failure of an educational system to meet the real needs of our children. In this way, they provide an important corrective to the theories of transformative praxis offered

by Giroux, McLaren, Kanpol, and Purpel.

First, Schaefer (1992) argues that recovery demands participation. One cannot go to AA meetings just to observe: "I could not afford the illusion of safety in just thinking about my disease and recovery, or reading stories about how others have been successful in recovery from their addictions.... I have never seen anyone heal from understanding alone" (p. 241). She continues:

The very nature of the paradigm is that it is a participatory paradigm. One may have ideas and assumptions about the theory and the way it should operate. This is very different from living it, and living it is the only way to really know it.... No one ever recovered through understanding the Twelve Step program or through understanding addiction.... In recovery groups, we often hear the difference between 'Talking the Talk' and 'Walking the Walk'.... 'Walking the Walk' is living recovery until it is a process out of which comes our being. (p. 287).

Second, Schaefer (1992) asks the question: How is it possible to help others to heal when the healers are not taking care of themselves? She cites Henri Nouwen's (1979) concept of "the wounded healer" as one that does a good job of analyzing the dynamics that go into becoming a healer (p. 237). Psychotherapists, like educators, cannot just learn a new technique or method or philosophy or program to deal with the effects of an addictive society. They must initiate their own recovery from the addictive process and make a paradigm shift themselves in order to work in any creative way with others. The one who is most trusted is the one who can say, "I've been there." She also noted that

as the Twelve Step work demanded participation, it also became a great leveler. There were no experts, no leaders, and no authorities. The ones who were the best teachers were often the ones who had behaved the worst before recovery. In this disease, we were all participants. The Twelve Step groups were the best example I found of an actual participatory worldview. (p. 240)

Third, Schaefer (1992) began to see that much of what we call "empowerment" is oftentimes something that one cultivates in oneself in order to meet

one's own addictive needs at the expense of others. Schaefer began to realize that

when I feel a power imbalance with someone (i.e., one-down or one-up) it is in me and has nothing to do with the other person. I can never deal with it by trying to control the other person. That approach is only falling back into my codependency, which is evidenced by trying to deal with what is going on in me by trying to control others.... The feeling is within me. This does not mean that that particular feeling should not be honored and worked with, but it does mean that I can never reclaim my unexperienced personal power by blaming and trying to control others. (p. 317)

This is a far cry from looking at a "micro-politics of power" for the purpose of achieving some small gains from a "grudgingly antagonistic" dominant power elite. For Schaefer (1992), these micro-struggles for power "are essential for the illusions of the codependent" (p. 317). They want and need to have the illusion that they can create social change by trying to control others, often functioning in ways strangely familiar to the power elite they supposedly contest.

Fourth, Schaefer (1992) points out that one of the main characteristics of addiction is isolation: isolation from ourselves, from others, from the environment, and from our own spirituality (p. 304). Again, Schaefer explains,

Our human-centered focus is exactly the same as what those of us in the addiction field call self-centeredness, which is a key characteristic of addiction. When people are self-centered they not only are selfish, they define the world in terms of themselves. Everyone and everything is either for or against them.... Anyone who is unlike them must be destroyed, because they feel so insecure in themselves that any differences are a threat.... When people are self-centered, they have no boundaries and do not know where they end and others begin. In fact, they do not know *that* they end and others begin; therefore, it is necessary for them to try to control everything. Addicts set up a world that is based upon the illusion of control. (p. 306)

And perhaps ironically, Schaefer points out,

In recovery, we see that when people become more in touch with themselves, they relinquish

their self-centeredness; and as they relinquish their self-centeredness, they have more of a self; and when they have a self, they do not need to be so self-centered, set up such rigid impenetrable boundaries, or penetrate others' boundaries. (pp. 306-307)

### Postmodern Education and Transformative Praxis

Mental health, psychology, medicine, religion, education, and all of the other helping professions have written a great deal about the possibility and desirability of bringing about individual and social transformation. Many of these groups, including critical and constructive postmoderns, have tried to initiate such transformations without facing the messiness and realities of the addictive process. Schaefer (1992), again, best explains the present dilemma:

People who try to recover without transformation are "dry but not sober," or abstinent but not in recovery. In order to become sober, we have to risk making a paradigm shift. As we peel away our addictions and get closer to the bottom of our addictive process, we begin to become aware of the deep processes that the addictions have been holding in check. (p. 283)

There are signs in the educational landscape that teachers are beginning to work and collaborate in ways suggested by Schaefer's theories of holistic mental health and "living in process." An increasing number of holistic scholars are beginning to provide insightful qualitative ethnographic accounts of some of these experimental teacher-to-teacher and teacher-to-administrator school encounter groups. These teacher narratives indicate that educators are beginning to struggle with those same deep processes that form the core of Schaefer's analyses. They are also beginning to supply the discipline with some troubling accounts of the factors that cause teachers to feel so isolated and powerless in their schools and classrooms, and are identifying some of the effective person-centered transformative strategies for action research, collaborative work, and avenues of personal and professional growth. Judith Irwin's (1996) *Empowering Ourselves and Transforming Schools: Educators Making a Difference*, Maureen Barbieri's (1995) *Sounds from the Heart: Learning to Listen to Girls*, Eleanor Duckworth and the Experienced Teachers Group's (1997) *Teacher to Teacher:*

*Learning from Each Other*, and Chellis Glendinning's (1994) *My Name is Chellis & I'm in Recovery from Western Civilization* are clearly books written with a sensitivity to ideas of holistic mental health and "living in process." I know of no one, however, who has attempted to develop a entire organizational model for K-12 schools grounded in Schaeff's concepts of holistic mental health. These ideas remain a rich source for future organizational and curriculum development efforts in American schools as we begin the new millenium.

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# E=eC

## E[Education] = e[Ethnic] C[Cleansing]?

Dana L. Stuchul

An essay review of *Escaping Education: Living as Learning within Grassroots Cultures* by Madhu Suri Prakash and Gustavo Esteva. (Published by Peter Lang [New York], 1998, 147 pp., in Counterpoints Series, Studies in the Postmodern Theory of Education, Vol. 36.)

The modern catechism exalts education as a universal value. For the World Bank, there is no higher priority than "Education For All!" For living in the global village, education is a quintessential global good. In the epoch of globalization, education appears as the universal panacea, the magical cure for all of modernity's afflictions. Through education, the nation-state can be internationally competitive—the key to both survival and prosperity. With human rights education, social justice will reign. With environmental education, ecological contradictions will be resolved. With multicultural education, peace and harmony will grow. If only the Serbians, Kosovars, Barundis, Rwandans, Chechens, Russians, Indonesians, Timorese, Indians, Pakistanis, and Arabs had been educated for a multicultural reality! At the least, their heirs (should they survive) hold the promise of securing what their ancestors could not.

And who would dare to object? Though there may be, and is, unending controversy over ways and means about all forms of reform of an educational system increasingly exposed to grievances and disappointment, unfettered optimism over unrealized educational potential persists. Who would dare to

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challenge the goodness or to jeopardize the achievement of this universal good?

The answer: the intended beneficiaries of education, those waiting for secular salvation via education, the un-educated, the under-educated, and the drop-outs. They don't need another 500 years to know what they need and want or what they don't. To be sure, they don't want to be "developed," akin to culture-cide. They see through the monocultural enterprise now cosmeticized within the multicultural fashion.

What if, they dare to ask, the universal good and right to education is not a door to opportunity and salvation, but a path compulsively oriented towards the destruction of their soils and cultures, of their very beings? Or worse, towards ethnic and cultural cleansing? In asking these questions, the dregs, wastes, and dropouts (Illich, 1988) are not seeking to claim something that they do not yet have. In truth, the opposite exists. As conscious refuseniks, they hold a different hope at the dawn of the new millennium. Rather than a demand for education, however formed, reformed, or re-envisioned, they are looking no further than their own worlds, where they live, thus affirming their rooted beings. By escaping education, they are transforming their resistance into liberation.

### Marginalizing the Marginalizing Machine

From their perspectives of rural India and Mexico (respectively), Madhu Suri Prakash and Gustavo Esteva provide readers with vignettes and excerpts of conversations gathered in their travels and living, their learning from the peoples branded "uneducated," "primitive," and "premodern." In sitting with the peoples embedded within agri-(soil)cultures, minus anthropological inspection, Prakash

Human Rights imperative.

First, the notion of human rights has its origin within the modern technological world. The introduction of these rights "into other cultures before the introduction of techniculture would amount to not only putting the cart before the horse, but also to preparing the way for the technological invasion...." (Panikkar 1995, 132). Second, there is a critical need for complements to the notion of human rights within other cultures. This complement, "urgent" for the survival of non-Western cultures against the "dynamism which drives the paneconomic ideology, linked with the megamachine" (p. 132), must be theorized and promoted by non-Western peoples. Third, it is necessary to create an "intermediary space ... for the mutual criticism that strives for mutual fecundation and enrichment" (p. 132). In such a space, Panikkar hopes, vastly different cultures might dialogue, forge new myths, and envision more humane civilization.

*Escaping Education* is a work that reveals and critiques those myths which mask attempts to dominate, suppress, and stymie peoples fully alive and voiced at the grassroots. In this book, the authors provide colorful anecdotes of peoples and places neither completely absorbed in nor absolved from the systems, needs, and rights which accompany modernity. With Panikkar, this work shows that human rights "may turn out to be a Trojan Horse, surreptitiously introduced into other civilizations which will then all but be obliged to accept those ways of living, thinking, and feeling for which Human Rights is the proper solution in cases of conflict." (p. 123) It is precisely the "Trojan Horse"—the right of education—which this book is intended to expose.

### The Dregs, Wastes, and Dropouts Speak Out

In chapter two, "Grassroots Postmodernism: Reffisenik Cultures," a series of questions, posed by peoples living at the grassroots and shared by the authors, guides the reader into a deeper consideration of education, rights, and the technological civilization that depend upon them. The questions:

How to protect themselves—their places, their customs, their traditions for teaching and learning—from the Outsiders' culture? the culture of schooling and education, teaching how to forget the traditional sense of place? How to

marginalize the educational system and its economy that marginalizes them? How to drop out of the culture of dropouts? How to prevent the death of their own cultural patterns of caring for their young and their old? How to drop out of a global race in which they are doomed to be the ones trying to "catch up" in perpetuity? 3,223 years for Mauritania, developers announce.... (Prakash and Esteva 1998, 51)

The answers are multiple, rooted to a place, and directed toward a way of living which nurtures commons, family, and community. Providing numerous accounts of people attempting to flourish by way of their particular *barrio*, *ayllu*, or *milpa*, the authors show that what is common to the majority of people they meet is their resistance to the ideologies, mythologies, even pathologies that are part of "modern" living and working.

Consider Luis Arvalo's story. Luis quit his job in a large factory in Mexico City in order to return home to his neighborhood. Wishing to develop an artistic capacity where his labor and his life would be less fragmented, Luis founded the Free Workshop of the Art of Shoemaking. With such a livelihood, "people might keep their dignity, not to own more and more, but to enjoy their time as their own and not as their bosses' time ... and to really live" (p. 60). Of his own resistance, Luis is quoted,

I think [the school] must disappear. If the parents and all the people can live together more ..., and thus become really independent, we will be able to better resist the power of money.... To start, we need to use our own hands and make with them what we want. Here, to talk about the family is to talk about the community: in a sense, they are the same thing. It is easier to rescue those that do not have a professional diploma. But in our real world, we send diplomas to the garbage. (pp. 59-60)

Schooling, with its emphasis on literacies, numeracies, geographies, and histories greatly abstracted from the places where the two-thirds social majorities live, is equivalent to a "road to Nowhere" (p. 64). Guaranteeing neither learning, jobs, status, nor prestige, the emphasis on education and schooling becomes ridiculously ludicrous in worlds not completely given to the "technological system" (Ellul 1964). Thus, the authors show, peoples living

at the grassroots are traveling the long path which leads from resistance to liberation—free of the globalizing schemes, initiatives, and projects and their accompanying economy and hegemony.

The initiatives within grassroots cultures commonly begin with a particular aspect of community in decline—creatively inviting and making attractive the return of the people to their own dignity and to that which is near, local, and born of themselves. In the promotion of intergenerational initiatives, they seek to involve all in the telling and shaping of local history in all of its personal and communal richness. The focus is on knowing well a place, not an abstract and removed place, but their place. In the course of these initiatives, a whole range of social relationships are regenerated and flourish, providing the strength to subordinate those forces which operationalize social fragmentation, individualism, and isolation.

In celebrating initiatives arising from the grassroots, this work does not suggest that the direction of social and societal maturation leads to some pre-technological and idealized past. Neither do the authors point to any of their “teachers” among the two-thirds social majorities as if to suggest that the answers to contemporary dilemmas have been found. What is offered instead is a questioning of the solutions promoted by the educated as the best means for confronting the difficulties facing the majority of the peoples of the world now living subsistence-based lifestyles. Rampant deforestation and desertification were not caused by their ways of living. Neither were the pollution of water with agricultural chemicals and the infertility of land caused by monocrop cultivation, nor the large-scale disruption of delicate ecological niches and balances. Rather, these people are struggling to maintain their distinct cultures amidst modern technological civilization. Prakash and Esteva provide glimpses of peoples successfully resisting the technological imperative and liberating themselves from the needs and rights prescribed to them by those seeking justification for their self-serving impositions (Illich 1992).

Prakash and Esteva’s own acuity is demonstrated in their recognition that a transformation has occurred within the modern milieu. Education, formerly defined as a basic human need, is now understood as a fundamental human right. It was their

teacher Ivan Illich, the iconoclastic historian of modern certainties whose questioning of how and under what conditions the need for something named “education” arose, who first led the authors to their own critical analysis of the human rights discourse. Illich proposes that once a need is prescribed, human nature itself is redefined. Within this new socially constructed conception of human nature, a whole host of ministrations and systems arise for the satisfaction of needs.

Similarly, Prakash and Esteva argue that the transformation of education-as-need to education-as-right provides both rationale and authority for new forms of cultural imperialism. When education is understood as a need apart from everyday existence, a systematized, standardized, and compulsory form of experiencing arises. Education, and its principal mode of delivery in schooling, is then connected to a vast array of societal and social justifications. Soon, these needs are redefined as rights, thus changing the impulse for their satisfaction from benevolence to responsibility.

Prakash and Esteva, adapting Illich’s critique, show how education as a basic human right has now earned the uncritical allegiance of the powerful and benevolent alike within so-called “developing” countries. Education is exposed as a promise that can never be fulfilled—one which will bring new levels of debilitation and dependency to peoples who have for centuries developed their particular arts of suffering necessities. The authors amplify the exclamation of the peoples who neither define themselves as needy nor wish to be dependent on the systems, services, and goods that too often lead to further dependencies. Similarly, the authors share the stories of those not fooled into believing that the products of industrialized and technological production will enhance rather than diminish the quality of their living. Prakash and Esteva pass along the “No, thank you! *Basta!*” (Enough!) resounding throughout the “developing world.”

### Re-Embedding Learning in Living

The final chapter, “After Education, What?” is in many ways a summary of the ideas and viewpoints that inspire and give hope to its authors. Adding their names to a long list of those people (among

## Book Reviews

### The Courage to Teach

by Parker J. Palmer

Published by Jossey-Bass (San Francisco), 1998.

Reviewed by Deborah L. Fox

"I am a teacher at heart, and there are moments in the classroom when I can hardly hold the joy." From the first remarkable sentence of this 183-page book, I was swept away on a journey into teaching, learning, and my inner self. Parker Palmer explores the inner and outer landscapes of the teaching self through three paths—intellectual, emotional, and spiritual—paying attention to each dimension but interweaving the three into a whole tapestry.

This book builds on the idea that "good teaching cannot be reduced to technique: good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher" (p. 10). The reader, therefore, will not find techniques or strategies for effective teaching; rather, the reader may discover the personal teacher within from which good teaching comes. The right methods emerge from the identity and integrity of the teacher. The kind of teaching that transforms people does not happen if the individual's inward teacher is ignored.

Palmer talks of the mentors and subjects that call to teachers. He writes that remembering the mentors and subjects that once inspired teachers may help them recover the heart to teach. "Many teachers were called to teach by encountering not only a mentor but also a particular field of study. We did not merely find a subject to teach—the subject also found us" (p. 25). He describes our fearful way of knowing, and discusses the fear that cuts us off from the world, from the subjects we teach, and from our students. This fear is deeply embedded in the roots of education and is found in both teachers and students. We read, "The mode of knowing that dominates education creates disconnections between teachers, their

subjects, and their students because it is rooted in fear. This mode, called objectivism, portrays truth as something we can achieve only by disconnecting ourselves, physically and emotionally, from the things we want to know" (p. 51). Palmer convincingly argues that a relational way of knowing—in which love takes away fear and co-creation replaces control—is a way of knowing that can help us reclaim the capacity for connectedness on which good teaching depends. Spirituality is discussed as a way to transcend fear and to reconnect teachers, students, and subjects. Teachers need to understand the fear within students' hearts and understand the fear that is in one's own heart before teaching can be transformed.

Ordinary truths about teaching, says Palmer, can only be expressed as paradoxes. The world of education as we know it is filled with broken paradoxes and he gives specific examples of these paradoxes along with the lifeless results that occur from their misuse in the educational system. The examples are as follows: we separate head from heart, we separate facts from feelings, and we separate teaching from learning. Engaging in paradoxical thinking requires that we "embrace a view of the world in which opposites are joined, so that we can see the world clearly and see it whole" (p. 66).

Palmer believes that teaching and learning require community. He writes of great things, the wondrous subjects around which the seekers of knowledge have always gathered. In this context, a subject-centered education is preferable to a teacher-centered or student-centered curriculum because "when the great thing (subject) speaks for itself, teachers and students are more likely to come into a genuine learning community, a community that does not collapse into the egos of students or teacher but knows itself accountable to the subject at its core" (p. 118). Where there are no authorities, a subject can be at the center of community and "the grace of great things" can evoke the virtues we cherish in education. When the subject is given a voice in the classroom the subjects can come to life through the learners.

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Palmer suggests that by teaching “from the microcosm” students are empowered to learn more in depth about a subject. As the poet William Blake wrote: “To see a world in a grain of sand / And a Heaven in a Wild Flower, / Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand / And Eternity in an hour,” Palmer thinks that every student should be given the opportunity to look for the world in a grain of sand, much like the idea of shining a laser upon a piece of a hologram and being able to see the whole picture. That laser represents the act of teaching and by teaching this way, the field or discipline is not only covered, it is honored.

We are introduced to the idea of a “community of truth” and we read about the isolation teachers generally feel behind closed doors in their classrooms. Palmer writes, “[I]f we want to grow into our practice, we have two primary places to go: to the inner ground from which good teaching comes and to the community of fellow teachers from whom we can learn more about ourselves and our craft” (p. 141). Humans are social learners, and students as well as teachers learn from others in a social context and from their own experiences. Palmer believes that teachers must observe each other teaching and that they must spend more time talking to each other about this teaching.

The last chapter describes social movements and examines their implications for educational reform. Palmer addresses the reality that no matter how many colleagues have embraced a new vision, no matter how many practical possibilities have been explored, someone will inevitably say, “These are wonderful ideas, but every last one of them will be defeated by the conditions in my school.” He counters this attitude by showing ways to create reform in a world that is oppositional to change. Claiming identity and integrity in institutional settings or in society is necessary for good teaching. Being faithful to the inner teacher and to the community of truth holds promise for ourselves, our students, and to “the great things of the world that our knowledge holds in trust” (p. 183). People’s lives have been transformed by people who have had the courage to teach this way, and who have had the courage to allow their students to discover, explore, and inhabit these same places within themselves. Readers of this

book are challenged and inspired to find this courage.

I was particularly fascinated with the section describing skillful means of communicating. Palmer describes attentive listening, a skill of knowing how and when to reframe comments that encourage students to talk to each other—not just to the teacher. The notion of how teachers usually fill space is also intriguing. Most professionals are taught to fill space rather than open it. Teachers do not need to jump so quickly into a discussion—the students can discover and challenge ideas (fill the space) themselves. This is different than the concept of wait time because a teacher is not just waiting for an answer, but waiting for students to question, challenge, agree, or disagree with each other.

What is the courage to teach? It is “the courage to keep one’s heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require (ii). Keeping one’s heart open in those moments when fear creeps in or when one is feeling vulnerable is challenging. The impulse to withdraw and disconnect from students and subject must be overcome if one is to teach from an undivided self—an integral state of being essential to good teaching. This is an important book for every teacher at every level, especially for those interested in deeply connecting with students, for those who are interested in the idea of learning within communities, and for those interested in growing as teachers and learners.



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## Literacy With an Attitude: Educating Working Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest

by Patrick J. Finn

Published by State University of New York Press (Albany, NY), 1999. 241 pp., paperback, \$16.95.

### Reviewed by Jeanne Henry

What would happen if working-class students had political motives for acquiring literacy? What would happen if the schools encouraged working-class students to view education as the means to furthering a working-class agenda and create a truly democratic society?

"What," I once asked a collection of graduate students, "is it that literacy promises poor and working-class students?"

"A means of getting ahead," a student answered.

"What do you mean by 'getting ahead'?" I asked.

"To have what we have," another student supplied. "Good jobs, nice homes, and kids in college."

"Okay, so individual attainment was a good enough incentive for me," I said. "Has it been for you too?"

Several heads nodded in agreement. There was silence until one student said, "So why isn't that working for our students?"

In *Literacy With an Attitude: Educating Working Class Children in Their Own Self-Interest*, Patrick J. Finn takes up the question of how literacy education serves to regulate access to power, as well as the ways in which schooling reproduces both the current social order and membership within it. What is so powerful about Finn's analysis of literacy education is that he avoids the arcane language critical perspectives usually entail. Of course teachers can read dense and demanding texts, but it is a mystery to me why they should have to struggle to gain access to theory that, without them, can never be enacted. Finn uses his experiences as a teacher and as a teacher-educator to anticipate readers' questions, objections, and confusions without being condescending or, more importantly as we shall soon see, anti-dialogic.

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*Literacy With an Attitude* is one of the most helpful books I have read in terms of introducing teachers, or members of the general public for that matter, to the ways and means of class, culture, and control in literacy education.

Finn uses the works of Jean Anyon (1980, 1981), Paul Willis (1977), Lois Weis (1990), and R.T. Sieber (1981) to compellingly make the case that children from working-class backgrounds tend to receive traditional, decontextualized, and directive instruction that is anything but empowering. The educational motivation offered these students is the threat that they will end up "in the mills" which, as it happened, provided a good enough life and livelihood for their parents. In Finn's analysis, working-class kids are *taught* little beyond occupational requirements, such as sufficient literacy to read and follow directions, and surface-level cooperation. In contrast, what they *learn*, in striking example after example, is how to resist educational agendas (and the workplace counterparts of managerial opposition and control) that are disrespectful and unresponsive to who they are and degrade their "station in life."

While most progressive educators have to applaud students' resistance to school practices intended to put and keep them in their place, we run the risk of so romanticizing resistance that we stop there. As Finn points out, this resistance serves to justify and perpetuate the sort of "keep a lid on them" education that working-class kids receive. While resistance might be the most reasonable response to unreasonable schooling, it creates an antagonist cycle of more frustrated and ineffectual control efforts on the part of teachers and more distractions for already disenfranchised students. In working-class schools, Finn argues, teachers and students are unwittingly trapped in roles that serve neither a sense of self nor purpose. When working-class students do not progress beyond functional forms of literacy, schools respond by re-teaching the basics—whether it is phonics instruction with very young children or skills and drills with their older counterparts—in the misguided hope that this will somehow produce powerful forms of literacy that allow individuals to understand and to control language.

Finn makes the case that the children from the upper middle classes experience a home discourse not

unlike that of school discourse, and see their parents using literacy in creative and commanding ways. These children have already learned the school discourse (the language, as well as the manners, values, and beliefs surrounding how and why language is used in schools) that will prepare them to take their parents' places in the social order. On the other hand, Finn argues, working-class children do not necessarily come to school fluent in school discourse and must be taught explicitly how to become members of this discourse community.

This is a point upon which most educators would agree, but progressives, moderates, and traditionalists part ways in regard as to the reasons why. Traditionalists might simply assert that the purpose of schooling is to teach "correct" or "proper" English, no discussion required. Those taking the middle ground respect students' home community discourses, but point out that the only way students from less empowered discourse communities can "get ahead," or to "border cross" is to learn school discourse. However, Finn and other progressive educators argue that insisting students learn school discourse as a means of escaping who they are and where they come from is a poor excuse for motivation. And, as my graduate student pointed out in the

discussion introducing this essay, this argument does not work.

Finn maintains that progressive literacy education, including New Literacy (Willinsky 1990) practices such as reading and writing workshops, is liberating and can lead to powerful literacy use. However, he points out that they require a high degree of learner cooperation and, I would add, faith that teachers mean it when they offer to shift the control of literacy learning onto the students. School resistance, Finn argues, makes "the use of progressive, collaborative methods difficult to impossible" (205) because students may regard power-sharing on the part of the teacher as a sign of weakness or total license, especially when their previous schooling has established authority and resistance as the foundation for schooling. While I accept this aspect of Finn's analysis as realistic, I also see it as deterministic, but I have to concede that simply adopting progressive literacy practices is not enough to inspire working-class students pursue the outer limits of their own literate reach.

And so how would Finn have us "educate working-class children in their own self-interests?" Like others, Finn finds answers in the pedagogy of the late Brazilian educator, Paulo Friere. Friere's peda-

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gogy combined dialogue, conscientization, literacy, and collective struggle. Finn focuses on Friere's teaching strategies of "dialogue" and "conscientization." In a dialogue, as opposed to an anti-dialogue in which empowered views are engineered to prevail, the discussion is democratic and conducted between equals. Rather than determining who is right, a dialogue becomes a complex collective text. Conscientization can be understood as consciousness-raising intended to help learners understand their ability to shape and to be shaped by culture. Finn makes the point that Friere was not interested in individual attainment; his vision was one of collective effort and class struggle.

But, and this is important, Finn distinguishes between the peasants Friere taught in Brazil and working-class students in the U.S. To Friere's vision, Finn adds that powerful literacy and school discourse must be explicitly taught. This does not mean traditional, directive lessons in subject/verb agreement. Instead, it might mean that students begin with an examination of the way they are treated in schools and end with a letter to the principal, written in "school discourse," that requests constructive change. Explicit instruction in the ways and means of school discourse, when it is used as a dialogic tool to raise consciousness, might lead students to document and protest racial profiling. To effectively make these appeals, students would have to read, write, and understand school discourse. But then, at long last, they might have a reason for wanting to. If we, like some of the teachers Finn highlights—William Bigelow, Linda Christiansen, and Robert Petersen—make school into a place wherein working-class students can see evidence of the ways in which powerful literacy and school discourse might further their interests, then we can, as Finn encourages, "make literacy dangerous again."

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