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Editorial

Education, Information, and Understanding

There is a vast difference between a symbol and that which is symbolized. In language, we often confuse the word. In education, the difference is all but lost. We think of words as the substance of discourse and seem to forget that they are meaningless without corresponding inner activity on the part of those who speak and those who listen. This is not to suggest that all things are subjective and relative, but the use and interpretation of symbols requires a corresponding inner movement. Such movement may come in the form of memory or imagination, emotion or intellectual inspiration, to name but two examples. This insight is not particularly original or profound, but it is helpful in reminding us about what is important in education.

Today, our culture is enamored with information, with the precision of data, and the speeds at which we manage it. We have so developed the technological capacities to store, sort, send, and otherwise manipulate data that we now stand in the Information Age. Aside from the questions of how to teach our youngsters to and use so much information, we have the issue of how we will educate children to live in and experience the world.

Several common assumptions that govern education today are that children need to learn as much information as possible, that they should learn to access and use information with precision and ease, and that they should do these things as early in their lives as possible. These assumptions fail to account for the inner activity that is the ground for understanding and ultimately for the educative character of learning. The fact that an individual has acquired some information does not mean that she/he has a corresponding inner capacity to understand it as having some meaning. This inner experience is not a product of rational rules but of personal creative vision. Formal procedures, such as those used in mathematics, may play an important but only an intermediary role.

Undoubtedly, one could argue that the meaning we give facts derives from the way we analyze, organize, or otherwise process them. While such a contention is in part true, it does not distinguish between the manipulation of symbols and their use in quickening us to the recognition of symbolized realities within and without. Information may be tightly defined and logically organized, but at some point, the symbols which constitute it must become transparent — lenses through which we may view the world or some part of it. This viewing is a personal act that requires an individual to create unique understanding.

Like optical lenses that enhance our capacity to see the expanded universe and sharpen our acuity in the observations of the atom, information can offer us opportunity to enhance, refine and critically reflect upon our own understandings. Information *may* be processed using systematic procedures so that generalizations can be constructed, patterns identified, and conclusions reached. However, formal activities do not of their own do anything more than manipulate symbols. They cannot pierce the symbols tograpple with what is symbolized. Nor can they attend to the meanings and possibilities for meaning that exist in phenomena. Whether we focus on information as data or we focus on processing as in systematic protocols for analysis, we are left playing on the surface of things, manipulating words rather than exploring meanings.

Information has meaning only to the extent that it is grounded in a person who contextualizes it within a host of meanings. This is as true in the physics laboratory as it is in the sandbox. There is always a foundation of human experience that tacitly contextualizes and gives meaning to that which we perceive and that which we are told. Philosopher/scientist Michael Polanyi explains that mathematics, for example, is only a formalized linkage that begins with an intuitive insight into some aspect of the world and an equally intuitive judgment as to the value of the mathematical computation once completed. He writes,

> ...we can use our formulas only after we have made sense of the world to the point of asking questions about it and have established the bearing of the formulas on the experience that they are to explain. Mathematical reasoning about experience must include, besides the antecedent non-mathematical finding and shaping of the experience, the equally non-mathematical relating of mathematics to such experience, and the eventual, also non-mathematical, understanding of experience elucidated by mathematical theory. It must also include ourselves,

> carrying out and committing ourselves, to these non-mathematical acts of knowing. (Grene, 1974, p. 132)

What here is true of mathematics is more profoundly important in the studies of physical and biological phenomena as well as in all matters relating to human beings. The possibility of meaning, the transcendence of symbols, requires the ground of a person, an active creator of meaning. Viewed in this context, education must speak to the development of the person, to the development of the capacity to experience and create meaning.

The accumulation of information is not enough. Even as children may acquire more and more facts at earlier and earlier ages, their education suffers. In essence, they may become well-informed but remain uneducated. They learn to search the Internet, download everything from music of ancient China to the political analysis of current United States policies, and orchestrate everything into a seamless multimedia presentation. Amazing as these things are, the question remains whether they are accompanied by an inner activity *beyond* the manipulation of information itself. In their studies of ancient times, do they acquire any sense of the consciousness of the time or the ancient ways of viewing the world? Do they develop capacities to perceive the world with heightened and new aesthetic sensibilities? It is not so much that these questions cannot be answered as much as that they are not being asked. We do not ask them because we mistake the acquisition of information for the experience of knowlege. Information is meaningless and education is empty to the extent that it is not rooted in inner experience. In schools, lessons may be said to be educative to the extent that they establish, extend, or refine the individual's capacity for inner experience.

For information to be meaningful, there must be a corresponding capacity on the part of the knower or learner to experience an emotion, an idea, an aesthetic sensibility, or an observed phenomenon. Where there is no such corresponding capacity, symbols remain abstractions. Although children and adults may learn to sort, categorize, analyze, and communicate such abstractions, they will not know them as a ground, they will not know them in terms of inner movement or as an intuitive basis for judgment and action. The difference between knowledge as symbol and as capacity to dwell in the symbolized marks the difference between one who is informed and one who is educated. A person who has been educated has developed inner resources for imagination, responsiveness, intellectual judgment, intuitive insight, and moral vision.

The assumptions that ground education today fail to account for the inner activity that is the basis for understanding and, ultimately, for the educative character of learning.

In this context, the purpose of education itself is to provide the experiences that develop and unfold these capacities. The task of the educator is to provide children with rich and varied experiences that will form the foundation for later abstract and symbolic learning. (The balance, level, and timing of subsequent abstraction is relative primarily to age level.) Experiences in music and art, in literature and physical movement, in imaginative play and simple encounters with nature, can bring about the invigoration and unfolding of the child. These experiences can lead children to see things with meaning and a depth that would not be comprehensible in terms of information alone or in terms of the world understood as lifeless abstraction.

When we think of education in these terms, we leave the comfortable and familiar ground where curriculum is explicit and where testing is objective. We leave the domain where numbers have authority even if they have no meaning, where higher educational careers are determined by scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Tests — a measure with fundamentally no correlative or predictive value. We, in turn, enter the domain where we have to depend upon our own inner resources to make judgments about what is important, about the meaning behind the numbers, about the structures and objectives of schools. The prospect is both fearsome and liberating. We are faced with the responsibility of relying upon ourselves and the freedom that comes with the transcendence of convention. The choice is ours.

— Jeffrey Kane

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Spirituality in Education

Education and the Heart of Learning

This issue of the *Holistic Education Review* was made possible, in part, by the Naropa Institute which this year held a conference from May 30 to June 3 on "Spirituality in Education: Education and the Heart of Learning." The conference focused on four topic areas: sacredness as the ground of learning, pluralism and identity, relationship and community, and tradition and innovation.

The speakers and related activities not only brought these issues into focus but engaged all the participants in the active contemplation of what we are doing and what we are called to do as educators. Speakers such as Parker Palmer, David Orr, and Joan Halifax, to name but three, provided clear, incisive, and compelling pictures of everything from the nature of knowing, to the wisdom of myth, to the design of ecologically sustainable architecture. His Holiness, Jenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, with gentleness, humor, selflessness, and words unadorned by pretense, went straight to the heart of education in terms of the very purpose of life itself. We are very pleased to provide in this issue adaptations of the talks given by His Holiness, John Gatto, Ron Miller, and Parker Palmer. Each of the talks offers unique insight and opportunity for continued study.

The editors wish to express our great appreciation for the vision and generous spirit of the people of Naropa who created the conference and who now share the fruits of their efforts with our readers. We are especially indebted to the co-chairs of the conference, Steve Glazer and Debra Horowitz, for their commitment and tireless effort for bringing to life a heightened vision of education. Happily, they are now working on a book based on the conference proceedings that will give a more comprehensive view of spirituality in education.

Education and the Human Heart

His Holiness, the Dalai Lama

The Western educational system, while impressive in its emphasis on the development of the intellect, neglects the enhancement and development of the human heart: love, compassion, and a sense of forgiveness.

This lecture was given by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the Naropa Conference on Spirituality in Education. He spoke on June 1, 1997, with the intermittent aid of an interpreter. His remarks have been adapted by the editors of *Holistic Education Review* for publication.

Tenzin Gyatso, His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama is the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people. Among his many publications are *Kindness, Charity, and Insight* and *A Policy of Kindness*. In 1989 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace.

What is the purpose of life? Of course, I believe that it is happiness. Our culture, our education, our economy, and all other human activities should be meant for that goal. Nothing else. However, although we often assume that certain activities will enable us to achieve that goal, in reality, we are often deceived by our ignorance and shortsightedness. Although everyone wants happiness and everyone is trying to achieve that goal, ignorance and shortsightedness sometimes lead us to a wrong method that ultimately causes pain and suffering both for others and oneself.

Therefore, in order to eliminate ignorance, education, no doubt, becomes very important. But even as education is very helpful, I think a good heart, a warm heart, can expel the shortsightedness. If one looks at a very limited area, and says "I'm in here" and does not bother with the consequences of one's actions in a larger arena, that is very often where problems begin. By keeping the larger community in mind, we can eliminate the problems resulting from narrow-mindedness or shortsightedness or extreme selfishness, none of which help a person or a community achieve the goal of happiness. When you think along these lines, you will come to realize that what we call love and compassion is not necessarily a religious matter. They are basic necessities of life not only for society but also for the individual.

A thousand years ago on the European continent separate educational institutions began to arise. The Church and monasteries had a great influence on society. At that time, they (those in the Church) took the responsibility to look after "a good heart" or to develop compassion and other related human values. Then, the separate educational institutions simply concentrated on the knowledge side, on intellectual development. Consequently, at that time, the responsibility carried by each of the two types of institutions was insufficient. As time went on, the influence of religious insight was reduced and more and more people took less and less interest about religious traditions and religious values. As a result, society gradually lost the realization of the

importance of love and compassion and a sense of forgiveness. These things were neglected.

Then, because of this and also the development of science and technology, people began to develop an attitude of increased expectation that all problems could be solved through technology. This attitude became one factor which contributed to the neglect of, and negligence about, inner values.

Today, society, despite its material development and wealth of material facilities, is facing many profound problems. Actually, these problems are often man-made. Clearly, there is something lacking. Of course, our educational facilities are very good and also, generally speaking, the educational standards are good and the standard of living. There are some pockets of people who are materially content but inwardly longing. We can imagine that if someone were to come from, say, a very poor, underdeveloped country and he were thrown into a material affluent society like the United States, he might actually feel puzzled. They would see a lot of material affluence and very good educational facilities and almost all of the comforts one could want. They would also find many people who are still unhappy. They would think to themselves, "Why are people still unhappy?" They actually would be puzzled.

In the 1960s, about 1,000 Tibetans immigrated to Switzerland. At the time they began to settle, some people began to say this was the land of SUKHAVATI, Heaven. They thought that their prayers had been answered to be reborn or born in Heaven. In fact, some of them claimed that they had been able to be reborn in the pure land without having to change lives. But then, eventually, as time went on people got a clearer picture of what was underneath. These people now say that they intended to return to India, saying, "Oh, this is a nice place for making money, but not a nice place to die." I use this as an example. Material comfort alone is not sufficient. You need another identity and different human values; these are very important.

From my rough impression of the Western educational system, although it is very impressive to see the high standard of the intellectual facilities and also many other resources, and the perfection of many other aspects of intellectual development, one thing that is becoming quite apparent is that the dimension of enhancing and developing the heart is lacking. The question is, how to promote these different human values.

It is necessary to make clear when we try to promote a sense of caring or compassion, forgiveness and loving kindness, that these are values carried by all the major religions of the world. It is, therefore, necessary to understand that as we promote these different human values, we are not speaking about the promotion of a specific religious belief. I believe religious faith is a matter of individual freedom. Whether you have a religion or not, it is an individual right, an individual choice. When one tries to promote a religion, it is very complicated. If say, you believe in the Buddhist perspective and propagate Buddhism, then other beliefs (those of other religious faiths) may not feel comfortable. There then arises a conflict of religious faith. In Mongolia, some Christian missionaries have started to work there and the result has not been very comfortable. When I give a lecture on Buddhism in a Western country or Christian or Judeo-Christian country, I usually feel very reluctant. I believe that it is much better to follow or to keep your own religious tradition. It is much safer. If you change your religion due to some immediate factor or for some immediate causes or conditions, you might find more confusion. That is not good. In order to respect and in order to promote these different human values for all people, the use of particular religious faiths is not very appropriate.

So what is the other option? I think the best thing is to develop secular ethics. Simply make clear the human values of a warm heart, a sense of caring for one another. Basic to human nature is that we are social animals. We can't survive as single persons without the company of others. We cannot survive without them. Although when we find ourselves in the company of even a small group like two or three people, we end up often quarreling and disagreeing, the fundamental fact of our existence is that we need these individuals who are objects of our complaints, quarrels, and disagreements. These individuals are necessary for our being; they are indispensable.

Then, of course, modern medical science has recognized that peace of mind is a crucial factor in good health. The most important source of inner peace is an open mind and a good heart. There is no question about this. A compassionate attitude, an affectionate attitude, a sense of caring is not only of benefit to society, but for oneself. Each individual will recognize an immense benefit. On the other hand, hatred and ill-feeling not only creates pain for others, but also causes oneself to suffer. If we carry ill-feeling or hatred or jealousy in our minds or hearts, these create discomforts. We lose sleep and need to rely more and more on tranquilizers, sleeping pills, and things like alcohol or drugs. If one has lost the inner ability to sustain peace

of mind, happiness, or joyfulness in life irrespective of external facility, then people usually seek refuge in alcohol or drugs or things like that.

These are literally very limited remedies so that once one becomes stuck within their limitations, one has few options available. It is a mistake to rely too much on external means and to completely neglect our inner life, our inner ability, our inner resources. Negative emotions are very harmful for one's self, one's body, and one's mental well-being. They will destroy or spoil all the chances for our future. On the other hand, an open heart, a warm heart, will bring more smiles, more reliable friends, and in that way a great fortune in life. If you have devoted your life to some meaningful activities motivated by a sense of caring, I think that when the last moment of your life comes, you will not have any regrets. "Now I am dying. My life is now ending here, but I have no regrets. During my lifetime, I have made every sort of activity purposeful and engaged in meaningful activities." But if my life has been spent under the influence of hatred, anger, jealousy, greed, and discontentment with the main effort being to acquire money with no hesitation to utilize mischievous methods to that end, then at that moment when dying comes, what is the use of that money? I think, at that moment one will feel great regret. Great remorse.

When you look at your neighbor, one who may be poor, but in a home that is full of human feeling, full of human warmth, full of human affection, then you will see smiles on the faces of their children. Their education is good, the relationship between the parents and the relationship between the parents and children also is good. That family, although not rich, is very happy.

Another neighbor might own a big car and occasionally hold a big party with many important persons coming in fine dress. But inside, the day is full of hatred, full of competition, full of fear, doubt, and jealousy. That family, in spite of all the fascinating possessions and good fortune, is not a happy family. Nor is the person himself or herself a happy person.

Judging from this reality, we can conclude that our inner peace is something that is really priceless, really precious. You cannot go to a doctor to ask for a pill to give you compassion. No. You can't go to a supermarket and buy it with a big check. I think that we can explain to our brothers and sisters, especially those who are young children, that there is some secret that we have, whether educated or uneducated, or rich or poor, or this race or that race, or this culture or that culture. We are human beings. We have great potential and we can try to promote in them basic human values that I call secular ethics. Though we cannot force others to be warm hearted, we must be warm-hearted persons. It is difficult to explain, but we can say that everyone wants happiness and a successful life. Of these things there is no question. It is important to make clear what is the most basic and effective means to achieve a happy life and a successful life. I think that the most practical way is to open the mind to the awareness of the importance of our own inner potentials.

Then people of religious faith may live according to their chosen religion. Basically, religions may be divided into two groups. One group, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and some ancient Indian traditions, I call God religions. Their fundamental faith is in a Creator. The other group of religious tradition, including Jainism, Buddhism, I usually call godless religions. They do not believe in a Creator. But, of course, God is a sense of infinite love. The religions are not so different in this understanding. But God in the sense of Creator, something absolute, that is difficult to accept. According to some, godless religion is more effective; according to others, God religions are more effective. The position is individual; it is a matter of choice.

Once one accepts the religious faith or value, it is not sufficient just to claim oneself to be a Buddhist, a Christian or a Muslim or a Jew. Once one accepts religion, you should implement it sincerely 24 hours a day so that religious practice and religious faith are part of your life. Sometimes we treat religion as something like medicine. We need medicine when pain or illness comes. When there is no pain, we need no medicines. So also, when we experience negative emotions or see a storm coming our way, in that moment there must be religion. When things are okay, we may say a mantra or some meditation or meditate on patience. If someone uses a harsh word and one completely forgets about meditation or tolerance or simply argues, one is not a religious practitioner.

So, when we begin to implement these things seriously, we should keep our focus on the transformation of our minds. This is not easy and will take time. Right from the beginning, we need a long-term plan. We should not expect that we can use a few days or a few weeks to complete the transformation. That's wrong. That's unrealistic. It requires constant effort and determination. Through mental training or training of the mind with constant effort, transformation, positive transformation, certainly will take place.

The Grace of Great Things

Reclaiming the Sacred in Knowing, Teaching, and Learning

Parker J. Palmer

What will transform education is not another theory or another book or another formula, but a transformed way of *being* in the world — a life illuminated by spirit and infused with soul.

We all know that what will transform education is not another theory or another book or another formula but a transformed way of being in the world. In the midst of the familiar trappings of education — competition, intellectual combat, obsession with a narrow range of facts, credits, credentials — we seek a life illumined by spirit and infused with soul. This is not romanticism, as John Cobb (President of the Naropa Institute and host of the Spirituality in Education conference) has properly cautioned us.

I saw the other day a remarkable documentary called *The Transformation of Allen School*. Allen School is an inner-city school in Dayton, Ohio. It was for many years at the bottom of the list in that city by all measures. There were fifth graders who had parole officers. The dropout rate was incredible and saddening. The failure of those students in every aspect of their lives sickened the heart. And along came a new principal, a principal who — it's relevant to note — came from the Philippines, a culture which has an inherent respect for things spiritual in a way American culture does not. And he brought the teachers together and said to them, in substance, as his very first proclamation as principal, that:

> We have to start to understand that the young people we are working with have nothing of external substance or support. They have dangerous neighborhoods. They have poor places to live. They have little food to eat. They have parents who are on the ropes and barely able to pay attention to them. The externals with which American education is obsessed will not work in this situation.
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> But these students have one thing that no one can take away from them. They have their souls. And from this day forth in this school, we are

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Parker J. Palmer is a writer, teacher, and activist. He serves as Senior Associate of the American Association of Higher Education and as Senior Advisor to the Fetzer Institute. His publications include *The Company of Strangers* and *To Know As We Are Known*. His latest book is *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*. He lives in Madison, WI.

> going to lift those souls up. We are going to make those souls visible to the young people themselves and to their parents and to the community. We are going to celebrate their souls, and we are going to reground their lives in the power of their souls. And that will require this faculty recovering the power of their own souls, remembering that we, too, are soul-driven, soul-animated creatures.

And in a five-year period, that school, the Allen School in Dayton, Ohio, rose to the top of every dimension on which it had been at the bottom, through hard work, through disciplined work, but through attentiveness to the inward factors that we are here to explore. This is not romanticism. This is the real world. And this is what is desperately needed in so many sectors of American education.

As we go into these five days together, let us remember one thing about the soul. It is like a wild animal: tough, self-sufficient, resilient, but also exceedingly shy. Let us remember that if we go crashing through the woods, screaming and yelling for the soul to come out, it will evade us all day and all night. We cannot beat the bushes and yell at each other if we expect this precious inwardness to emerge. But if you are willing to go into the woods and sit quietly at the base of a tree, that wild animal will, after a few hours, reveal itself to you. And out of the corner of your eye, you will glimpse something of the wild preciousness that this conference is looking for.

I ask guidance for myself and, as Quakers say, hold this entire conference in the light, to be here, to be present to each other in the right spirit, speaking our truth gently and simply, listening respectfully and attentively to the truth of others, grounded in our own experience and expanded by experiences that are not yet ours, compassionate toward that which we do not yet understand, not only as a kindness to others but for the sake of our growth and our students and the transformation of education. Amen.

In preparing these remarks, I've asked myself what are we trying to do here? We know it's about spirituality and education, but what does that mean? For whatever it's worth, these are the images that have come to me as I've tried to put a larger frame of personal meaning around this conference.

I think we are here to seek life-giving forces and sources in the midst of an enterprise which is too often death-dealing — education. It may seem harsh to call education death-dealing, but I think that we all have our experience of that.

I am always astonished and saddened by the fact that this country, which has the most widespread public education system in the world, has so many people who walk around feeling stupid because they feel that they are the losers in a competitive system of teaching and learning. It is a system that dissects life and distances us from the world because it is rooted in fear.

We come out of schools where learning turns out to be dull and we don't want to learn again. Too many children have their birthright gift of love of learning taken away from them by the very process that's supposed to enhance that gift. And so we here seek forces and sources that are life-giving in the midst of a system that is too often death-dealing.

Everyone here has had his or her own encounter with the forces of death: racism, sexism, justice denied. In my life, one of my face-to-face encounters with the forces of death was in two prolonged experiences of clinical depression, passages through the dark woods that I made when I was in my 40s, devastating experiences when it was not clear from one day to the next whether I wished to be alive, or even *was* still alive — the darkness, face-to-face, immersed in it, hardly a spark of life.

It was a depression partly due to my schooling, partly due to the way I was formed in the educational systems of this country to live out of the top inch and a half of the human self, to live only with cognitive rationality and with the powers of the intellect, out of touch with anything that lay below that top inch and a half: body, intuition, feeling, emotion, relationship.

I remember one time a therapist and spiritual guide saying words that were eventually salvific for me. He said, "You seem to keep imaging your depression as the hand of an enemy trying to crush you. Why don't you try imaging it as the hand of a friend trying to press you down to ground on which it is safe to stand?" And that image has always stayed with me of this movement from the world of abstraction, the hot-air balloon that education so falsely represents as the good life, down to the ground — in my tradition, the "ground of being" — on which it's not only safe to stand but safe to fall. The ground will hold you if you fall, and you can get back up.

Well, at some point in that journey with depression, I was given by a friend some words from that extraordinary novel by T.H. White, *The Once and Future King*. This is a passage in which the young Arthur, king to be,

in his depression, his dark night of the soul, has sought counsel from Merlin, the magician, who was his mentor. And I want to read these wonderful words which created a spark of light for me in the midst of that death-dealing episode of my life. Speaking to the young Arthur, Merlin says,

> The best thing for being sad is to learn something. That is the only thing that never fails. You may grow old and trembling in your anatomies. You may lie awake at night listening to the disorder of your veins. You may miss your only love. You may see the world around you devastated by evil lunatics or know your honor trampled in the sewers of baser minds.
>
> There is only one thing for it, then: To learn. Learn why the world wags and what wags it. That is the only thing which the mind can never exhaust, never alienate, never be tortured by, never fear or distrust, and never dream of regretting. Learning is the thing for you.

"Learning is the thing for you." I read those words, and I began to understand that in the midst of death, there is life in learning. I could not do much in the darkness of my depression. I couldn't work. I couldn't connect with other people. But I could start to learn what was in there. I could grope around in the darkness and learn what and who was there. And, of course, those of you who have been on that journey know that part of what I found and learned about there was what Thomas Merton calls true self.

What Merlin knows, as he advises the young Arthur, is that education at its best — these profound human transactions called knowing, teaching, and learning — are not just about information, and they're not just about getting jobs. They are about healing. They are about wholeness. They are about empowerment, liberation, transcendence. They are about reclaiming the vitality of life.

The question that we must wrestle with, I think, is why there is so little life-giving power in our culture when we use the words education, teaching, learning. Why are those words and the things they point to in our culture so flat, so dull, so banal compared to Merlin's understanding?

Of course, there are many answers to that question: the industrial model of schooling that is still with us from the 19th century, the diminishing effects of professionalism in teacher training, the way education has devolved into political rhetoric and serves the purposes of power.

But the answer I want to explore is a different one. I want to propose that education is dull because we have driven the sacred out of it. Merlin, the magician, understood the sacredness at the heart of all things, and learning was a natural derivative of that. I want to explore what it might mean to reclaim the sacred at the heart of knowing, teaching, and learning; to reclaim it from this essentially depressive mode of knowing which honors only data, logic, analysis, and a systematic disconnection of self from the world, self from others.

As I launch into this inquiry, I want to remind us all that the marriage of education and the sacred has not always been a happy one. It has not always produced creative offspring. Ask Galileo. Ask a Muslim child subjected to American school prayer. Ask anyone whose family or history was touched by the Nazis' murderous attachment of the sacred to blood, soil, and race.

There are real dangers in this enterprise when the sacred gets attached to the wrong things. There are real dangers when the sacred gets institutionalized and imposed on people as one more weapon in the objectifying forces of this or any other society.

But we need to have the courage to jump into the midst of that mess. The Nazi story, the murderousness of the Third Reich, is not only about the attachment of the sacred to the wrong things by a political system of power; it's also about German higher education refusing to get involved with those kinds of issues, distancing itself, clinging to logic and data and objectivism as a way of staying disengaged from the social reality of its time.

We can no longer afford a system of education that refuses to get engaged with the mess. We must be willing to join life where people live it. And they live it at this complicated intersection of the sacred and the secular. So with that acknowledgment of the mess on whose edge we stand, let me move ahead.

What do I mean by the sacred? I was laughing to myself in preparing this talk, remembering my first yearning for the sacred, which was only a word for me when I was young. I had merely heard it in church, and I wanted an experience of it.

In college I ran across a book by Rudolph Otto called *The Idea of the Holy*. Otto has a remarkable description of the sacred in which he uses phrases like *numinocity*

and *mysterium tremendum*. It was my first Latin, and I was so proud of it.

What I was laughing about when I was preparing these remarks was the title of the book, *The Idea of the Holy*. I could only have an *idea* of it because I didn't have an experience of it. And over the years, I've struggled to move from the level of idea to the embodied life.

I remember a night in the middle of one of those devastating depressions when I heard a voice I've never heard before or since. The voice simply said, "I love you, Parker." It was not a psychological phenomenon, because my psyche was crushed; it was the numinous. It was *mysterium tremendum*. But it came to me in the simplest and most human way: "I love you, Parker."

That experience has opened me to the definition of *sacred* that I want to explore. It is a very simple definition that says that the sacred is that which is worthy of respect. As soon as we see that, the sacred is everywhere. There is nothing, when rightly understood, that it is not worthy of respect.

I have had a rare experience of the numinous, and I treasure it. But I do not have a steady flow of that experience. And I cannot count on it to be my sustaining reminder of the sacredness of life. But I can *practice respect* on a minute-by-minute basis, especially towards those things that somehow arouse my anger, my ire, my jealousy, some strong ego reaction that reminds me to reach deep for respect.

How it would transform academic life if we could practice simple respect! I don't think there are many places where people feel less respect than they do on university campuses. The university is a place that has learned to grant respect to only a few things: to the text, to the expert, to those who win in competition.

But we do not grant respect to students, to stumbling and failing. We do not grant respect to tentative and heartfelt ways of being in the world where the person can't quite think of the right word or can't think of any word at all. We don't grant respect to silence and wonder. We don't grant it to voices outside our tight little circle, let alone to the voiceless things of the world.

Why? Because in academic culture, we are afraid. It is a culture of fear. What are we afraid of? We are afraid of hearing something that would challenge and change us. The great German poet Rilke has this amazing line in which he says, "There is no place at all that is not looking at you. You must change your life." There is no place at all that is not talking to me. I must change my life.

But I don't want to hear those voices because I am afraid of change. And so in academic culture, I am carefully buffered, carefully walled off, through systematic disrespect, from all of those things that might challenge me, break me, open me, and change me. It is a fearful culture.

Education is dull because we have driven the sacred out of it.

One of the things we have to do is to remember the counsel at the heart of every great spiritual tradition: Be not afraid. Be not afraid. Interesting words. The words do not say you're not supposed to *have* fear. I have fear. I have fear as I stand here before you. How am I doing? Do they like me? Am I delivering on all the preparation I've put into this talk?

I'm fearful. I have fear. But I don't need to *be* here in my fear. I don't have to speak to you from my fear. I can choose a different place in me, a place of fellow feeling, of fellow traveling, of journeying together in some mystery that I know we share. I can "be not afraid" even while I have fear.

If we could reclaim the sacred — simple respect — in education, how would it transform our knowing, teaching, and learning? I would like to suggest several answers, but I want to preface them by telling a story, not from the world of religion, not from the world of education, but from the world of science, because I think there is much for us to learn from the world of science about the very things that we care about. Science is not the enemy, not great science.

I want to tell you about a great scientist whom some of you will know. Her name was Barbara McClintock. Barbara McClintock died a few years ago in her early 90s. Her obituary was on the front page of *The New York Times* in the place usually reserved for heads of state. She was the greatest American biologist of the 20th century and, arguably, the greatest American scientist of the 20th century.

In her obituary, she was eulogized by one of her colleagues, a geneticist from the University of Chicago, as "a mystic who knew where the mysteries lie but who did not mystify." I like that very much. To be mystics who know where the mysteries lie but who do not mystify — I presume that's part of *our* task.

Barbara McClintock, as a young woman, became fascinated with genetic transposition. She wanted to know how genes moved, carried their messages from one place to another. In her day, there were none of the instruments and chemical procedures that my biologist son works with as he works with DNA. There were only hunches, hypotheses, clues, and the powers of human imagination — the mystical capacity to identify with the other and still respect its otherness.

Barbara McClintock exercised the mystical capacities at the heart of her work in genetic science, but the price she paid for that was to be marginalized by her profession. Her work was scoffed at. Her work was distrusted. She could not get grants. She could not get articles published. She could not get laboratory space — until she won a Nobel Prize in science, and then her dance ticket started getting filled.

Another scientist named Evelyn Fox Keller came along when McClintock was in her early 80s and said, "I would like to write your intellectual biography, your story as a scientist. Tell me," she said, "How do you do great science?"

Barbara McClintock, who was one of the most precise empirical observers and one of the most analytic logical thinkers that we have ever had in American science, thought for a moment and said, "About the only thing I can tell you about the doing of science is that you somehow have to have a feeling for the organism."

Then Keller asked her question again. "Tell me, how do you do great science?"

McClintock, who was at that age when all that's left is to tell the truth, thought for a moment about these ears of corn that she had worked with all her life, because they were cheap and plentiful, and she said, "Really, all I can tell you about doing great science is that you somehow have to learn to lean into the kernel."

At that point in the book, Evelyn Fox Keller, herself a physical chemist, writes a sentence that I regard as brilliant and luminous. She says, "Barbara McClintock, in her relation with ears of corn, practiced the highest form of love, which is intimacy that does not annihilate difference."

When I read that, tears came to my eyes. I thought, McClintock had a relation with ears of corn that I yearn to have with other people. And she knew it was possible to have that kind of relationship with all creatures and all forms of being. Sacredness. Simple respect. Intimacy that does not annihilate difference. A mystic who did not mystify but who knew where the mysteries lie. Here was a scientist — Nobel Prize winning, responsible for the genetic breakthroughs which we now live with, in the late 20th century, a heroine of her own arena — who practiced the highest form of love in the doing of science itself.

Well, I think the story stands on its own, but let me just mention a few things out of it that would transform education if we could embody in our knowing, teaching, and learning, this simple sense of the sacred that Barbara McClintock brought to her work and science.

First, if we could recover a sense of the sacred in knowing, teaching, and learning, we would recover our sense of the otherness of the things of the world, the precious *otherness* of the things of the world.

One of the greatest sins in education is reductionism, the destruction of that precious otherness by cramming everything into categories that we find comfortable, ignoring data, ignoring writers, ignoring voices, ignoring information, ignoring simple facts that don't fit into our shoebox, because we don't have a respect for otherness. We have a fear of otherness that comes from having flattened the terrain and desacralized it. A people who know the sacred know otherness, and we don't know that anymore.

When we teach about third-world cultures in ways that confine them, make them measure up to *our* standards of what greatness or excellence is supposed to be like, we ignore their powerful richness. These cultures have more to teach us than we have yet to understand or imagine about real values, about community, about respect, about the sacred, yet they come out, by our measures, as shabby, dirty, dusty, lacking in merit. Too many students have learned, through that reductionist model, a disrespect for the otherness of the things of the world.

We do it with great literature too. This is done not only on the right; it's done on the left as well. We do it with great literature where the story itself may convey powerful messages about the human condition, but because its author does not measure up to current tests of rightness or credibility, the text gets dismissed. A writer named David Denby has said, "What a convenient way of making the professor and students superior to the text," by not respecting the otherness of that voice and engaging it on its own terms. So the first thing that a people who know the sacred would know in education is the precious otherness of the things of the world.

But the second thing that such a people would know is the precious *inwardness* of the things of the world.

Barbara McClintock respected ears of corn in their integrity as an alien nation, as an otherness that she needed to respect if she was to do good science. But at the same time, she believed that an ear of corn had an inwardness to it, had a mind. She once said, "I learned to think like corn." The corn thought, and you could learn to think like it. And her great science didn't mystify that. It built on that and used her intuitive capacities to enter the mind of corn in a way that led to breakthrough scientific discoveries.

We don't respect the inwardness of the things we study, and we therefore do not respect the inward learnings that those things have for us.

I have thought often and painfully about the education about the murderous history of the Third Reich that I got in some of the best colleges in this country. I was taught its history by good historians, some of whom were award-winning. But I was taught the history of Nazi Germany in a way — and I've never known how to say this — that made me feel that somehow all of that murderousness had happened to another species on another planet.

My teachers were not revisionists. They weren't saying it didn't happen. It happened. They taught the statistics and the facts and the theories behind the facts, but they presented them at such objective arm's length — just the facts and only the facts — that it never connected with the inwardness of my life, because the inwardness of those events was never revealed to me. All was objectified, all was externalized, and I ended up morally and spiritually deformed as a consequence of that objectification.

There are two things that I failed to learn from the history courses that I took on Nazi Germany that I should have learned and learned painfully only in later years. One was that the very community I grew up in on the North Shore of Chicago had its own fascist anti-Semitic tendencies. I grew up in Wilmette, Illinois, and if you were a Jew who lived in that area, you didn't live in Wilmette and you didn't live in Evanston and you didn't live in Kenilworth. You lived in Glencoe, because a fascism was at work which said, "We don't want to live with you."

I should have been taught that. My little story and the inwardness of my life should have been connected with the inward dynamics of that history in a way that would have helped me understand my own time, my own place, and my own involvement in the same evil, because without that, there was no way for me to grow morally.

And, of course, the second thing I didn't learn, which takes me even more deeply inward, is that I did not learn that there is within me, in the shadow of my own soul, a little Hitler, a force of evil, that when the difference between me and thee gets too great, I will find some way to kill you off. I won't do it with a bullet or a gas chamber, but I'll do it with a category, a dismissal, a word of some sort that renders you irrelevant to my universe and to my life: "Oh, you're just a _____." It is a dismissal that we do with such facility in academic life to render each other and each other's truth irrelevant to who we are.

Our challenge is to find life-giving forces and sources in the midst of an enterprise which is too often death-dealing — education.

I taught not long ago for a year at Berea College in Kentucky. Some of you will know this remarkable institution devoted to the young people of Appalachia. They charge no tuition because these kids have no money. I taught a course in which I attempted to parallel the big story that I was teaching with the little stories of their lives, and not only to parallel the big story with the little story but to connect and interweave the two.

As part of that second objective, I asked my students to write autobiographical essays connected with the ideas of the big story we were considering. I wanted them to see that the big story was their story. And I wanted their little stories to correct the way the authors of this particular text had written the big story, because the whole Appalachian experience had been omitted from this text on American life.

At the end of the first session, a young man came up to me, and he said, "Dr. Palmer, in these autobiographical papers that you want us to write, is it okay to use the word 'I'?" I said, "Of course, it is. I invite you to use that word. I don't know how you would be able to fulfill the assignment if you didn't. But help me understand why you needed to ask the question." And he said, "Because I'm a _____ major, and every time I use the word 'I' in a paper, I'm downgraded one full grade."

This goes on all the time in education. Recovering the sacred might be one path towards recovering the inwardness without which education does not happen.

Third, by recovering the sacred, we could recover our *sense of community* with each other and with all of creation, the community that Thomas Merton named so wonderfully as the "hidden wholeness." I have become increasingly convinced that this recovery of community is absolutely at the heart of good teaching.

I'm amazed by the fact that good teachers use a million different techniques. Good teaching isn't about technique. I've asked students around the country to describe their good teachers to me. Some of them describe people who lecture all the time, some of them describe people who do little other than group process, others describe everything in between.

But all of them talk about people who have some sort of *connective* capacity, who somehow connect the students and the subject being studied and the students to each other.

One young woman told me she couldn't possibly describe her good teachers because they were all so different from each other, but she could easily describe her bad teachers because they were all the same.

I said, "What do you mean?" And she said, "With my bad teachers, their words float somewhere in front of their faces like the balloon speech in cartoons."

I thought this was an absolutely extraordinary image, and I said, "Do you mean that somehow with bad teaching, there is a disconnect between the stuff being taught and the self who is teaching it?" And she said, "Absolutely."

There is a distance, a coldness, a lack of community because in a secularized academy, we don't have the connective tissue of the sacred to hold this apparent fragmentation and chaos together. Merton is right. It's a wholeness, but it's a *hidden* wholeness. It's so easy to look on the surface of things and say there is no community here at all. But if you go deep, the way you go when you seek that which is sacred, you find the hidden wholeness. You find the community that a good teacher evokes and invites students into, that somehow weaves and reweaves life together.

Community goes far beyond our face-to-face relationship with each other as human beings. In education especially, this community connects us with what the poet Rilke called the great things of the world and with the grace of great things.

We are in community with all of it: the genes and ecosystems of biology (as Barbara McClintock knew herself to be), the symbols and reference of philosophy and theology, the archetypes of betrayal and forgiveness and loving and loss that are the stuff of literature, the artifacts and lineages of anthropology, the materials of engineering with their limits and potentials, the logic of systems and management, the shapes and colors of music and art, the novelties and patterns of history, the elusive idea of justice under the law. We are in community with all of these great things. Great teaching is about knowing that community and feeling that community and sensing that community and drawing your students into it.

I had a teacher at Carleton College who changed my life, but he lectured nonstop. We would raise our hands and try to get a word in edgewise, and he would say, "Wait a minute. I'll get to that at the end of the hour." He wouldn't have gotten to it at the end of the week, the month, the year. Thirty years later, my hand is still up! He's dead, unfortunately, but I'm still engaged with what he said.

I wondered what was this magic that made me feel so deeply related to the world of social thought that he was teaching, even though he, himself, was basically a shy and awkward person who didn't know how to connect with me on the social level.

He would make a vigorous Marxist statement, a puzzled look would come over his face, and he would step over here and argue with himself from a Hegelian viewpoint. It wasn't an act. He was really confused.

And I realized years later what the deal was. He didn't need us to be in community! Who needs 18-year-olds from the North Shore of Chicago when you're hanging out with Marx and Hegel and Troeltsch and other really interesting people? But he opened a door to me that had never been opened before, a world of imagination and thought that I had no idea existed, and it was an enormously gracious act. He was an amazing man who carried a community within himself, a community of people long gone.

(This is a mildly political comment, but I'm amazed at this controversy surrounding Hillary Clinton and her conversations with Eleanor Roosevelt. After all, the heart of the liberal arts is the ability to talk to dead people. People pay $25,000 a year to learn how to have conversations with the dead. It's called being liberally educated!)

Fourth, if we recovered a sense of the sacred, we would recover the *humility* that makes teaching and learning possible.

Everybody in academia knows what Freeman Dyson meant when he said, about the development of the nuclear weaponry that threatened to destroy the earth, "It is almost irresistible, the arrogance that comes over us when we see what we can do with our minds." So much arrogance that we will keep turning the crank until we destroy the earth itself. It is only with humility, the humility that comes from being in the presence of sacred things and knowing the simple quality called respect, that real knowing, teaching, and learning are possible.

A couple of years ago, Watson and Crick, the discoverers of the DNA molecule, celebrated the 40th anniversary of that discovery. Those of you who have read the book, *Double Helix*, know that it's about all of the antivirtues of academic life: competitiveness, ego, greed, power, and money.

But when they were interviewed on the 40th anniversary of the discovery of DNA, James Watson said, "The molecule is so beautiful. Its glory was reflected on Francis and me. I guess the rest of my life has been spent trying to prove that I was almost equal to being associated with DNA, which was a hard task."

Then Francis Crick — of whom Watson once said, "I have never seen him in a modest mood" — replied, "We were upstaged by a molecule."

Finally, if we recovered a sense of the sacred, we would recover our capacity for *wonder and surprise*, an absolutely essential quality in education. I know what happens when we get surprised in an academic context. We reach for the nearest weapon and try to kill the surprise as quickly as we can, because we are scared to death.

I will never be able to comprehend why people so devoutly believe that competition is the best way to generate new ideas, because I know from experience what happens in competition. In competition you do not reach for a new idea, because a new idea is risky. You don't know how to use it. You don't know where it's going to take you. You don't know what flank it may leave open. In competition, you reach for an old idea that you know how to wield as a weapon, and you smite the untruth as quickly as you can.

We have flattened our landscape. My image of this objectivist landscape in higher education is that it is so flat, so lacking in variety, so utterly banal that anything that pops up and takes us by surprise is instantly defined as a threat. Where did it come from? It must be from underground. It must be the work of the devil.

The Rosa Parks of this world have come to understand that no punishment that anybody could lay on us could possibly be worse than the punishment we lay on ourselves by conspiring in our own diminishment, by living a divided life, by failing to make that fundamental decision to act and speak on the outside in ways consonant with what we know to be true on the inside.

The sacred landscape has hills and valleys, mountains and streams, forests and deserts, and is a place where surprise is our constant companion — and surprise is an intellectual virtue beyond all telling. Those are some things I think we might bring back if we pursued the themes of this conference in our lives and education.

I want to say one final word about the journey toward recovering the sacred, about getting from here to there. I do not believe that we can rightly ask or hopefully ask our institutions to manifest the qualities of the sacred that I have been talking about. I don't think institutions are well suited to carry the sacred. I think distortion happens when the sacred gets vested in an institutional context or framework.

I think institutions have their utility. They have jobs to do. We all have important vocational decisions about whether to be inside or outside institutions and how to do that dance because we all know their power of co-optation. But I don't believe that what we're talking about here is going to be carried by the Roman Catholic Church or the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends or the University of Colorado at Boulder or even the Naropa Institute. I believe these are things we carry in our hearts into the world in solitude and in community.

I have been doing a small study of social movements that have transformed the landscape: the women's movement, the black liberation movement, the gay and lesbian identity movement, the movement for freedom in Eastern Europe and in South Africa. I will not trouble you with all of the details of how movements evolve. I just want to say a word about the starting point of social movements as I understand it.

I believe that movements start when individuals who feel very isolated and very alone in the midst of an alien culture, come in touch with something life-giving in the midst of a death-dealing situation. They make one of the most basic decisions a human being can make, which I have come to call the decision to live "divided no more," the decision to no longer act differently on the outside than one knows one's truth to be on the inside.

I call it the Rosa Parks decision, because she is emblematic for me and for many people I know of the historic potentials of a decision that can feel very lonely and very isolated. Rosa Parks was prepared for that day on the bus in Montgomery, Alabama, December 1, 1955. She was prepared in many ways. She had gone to the Highlander Folk School where Martin Luther King also learned nonviolence. She was the secretary of the NAACP in her community.

But we all know that the day — the moment — she sat down, she had no assurances that the theory would work, that the strategy would succeed, not even assurances that people who said they were her friends would be there for her in the aftermath of that action. It was a lonely decision made in isolation, but a decision emblematic of that being made by many other individuals in that place and time, for which she has risen to be the exemplar. It was a decision that changed the lay and the law of the land.

I've often asked myself where people find the courage to make a decision like that when they know that the power of the institution is going to come down on their heads? How do they find the courage to make a decision like that when they know it could easily lead to loss of status, loss of reputation, loss of income, loss of job, loss of friends, and, perhaps, sense of meaning?

The answer comes to me through studying the lives of the Rosa Parks and the Vaclav Havels and the Nelson Mandelas and the Dorothy Days of this world. These are people who have come to understand that no punishment that anybody could lay on us could possibly be worse than the punishment we lay on ourselves by conspiring in our own diminishment, by living a divided life, by failing to make that fundamental decision to act and speak on the outside in ways consonant with what we know to be true on the inside.

And as soon as we make that decision, amazing things happen. For one thing, the enemy stops being the enemy. When Rosa Parks sat down that day, it was partly an acknowledgment that by conspiring with racism, she had helped to create racism. By conspiring with death-dealing education, we help to create death-dealing education. But by deciding to live divided no more, we help change all of that.

When the police came on the bus that day, they said to Rosa Parks, "You know if you continue to sit there, we're going to have to throw you in jail." And her answer is historic. She said, "You may do that." An enormously polite way of saying, "What could your jail possibly mean compared to the imprisonment I've had myself in for the last 43 years, which I break out of today?"

I don't know where you are on your journey. My journey is constantly toward trying to understand what it means to live divided no more. And I think if we come out of this conference understanding that decision better in the context of education, we will have done something well worth doing.

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Education and the Western Spiritual Tradition

John Taylor Gatto

The values implicit in the traditional spiritual perspective of the West contrast sharply with that of the dis-spirited modernist worldview and have profound implications for education.

I'll be talking about three characteristics of American Christian doctrine. When I say "American Christian doctrine," the country, until the 1870s or 1880s, was virtually exclusively Protestant and more than Protestant — it was made up of the independent and dissenting minds of England and Germany, not the State Church people.

You'll recall the Dalai Lama yesterday said that the goal of Buddhism is happiness, and I think one sharp dividing line between these two major faiths is that the goal of Christianity has not been happiness except incidently to other purposes.

The Congregational Principle

When the Puritans arrived in Salem in 1629, there were no Anglican church officials around to approve the selection of their church authorities. That would have been mandatory in the State Church of England, so the first congregation here took that responsibility illegally into its own hands. That simple revolutionary act subverted power that traditionally had belonged to some certified expert and placed it into the hands of people who simply went to church. The sole yardstick of suitability for high office was that the seeker be the choice of ordinary people whose only proof of competence was joining a congregation which took religion seriously. That was it.

History dubbed this quasi insurrection the Salem Procedure, and for the next 231 years that simple public shedding of traditional authority, which was an act of monumental localism, challenged the right of arrogant power to broadcast any centralized version of the truth without argument. America became the only nation in human history where ordinary people could argue with authority without being beaten, jailed, or killed, and that remains largely true in the world that you and I live in today.

The best thing, I think, about the Internet so far is that it shows signs of becoming a post-modern Salem

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John Taylor Gatto, a public school teacher for 30 years, was New York State Teacher of the Year in 1991 and New York City Teacher of the Year on three occasions. He is the author of *Dumbing Us Down* and *The Exhausted School*, and the forthcoming *The Empty Child* (Simon & Schuster, 1998).

Procedure. In the face of widespread moral and intellectual collapse in what is mistakenly called public education, we're being asked once again to patiently try a variety of expert solutions whether by James Comer, Ted Sizer, Chris Wittle, the National Education Association, or any of a large number of fronts for institutional players. Some are honorable men, some dishonorable men, but all clamoring to manage the lives of children in various profitable mass compulsion schooling schemes.

Plato once said, "Nothing of value comes from compulsion," but pass that by for a moment and concentrate on the new praetorian guard who claim the right to drain all the children from the community like pied pipers. They come from a very few selective universities, from less than a dozen private foundations, from the board rooms of about 30 global corporations, from a handful of think tanks, from a few government agencies whose operations are shielded from the view of the public, and from various other national associations. This is a body like the ephors in ancient Sparta who ruled the public through fear from behind a screen of dummy legislators.

The reforms of these reformers appear to be very different in nature, representing different constituencies, but do not be fooled. Just as we have not had a two-party political system for a long time, perhaps since the power to issue currency was stripped from the House of Representatives and placed in the hands of private bankers, all the narrow set of cronies who float national school reforms belong to the same clubs, read the same magazines, send their children to the same private schools, address each other by first names when they meet in Chevy Chase or Cambridge, Palo Alto or Boulder.

You could never mistake any of the comfortable experts who have appropriated the right to speak for ordinary people, for the people who thought God was more important than anything, the ones who built the New England congregations, although indeed many of the modern experts are honorable men.

Congregations were never universal, but they were always intensely local. Particular men and women were attached to them who knew their fellow congregants by name and by family history. They were not mere networks of pious people who met whenever it was convenient. They cared about each other, not about humanity in general. If a congregation had a school problem, it would not welcome outside intervention unless it asked for help. These places insisted upon their God-given right to do things their own way, to make their own mistakes. I don't think you can grow up unless you're allowed to make your own mistakes.

Were some of these congregations bad places? Of course they were. Some of them were horrible, but think hard about this: At least the damage stopped abruptly at the boundaries of a single church. That's the difference between a congregational reality and a State Church system or indeed, any systematic universal governance. A system won't let you walk away while a congregation says good luck and good riddance.

We're far from a time when we trusted each other or ourselves enough to make waves in congregations without surveillance. Since the Civil War, a century and a half of increasingly suffocating expert interventions in our schools has left us thinking there isn't any other way to do things. To get something done, Harvard has to be called in or Stanford or Yale or the Carnegie Corporation. Official strangers decide everything important, sometimes with token local voices allowed to ventilate before the prearranged decision is published. Often not even that bone is tossed, nor is there any target for our children to aim for in this society but the approval of official strangers. That's a major reason our families fall apart. How can children respect their own parents when those sad souls are regularly contradicted by various agents of the State, most frequently by the school hierarchy? Our parents have been made childlike by honorable people.

The Salem Procedure of picking laypeople, of letting them pick their own experts, and then keeping an eye on those experts because the congregational polity was small enough to allow that, has a kinship to the powerful vision of Anabaptists — a vision which lives on in the spectacularly successful, spectacularly prosperous Amish communities that have driven the governments of Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, and Wisconsin livid with rage because of their successes this past century.

But it also draws from a well of common sense innate in people who actually work instead of talk for a living. Small farmers, crafts people, teamsters, artists, fishermen, loggers, small entrepreneurs, people who maintain an intuitive understanding of the fakery lurking near any expert claim to superior wisdom. And I'm being precise there. I mean superior *wisdom*. Of course, experts are supposed to have superior knowledge, but knowledge and wisdom are far from the same things, and to conflate the two is madness. Going to college can help you be knowledgeable, but it cannot make you wise.

The American genius was to locate wisdom in ordinary people while every other government on earth located it in an aristocracy, a theocracy, a military class, a merchant class, or in civil service experts. And those who know Thomas Hobbes will recognize where I'm coming from on that.

The failure of forced monopoly schooling to check our slide into despair and moral chaos allows me to demand the subordination of the expert voice once again, on the grounds it has had a century's monopoly reign and has produced a bankrupt leadership with not the slightest idea how to get us out of this mess we're in except to ask for more money, more power, more power over our children, a sorry elite who are currently making a desperate effort to turn the leadership of our schools over to men and women who sell soap for a living or cigarettes or processed food. That's what school-to-work legislation is, of course.

It's time to turn the school business back to people where the Constitution vested it in the 10th Amendment. It's time to let any small group that wants to try to show what it can do in schooling. A million family schools over the past decade have demonstrated that uncertified parents, many of them in modest circumstances and lacking the benefit of college themselves, can pin back the ears of the best factory model schools, public or private.

The congregational principle is a spiritual force propelling the maximum number of people to reach their full potential by vesting everyone with an identity and a voice at the policy table and doing it in voluntary associations with members who feel in harmony with one another. That's the way the Council on Foreign Relations works, that's the way the Ad Council works, that's the way the Business Roundtable works, that's the way the Sidwell Friends School that Mrs. Clinton's daughter goes to works, that's the way Groton and Saint Pauls work, and that's the way public schools will work best, too.

If you think about this, you begin to wonder what purpose is being served by arranging government schools any other way. The congregationalists knew that good things happen to the human spirit when it is left alone to make its own curriculum. No two congregational churches ever got together. They had contempt for the Presbyterians because that denomination met once a year in a synod. The congregations did not officially compare notes. They didn't inquire about each other's doctrinal purity, they had no universal management. Some churches were good, some were horrible, but each was sui generis. Each was sovereign. And what was the result? The forms, the spirit, and the leadership of New England during its congregational period produced the only coherent regional culture this nation has ever seen, with the Anglican tidewater south a distant second.

Indeed, New England ships were selling ice cut from local ponds to India, if you can believe that, long before you could take a train from Boston to New York. Ninety-eight percent of the Massachusetts population could read, write, and count quite well before the legislature, at the urging of the new industrial business establishment (coal mining and railroad interests like the Peabody family and real estate interests eager to exploit the empty land to the West) rammed through a compulsion school law. (It's true they fronted the zealots, and Horace Mann was a zealot. He had been offered a seat in Congress if he fronted this operation.) The entire Connecticut population was also literate without forced schooling.

We have never reached that degree of literacy again, although we were close to it in 1941 when, under cover of World War II, the nation's schools abandoned wholesale the brilliantly efficient reading method which had been used for centuries and gradually replaced it with a system certain to fail — again I'm being precise — certain to fail in the dramatic hothouse of a classroom. That was the congregational principle.

Discipline and Disciples

Wherever I go in the United States these days I hear of something called the crisis of discipline, how children are unmotivated, how they resist learning. That is nonsense, of course. Children resist teaching, as they should, but nobody resists learning. However, I won't dispute that schools are in chaos. Even the ones that seem quiet and orderly are in a kind of moral chaos beyond the power of journalism, so far, to penetrate. And restless children underline the school's failure so they come to public attention, and they must be explained some way by authorities.

I don't think it's off the mark to say that all of us, whatever else we may disagree upon, want kids to have discipline in the sense of self-control. That goes for Black mothers in Harlem where I taught for five years, despite the secret religion of schooling that believes those mothers are genetically challenged. But we want more than behavioral discipline. We pray for discipline in the more specialized sense of intellectual interests well enough mastered to provide joy and con-

solation all our lives — and maybe even a buck, too.

A discipline is what people who drink chablis instead of Pittsburgh Red Whiskey, call a field of learning like chemistry, history, philosophy, et cetera, and its lore. The good student is literally a disciple of a discipline. The words are from the Latin *disciplinare* and *discipulus*. (By the way, I learned all this from a school teacher in Utica, New York, named Orin Dominico who writes me and I pay attention. In this discipline matter, I'm Orin's disciple.)

The most famous discipline in Western tradition is that of Jesus Christ. That's true today, and it was true 1500 years ago, and the most famous disciples are his 12 apostles. What did Christ's model of educational discipline look like? Well, attendance wasn't mandatory, for one thing. Christ didn't set up the Judea Compulsory School System. He issued an invitation, "Follow me," and some did, and some didn't. And Christ didn't send the truant officer after those who didn't.

So as Orin tells me, the first characteristic of this model is a *calling*. Those who pursued Christ's discipline did so out of desire. It was their own choice. They were called to it by an inner voice, a voice we never give students enough time alone to possibly hear. And that's more true of the good schools than it is of the bad ones.

Our present system of schooling alienates us so sharply from our inner genius, most of us are barred from being able ever to hear our calling. Calling in most of us shrivels to fantasy and daydreams as a remnant of what might have been.

The second characteristic of Christ's discipline was *commitment*. Following Jesus was not easy. You had to drop everything else, and there was zero chance you could get rich doing it. You had to love what you were doing. Only love could induce you to walk across deserts, sleep in the wilderness, hang out with riffraff, and suffer scorn from all the established folks you encountered.

The third characteristic of Christ's model of discipleship was *self-awareness and independence*. Christ's disciples were not stooges. They had to think for themselves and draw their own conclusions from the shared experience. Christ didn't give lectures or handouts. He taught by example, by his own practice, and through parables which were open to interpretation. Orin, my coach, personally doubts that Christ ever intended to start a school or an institutional religion, for institutions invariably corrupt ideas unless they are kept small. They regiment thinking, and they tend toward military forms of discipline. Christ's followers started the Church, not Christ.

And finally, Christ's model of discipline requires a *master* to follow — one who has himself or herself submitted to discipline and still practices it. Christ didn't say, "You guys stay here in the desert and fast for a month. I'll be over at the Ramada. You can find me in the bar if you need help." He did not begin his own public life until he was almost a rabbi, one fully versed in his tradition.

One way out of the fix we're in with schools would be a return to discipleship in education. During early adolescence, students without a clear sense of calling might have a series of apprenticeships and mentorships which mostly involve self-education. Our students have pressing needs to be alone with themselves on quests to test themselves against obstacles, both internal personal demons and external barricades to self-direction.

As it is, we currently drown students in low-level busywork, shove them together in forced associations which teach them to hate other people, not to love them. We subject them to the filthiest, most pornographic regimen of constant surveillance and ranking so they never experience the solitude and reflection necessary to become a whole man or woman. You are perfectly at liberty to believe these foolish practices evolved accidently or through bad judgment, and I will defend your right to believe that right up to the minute the men with nets come to take you away.

Dis-Spirited Schooling

The net effect of holding a child in confinement for 12 years and longer without any honor paid to the spirit is an extended demonstration that the State considers the Western God tradition to be dangerous. And, of course, it is. Schooling is about creating loyalty to an abstract central authority, and no serious rival can be welcome in a school that includes mother and father, tradition, local custom, self-management, or God.

The Supreme Court *Everson* ruling of 1947 established the principle that the State would have no truck with spirits. There was no mention that 150 years of American judicial history had passed without any other court finding this fantastic hidden meaning in the Constitution.

But even if we forego an examination of the motives of this court and grant that the ruling is a sincere expression of the rational principle behind modern leadership, we would be justified in challenging Everson today because of the grotesque record laid down over

the past 50 years of spiritless schooling. Dis-spirited schooling has been tested and found fully wanting. I personally think that that's because it is a liar's game that denies the metaphysical reality recognized by men and women worldwide today and in every age.

One of the great ironies of Chelsea Clinton's schooling at Sidwell Friends School is that she is compelled to study Quaker history and participate in Quaker meeting. For Chelsea, it was take it or leave it at Sidwell. She seems to have survived that compulsion to learn a religion not her own.

It is ironic from a contrarian viewpoint that the most prestigious scientific position in the world today is surely heading up the human genome project. Corporations are lined up all the way to China to make fortunes out of genetic manipulation, and the co-head of that project is a man named Dr. Francis X. Collins who, according to the *New York Times*, personally recognizes religion as the most important reality in his life.

Collins was reared in an agnostic home in western Virginia where he was homeschooled all his life by his outspoken, radical mother who broke the law, he says, in a number of ways to give him an education. While in medical school, he came to the conclusion — I'm quoting Collins — that he would become a born-again Christian because the decision was "intellectually inescapable." It blew my mind to read that. And he has maintained that faith energetically ever since, a decision that makes his professional colleagues very uncomfortable.

The difficulty with rational thought, however valuable a tool it certainly is, is that it misses the deepest properties of human nature: our feelings of loneliness and incompletion, our sense of sin, our need to love, our longing after immortality.

Let me illustrate very specifically how rational thinking preempts terrain where it has no business and makes a wretched mess of human affairs. Now you can tell your grandchildren that you actually heard someone at the end of the 20th century challenge Galileo's heliocentric theory. Here goes. This is what's called a tour de force.

In materially evidentiary terms, the sun is at the center of the solar system, not the earth, and the solar system itself is lost in the endless immensity of space. I suppose most of you believe that. How could you not? And yet, as far as we scientifically know to date, only planet earth looks as if it were designed with people in mind. I know that Carl Sagan says we'll find millions of populated planets eventually, but right now there's only hard evidence of one. As far as we know, you can't go anyplace else but earth and stay alive for long. So as of 1997, earth is clearly the center of the human universe. I want to push this a little farther, however, so stick with me.

Planet earth is most definitely not the center of your personal life. It's merely a background which floats in and out of conscious thought. The truth is that psychologically, you are the center of the universe and the solar system. And don't be modest or try to hide the fact. The minute you deny what I just said, you're in full flight from the responsibility this centrality entails: to make things better for the rest of us who are on the periphery of your consciousness.

When you deny your own centrality, you necessarily lose some trust in yourself to move mountains. As your self-trust wanes — and school is there to drill you in distrusting yourself: What else do you think it means to wait for a teacher to tell you what to do? — you lose some self-respect. Without self-respect, you could hardly love yourself because we can't really love those we don't respect or trust except, curiously enough, by an act of faith. When you can't fully trust yourself or even like yourself very much, you're in a much worse predicament than you may realize because those things are a preamble to sustaining loving relationships with other people and with the world outside yourself.

Think of it this way: You must be convinced of your own worth before you ask for the love of another or else the bargain will be unsound. You'll be trading discounted merchandise unless both of you are similarly disadvantaged, and perhaps even then your relationship will disintegrate, usually painfully.

The trouble with Galileo's way is that it is a partial truth. It's right about the relations of dead matter, and it's wrong about the geography of the spirit. But schools can only teach Galileo's victory over the church. They cannot afford to harbor children who command personal power. So the subtlety of the analysis that you and I just went through which can confer power has to be foregone. Galileo's rightness is only a tiny part of a real education. His blindness is much more to the point. The goal of a real education is to bring us to a point where we can take full responsibility for our own lives, and in that quest, Galileo is only one more fact of little human consequence.

The ancient religious question of free will marks the real difference between schooling and education. Education is conceived in Western history as a road to knowing yourself and through that knowledge arriv-

ing at a further understanding of community, relationships, jeopardy, living nature, and inanimate matter. But none of those things has any particular meaning until you see what they lead up to, finally being in full command of the spectacular gift of free will: a force completely beyond the power of science to understand.

With the tool of free will, anyone can forge a personal purpose. Free will allows infinite numbers of human stories to be written in which a personal *you* is the main character. All of the sciences, hard or soft — although the soft are much worse in this regard — assume that Purpose — that's with a capital P — and free will are hogwash. All of them believe that, given enough data, everything will be seen as predetermined.

Schooling is an instrument to disseminate this bleak and sterile vision of a blind-chance universe. When schooling is able to displace education, as happened in the U.S. just about a century ago, a deterministic world could be simulated. We can entrap children into becoming organic machinery simply by ignoring the universal human awareness that there is something dreadfully important beyond the rational. We can cause children to mistrust themselves so severely they come to depend on cost-benefit analyses for everything. We can teach them to scorn faith so comprehensively that buying things and feeling good becomes the point of their lives.

The Soviet empire did this brilliantly for a little over 70 years. Its surveillance of individual lives was total. It maintained dossiers on each human unit, logged every deviation, and assigned a mathematical value so that citizens could be ranked against each other.

Does that sound familiar? It schooled every child in a fashion prescribed by the best psychological experts. It strictly controlled the rewards of work to ensure compliance, and it developed a punishment system unheard of in its comprehensiveness. If you want to ever explore that, read Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag Archipelago*. If human science could guarantee a stable orthodoxy directed out of the centralized leadership of a political state, then the Soviet practice reached the millenium where lives can be regarded as Galileo regarded planetary bodies.

I sat no more than ten feet directly in front of Jean Kirkpatrick about eight years ago in a small room in the Old Senate Office Building, and she informed this little group of political chairmen I was in that it would be at least 100 years before we saw cracks in the Soviet Union because they had mastered every detail of deviance, and they could chart these things and predict them far in advance. Oh, Jean! Oh, Jean! She said the Kremlin owns all the tanks, all the jobs, all the schools, and all the food. But just the other day, I read in the *New York Times* that 8,000 criminal gangs, many of them white collar, operate freely today in what used to be the Soviet Union. An explosion of irrationality is upon them in spite of all their precautions. Finally, the suffocation of leading well-schooled lives got to be more than the Soviets could bear. Nobody could be trusted, not even the army. Everybody cheated, lied, stole, sabotaged orders, felt contempt for everyone else because they felt contempt for themselves.

The bedrock principles of human nature had just been violated too long, and so the whole apparatus fell apart. It lasted one lifetime. Our softer form of spiritual suffocation has already been in place for two lifetimes. The neglected genius of the West, neglected by the forced schooling institution as a deliberate policy, lies in its historical forging of a collection of spiritual doctrines which grant dignity and responsibility to ordinary individuals, not to elites. And I have the greatest respect for every other religious tradition in the world, but not one of them has ever done this or attempted to do this. It correctly identified the problems that not one of us can escape, the problems that you can't elude with money or intellect or charm, science, politics, or powerful connections. It also said that these problems were paradoxically fundamental to human happiness.

The Challenges of Original Sin

We first encounter a description of these problems in the Hebrew Bible arising as universal punishments for the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Even if you believe yourself too sophisticated to accept the story at face value, it matters little to my accounting because it is certain that you do share these burdens with believers, as you'll soon see.

What I'm speaking of is original sin, a concept which comes from the Christian interpretation of the Book of Genesis, which has powerfully affected the shape of every Western institution in the past 1500 years. The fallout from a millenium-long, often bloody debate about original sin was profound. Out of Genesis came four penalties which followed the expulsion from Eden. And if you'll forgive me some slight modernization of the Genesis account, I'll enumerate those burdens.

First was *labor*. There was no need to work in Eden, but now we would have to care for ourselves. Next, there was an emotional penalty of *pain*. There was no

pain in Eden, but now our natures would be subject to being led astray, to overindulging, to feeling tremendous pain, even from natural acts like childbirth, whether we were good people or bad people.

Third, there was the amazingly two-edged *free will* penalty which included the right to choose evil which would now lurk everywhere. Recall that in Eden there was exactly one wrong thing to do. Now we would bear the constant stress of having to be morally wary or surrendering to sin.

And lastly and most important, we were assigned the *limitation penalty*. The term of human life would be strictly limited. Nobody escapes death. And the more you have in wealth, family, community, and friends, the more you will be tempted to curse God as you witness yourself day by day losing physical beauty and energy and eventually losing everything. If you know the Book of Job, you'll have an idea what I mean.

So that's some doom, I know you'll agree. The question is what to do about it. Since these penalties exist in a religious universe, but they also exist as matter-of-fact, everyday material realities, two different answers emerge depending upon how intensely one group or the other felt the spiritual pull.

The Response of the Dis-Spirited

I'll start with the group that cast its lot on the racehorse of shrewdness, calculation, and science to find a way out because that group has commanded forced schooling, our economy, our technology, and our public philosophy for over a century. Here is its response to the challenge of original sin.

On *labor*. Work is a necessary evil, but for the smart, it is a curse which can be avoided. Machines and electronic slaves are making work obsolete. Only stupid people work. Hired hands are there for those who understand this.

On *pain*. There are many scientific ways to avoid pain and enhance pleasure. Chemicals and other modern magic have made pain obsolete and, with them have come most problems of overindulgence. If you get drunk, megadoses of vitamin B will handle it. If you get fat, you can be lypo sucked; if you get old, there's plastic surgery. Grab for the gusto. You only go around once. Good feelings are what life is about. There isn't anything else.

On the third penalty, *good and evil*, the dis-spirited response denies that they even exist. When Alger Hiss accepted the presidency of the World Health Organization in 1948, his initiatory address said that the problem of good and evil was an illusion and had caused more harm in the world than anything else and everything else put together.

Every principle is negotiable. All ethics are situational. Nothing isn't relativistic, and you cannot know too much. With enough knowledge, you can duplicate the mythical God's powers. You can walk on water, you can fly, you can even create life.

Did God destroy Sodom and Gomorrah with fire in the Hebrew Bible? Well, wake up. We turned the night sky over the Sinai just a few years ago into flame with a gasoline air mixture which incinerated 100,000 retreating Iraqis in a matter of seconds. Only one out of six of those people even had a weapon. We are God, at least the most evolutionarily advanced among us are. And you know where you find them — at Harvard, Princeton, and the Yale Divinity School.

And finally on *aging and death*. Aging and death are the ultimate evils, but magic is available in the form of pills, potions, lotions, surgery, aerobics to stave off sickness and extend life. Young is the name of the game when it's all said and done, so aging must be concealed as long as possible through dress, speech, personal training regimens, and attitude makeovers. We only live once, and life is the highest value, so it follows that the health industry holds the ultimate wisdom around which we should center our attention. Every day science gets closer and closer to making life eternal.

You see how easy it can be done to repudiate the penalties of original sin, to grant absolute absolution. Ideologically speaking, that was the main mission of forced schooling: to redirect loyalty away from God and those who lived in a godly fashion by the Western Christian tradition to belief in a corporate industry and specialized intelligence.

The Spiritual Response

What Western spirituality taught was much different. Rather than avoiding the punishments, it asked you to embrace them. It taught the marvelous paradox that willing acceptance of these burdens was the only way to a good, full life, the only way to inner peace. By bending your head in obedience, it would be raised up strong, brave, indominable, and wise. Now let me go through the same list of penalties from the spiritual perspective.

About *labor*, the religious voice said that work was the only avenue to genuine self-respect. Work develops independence, self-reliance, resourcefulness, and a host of other valuable things. Work itself is a value

elevated far above a paycheck, above praise, above accomplishment. Work produces a spiritual reward unknown to the reinforcement schedules of behavioral psychologists like B.F. Skinner, but only if you tackle it gladly, without resentment or avoidance, whether you're digging a ditch or building a skyscraper.

If the secular aversion to work is a thing to be rationalized, as schools do rationalize minimal effort, a horrifying problem is created for our entire society, one which has proven so far to be incurable: I refer to the psychological, social, and spiritual anxieties that arise when you have no useful work to do. Phony work, no matter how well paid or praised, causes such great emotional distortions to emerge that the major efforts of our civilization will soon go into solving them. But there is no hint of an answer in sight from any familiar modernist quarter.

In the economy we have allowed to evolve, the real political dilemma everywhere is keeping people occupied. Jobs have to be invented by government agencies and corporations, and both employ millions and millions of people for which they have no real use. It's an inside secret in the top echelon of CEOs that when you want to exercise your stock options, all you need to cause a sharp rise in the stock's value is to lay off 40,000 people. And that is done regularly and cynically independent of bottom lines. I learned that by reading *Fortune*.

Young men and women during their brightest, orneriest, and most energetic years are kept from working or from being a part of the general society as they would have been in Ben Franklin's day. This is done to keep them from aggravating this work situation either by working too eagerly, as kids are prone to do, or by inventing their own work which could cause a cataclysm in the economy. The violation of the injunction to work which Western spirituality imposed has backed us into a corner from which no authority has any idea how to extricate us. We cannot afford to let children learn to work as Amish children do for fear they will discover one of the great secrets of Western history: Work is not a curse, but a salvation.

About the second penalty, *pain*, Western spirituality has always regarded pain as a friend because it forces attention off the things of this world and puts it squarely back into the center of the universe, which is yourself. Pain and distress in all its forms are the ways we learn self-control (among other valuable lessons), but the siren call of feel-good lures us to court sensations and to despise pain as a spoiler of pleasure. Western spirituality teaches that pain is the road to self-knowledge, that self-knowledge is the road to trusting yourself; that without such trust, you cannot like yourself; without such self-liking, you can never dependably love another or love God.

About the third penalty, *good and evil*, Western spirituality demands you write your own script through the world. In a spiritual being, everything is morally charged, nothing is neutral, no excuses are accepted. Choosing is a daily burden, but one which makes you fully alive because literally everything then becomes a big deal.

I heard secondhand very recently about a woman who said to her mother about an affair she was conducting openly despite the protest of her husband and in full knowledge of her 6-year-old daughter, that, "It's no big deal." That's what she said to her mother. But if infidelity, divorce, and the shattering of innocence in a child isn't a big deal, then what could ever be one? By intensifying our moral sense, we feel the exhilaration of being alive in a universe where everything is a big deal.

To have a real life, you must bring as many choices as you can out of the preprogrammed mode and under the conscious command of your will. The bigger the life you seek, the less anything can be made automatic, as if you were only a piece of machinery. And because every choice has a moral dimension, it will incline toward one or the other pole of that classic dichotomy that people hate to hear about, good and evil.

Despite any extenuating circumstances — and they are legion, I know — the accumulating record of our choices marks us as worthy or as unworthy people. Even if nobody else is aware how your accounts stand, deep inside the running balance will vitally affect your ability to trust, to love, to gain peace and wisdom from your relationships and your community.

And finally, *aging and death*. In the Western spiritual tradition which grew out of a belief in original sin, the focus was primarily on the lesson that nothing in this world is more than an illusion. This is only a stage on some longer journey we do not understand. To fall in love with your physical beauty or your wealth, your health, your power to experience good feelings is to kid yourself because they will be taken away. An 86-year-old aunt of mine with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and a woman I love very, very dearly said to me tearfully after the death of her husband of 60 years who had left her millions of dollars, "They don't let you win. There is no way to win."

She had lived her life in the camp of science, honor-

ably observing all its rules of rationality, but at this pass, science was useless to her. The Western spiritual tradition would reply, "Of course you can win. Everyone can win. And if you think you can't, then you're playing the wrong game."

The only thing that gives our time on earth any deep significance is that none of this will last. Only that temporality gives our relationships any urgency, and passion makes our choices matter. If you were indestructible, what a curse! How could it possibly matter whether you did anything today or next year or in the next hundred years, learned anything, loved anybody? There would always be time for everything and anything. What would be the big deal?

Everyone has had the experience of having too much candy or too much company or even too much money, so much that no individual purchase can involve real choices because real choices always close the door on other choices. I know that we would all like to have endless amounts of money, but the truth is too much money wipes out our ability to choose since we can now choose everything. That's what the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius discovered for himself in his reflections on what really matters. In the *Meditations*, which has become one of the greatest classics in Western history, he discovered that none of it was for sale. If you don't believe any emperor would feel this way, read the *Meditations*.

Too much time, like too much money, can hang heavily as well. Look at millions of bored school children. They know. The corrective for this boredom is full spiritual awareness that time is finite. As you spend time on one thing, you lose forever the chance to spend it on something else. It *is* a big deal.

Science cannot help with time. In fact, living scientifically so as not to waste time, becoming one of those poor souls who never goes anywhere without a list, is the best guarantee that your life will be eaten up by errands and that none of those errands will ever become the big deal that you desperately need to finally love yourself — because the list of things still to do will go ever onward and onward. The best lives are full of contemplation, full of solitude, full of self-examination, full of private, personal attempts to engage the metaphysical mystery of existence.

There must be a reason that we are called human *beings* and not human *doings*. And I think the reason is to commemorate the way we can make the best of our limited time by alternating effort with reflection and reflection completely free of the get-something motive. Whenever I see a kid daydreaming in school, I'm careful never to shock the reverie out of existence.

Buddha is reputed to to have said, "Do nothing. Time is too precious to waste." If that advice seems impossible in the world described in the evening news, reflect on the awesome fact that in spite of the hype, you still live on a planet where 67% of the world's entire population has never made or received a single phone call and where the Amish of Lancaster County live prosperous lives free of crime, divorce, or children who go beyond the 8th grade in school. And yet not a single one of that 150,000 member sect has a college degree, a tractor to plow with, or a telephone.

If I seem to have stepped away from original sin with these facts, it is not so. Until you can acknowledge that the factual contents of your mind upon which you base decisions have been inserted there by others whose motives you cannot fully understand, you will never come to appreciate the neglected genius of Western spirituality which teaches that you are the center of the universe and that the most important things worth knowing are innate in you already. They cannot be learned through schooling. They are self-taught through the burdens of having to work, having to sort out right from wrong, having to find a way to check your appetites, and having to age and die.

The effect of this formula on world history has been titanic. It brought every citizen in the West a mandate to be sovereign, which we still have not learned to use wisely, but which offers the potential of such wisdom the moment we figure out a way to put the neo-aristocracy of global business, global government, and massive institutions back into the Pandora's box where they belong.

Western spirituality granted every single individual a purpose for being alive, a purpose independent of mass behavior prescriptions, money, experts, governments. It conferred significance on every aspect of relationship and community. It carried inside its ideas the seeds of a self-activating curriculum which gives meaning to time.

In Western spirituality, everyone counts. It offers a basic, matter-of-fact set of practical guidelines, street lamps for the village of your life. Nobody has to wonder aimlessly in the universe of Western spirituality. What constitutes a meaningful life is clearly spelled out: self-knowledge, duty, responsibility, acceptance of aging and loss, preparation for death. In the neglected genius of the West, no teacher or guru does the work for you, you must do it for yourself.

Holistic Education for an Emerging Culture

Ron Miller

Holistic education, which has roots stretching back at least for 200 years, is a viable alternative to the reductionism of modern schooling.

My goal today is to acquaint you more than you already may be with the kinds of spiritually influenced education that have emerged over the last couple of centuries and particularly the last couple of decades.

My message is twofold. First, your work is difficult, there's no question about that, because our culture, as it is now, is fundamentally hostile to the meanings of spirituality that we have discussed here. There's no way around that. But, on the other hand, we are entering an historic period of transition from one dominant worldview to another that is going to be radically different. All of us working in this fledgling holistic education movement are pioneers on a rough and uncharted frontier. There are no reliable techniques or simple solutions to make our task easier. I'm not promising that. We need many different tools, many different approaches in order to make this transformation happen.

On the one hand, we need the kind of spirituality that has been spoken of at this conference. We need the kind of gentleness and humility and compassion that was embodied by the Dalai Lama in his talk (See page 3 above). At the same time, though, if we are to clear away the rubble of a declining and obsolete civilization that stands in our way, in the way of compassion, we also need the prophetic outrage that is so well expressed by John Gatto.

Now, I've never agreed with all the details of John's historical analysis. I'm certainly not persuaded by his argument that reviving original sin is the most constructive contribution that we can make to a postmodern culture. But John is passionate; he is a true prophet, and his passion is so powerful and so necessary because he sees so clearly the terrible damage that modernist education has inflicted on the human spirit.

His critique, much of which I share, is not meant to blame any of you who work in public schools or who hope to save public education somehow. That's not the point — the point is that there are forces in this culture

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Ron Miller is the editor of the *Great Ideas in Education* newsletter and was the founding editor of the *Holistic Education Review*. He has written or edited four books, including *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture*.

beyond your control, beyond any of our control: the colossal military-industrial-global-corporate system, the 400-year legacy of reductionism. These kinds of forces will work against your efforts, however well and faithfully you work, until the emerging culture, this postmodern culture, can gain a more secure foothold.

The work that we are doing is vitally important work in preparing the foundation for this new culture. We should never be discouraged. We should never stop doing it. But until the culture catches up to what we're doing, it's going to be a rough road. We've got to be in this for the long haul. We may be defeated in many ways, large and small, in our daily work, but ultimately a postmodern civilization is going to be born.

The Contrast Between Modern Schooling and Holistic Education

Modern schooling does not serve the spiritual unfoldment of the child. It serves capitalism, nationalism, a reductionist worldview. It serves a society that is completely committed to meritocracy, where there's fierce competition between individuals to reach the top of a social hierarchy.

The procedures that are built into our system of schooling: grading, standardizing, the herding of children from room to room at the sound of a bell, teachers who answer to a hierarchy of authority, the extraordinary influence of business leaders in what goes on in our classrooms — none of this serves the spiritual unfolding of children or the building of community.

In my historical research I found a quotation from 1908 that captures the essence of this system. A man named Colin Scott wrote a book called *Social Education*, in which he promoted the concept of "social efficiency" in public education:

> It is not primarily for his own individual good that the child is taken from his free and wandering life of play. It is for what society can get out of him, whether of a material or spiritual kind, that he is sent to school.

Now, the individual does have responsibilities to society. I am not advocating an atomistic individualism here, but Scott is not talking about an organic kind of society where education brings about a connection between the person and the community. He's talking about the imposition of a social discipline, social efficiency, which is mechanistic and reductionist.

In recent years another term has come to be used by the leaders of our educational system, the term *intellectual capital*, suggesting that the minds of our children are raw material for the economy. This is what schools are for in the present age.

But I speak of an emerging culture, a critique of the reductionism and the hierarchy and the materialism of the modern age. We see this starting to come forth in the 19th Century, in the Romantic movement and the American Transcendentalist movement. Around the turn of the century there were a handful of thinkers who looked very deeply at the epistemological roots of this modern way of being, people like Rudolf Steiner, Alfred North Whitehead, and William James.

In the 1960s, of course, this way of thinking blossomed. It emerged in the streets and in universities and in many other places. We have the environmental movement, which has matured into branches such as deep ecology and social ecology. We have the human potential movement, the development of humanistic psychology and transpersonal psychology. The work of Ken Wilber is a fantastic explanation of this transition to a whole different way of thinking about who we are as human beings (See Wilber 1997).

We have seen the infusion of new spiritual perspectives in our culture — Naropa is a perfect illustration of this — as Asian ways of thinking have been brought into our culture. And I would mention someone like Matthew Fox, the former Catholic priest who speaks of "creation spirituality" — a holistic alternative to original sin.

In science there are new ways of thinking in the hard sciences that are challenging the stale reductionism of the last four centuries. We can think of people like Gregory Bateson or David Bohm or Rupert Sheldrake or Barbara McClintock, to name only a few. These are not romantics; they are not flaky people. These are very, very competent scientists who understand that modernist culture is obsolete.

We have thinkers like David Ray Griffin who speak of a "constructive postmodernism" and we have green politics and green thinkers. People who have influenced me particularly are Theodore Roszek, Jeremy Rifkin, Fritjof Capra, Charlene Spretnak, and the list goes on and on. This literature tells us that this new culture is not just a fantasy, it's not just a passing fad. This is something that is coming, but it may take a long time. Cultural transformation is not easy, but it's coming.

What I call *holistic education* came out of this movement in the 1970s. In the late 1970s a group of transpersonal psychologists and people into transpersonal edu-

cation started to talk about "holistic" education. The kinds of ideas that they expressed go back 200 years. They go back to Rousseau in the late 1700s; and Pestalozzi, the great educator in Switzerland in the early 1800s; Froebel, who was a student of Pestalozzi and was the founder of the kindergarten; the American Transcendentalists, in particular Bronson Alcott, who ran a school in Boston. There were also other progressive educators and other pioneers, such as Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori. The holistic education movement, which is really taking shape now, has its roots in all of these pioneers (Miller 1988, 1997).

What I have said all along, ever since I became involved in this movement, is that holistic education is not going to save our society. We cannot educate a new generation and then hope that they will change the world. Holistic education will only become established, it will only become accepted and widespread, to the extent that the culture itself changes. And it's a give-and-take relationship. Our work in education will help that process, but we need that process to go further before we're going to experience very much success.

Basic Principles of Holistic Education

Of the myriad of possibilities, there are four basic principles of holistic education that I would like to focus on today. First, holistic educators believe that the human being is a complex existential entity made up of many, many layers of meaning. We are biological creatures. We are ecological creatures. We have a psychological dimension, an emotional dimension. We live in an ideological environment, a social and cultural environment, and we have a spiritual core. We are very complex creatures because of the interactions of all these different meanings. You cannot just take any one of them and say, "Oh, that's who we are."

Holism is the point of view which recognizes this complexity. There's a wonderful book out of Australia called *Educating Psyche*, written by Bernie Neville (1989) a few years back. He points to the diverse archetypal energies that flow through human consciousness. He argues that any educational method is a "partial vision" if it honors only one or even a few of these energies to the exclusion of the others.

Certainly an excessively rational or academic education denies spontaneity and spirit. But a completely romantic or child-centered vision denies the shadow and denies the need for order and discipline. So education must address or at least respect the multifaceted mystery of human existence or it damages the delicate process of development.

My second point is related to this. Human development occurs in at least two spheres. One is personal. Good holistic educators recognize the stages of a child's development, and how the child's thinking and feeling and way of relating to the world change over time. They also recognize that each child develops at a different rate.

But what we also need to keep in mind is that development has a universal or spiritual dimension. Rudolf Steiner, Ken Wilber, and several other thinkers have told us that human consciousness appears to be engaged in a long, long historic process of unfolding. Somehow we started in an instinctive organismic existence and are moving toward spiritual realization, or transcendence, a process that will take many, many, many centuries, but it's moving forward. And what this means for education is that we should not be training children merely to obey the dictates of this culture. We should be enabling them to go beyond it as far as they are able. The Canadian education theorist, John P. Miller, who has written wonderful books on holistic education, has said that education should be about transformation. We are supporting this process of evolution. Education should not be exclusively concerned with transmission, with what we've already established in our culture.

Johann Pestalozzi in Switzerland in 1809 beautifully expressed what holistic education is when he said,

> God's nature which is in you is held sacred in this house. We do not hem it in. We try to develop it. It is far from our intention to make of you men and women such as we are. Under our guidance you should become men and women such as your natures, the divine and sacred in your nature, require you to be. (Silber 1965)

My third principle of holistic education is that this spirituality should not be taken as an utterly mystical or other-worldly spirituality. The human being is comprised of many, many layers of wholeness, layers of meaning. Holism speaks of wholes within wholes. As Vincent Harding and others here have reminded us, it makes no sense to have spirituality without democracy, without social justice, without the healing of hatred and racial and class oppression, without a sustainable and nourishing relationship to the biosphere. Alongside our spiritual nature, the social and cultural reality

that we inhabit is a tremendously important part of our identity, and we have to address it directly.

Holistic education is not trying to train children for monastic practice. It is a way of engaging them with the world, in all its complexity. Holistic education has cultural, historical, and, yes, political implications. For example, I think when we leave here we should all be out there campaigning strenuously to overturn *Goals 2000* and all the national standards that are being crammed down our throats.

Now, we come to this position from a spiritual understanding, from a compassionate understanding. We want to honor the spirit of the children. But in the political arena we need to confront this mechanization and standardization of children's souls in a very fierce way. And that's why voices like John Gatto's are so important.

I have a fantasy that thousands of Rosa Parkses will emerge in our schools and one day will simply refuse to administer another standardized test. One day teachers will simply refuse to trim down their curriculum and make it conform to the mechanical and standardized curriculum that comes down from IBM and the State Department of Education. But this civil disobedience will have to be massive. If any one teacher tries it on their own, they are sure to be out of a job, and we need them in there. We don't want that to happen. I don't know who can spark this movement, but it needs to happen.

My fourth principle is that holistic education cannot be reduced to any technique. How do we take all this vision and put it into practice? There is really no particular technique. Holistic education is the art of cultivating meaningful human relationships. It's a dialogue between teacher and student within a community of learners.

Parker Palmer in his writings and in his talks has expressed this beautifully. John Miller, Rachael Kessler, and religious thinkers such as Thomas Merton and Martin Buber have also spoken very eloquently about dialogue, connection, and the mutual creation of meaning — this is the heart of education. There's no technique for doing that. It comes out of who you are. Standardization, quantitative assessment, competition, hierarchical authority, and the political control of curriculum and textbooks all diminish or destroy the possibility of this kind of learning.

I can, however, point to some practices in holistic education. Here's where we get a little more concrete. I want to start with early childhood education. And as I mentioned before, a holistic approach to early childhood education is one that starts with the developmental process. It understands that a three-year-old experiences the world very differently from a five-year-old or a seven-year-old. Maria Montessori and Rudolf Steiner were two of the brilliant pioneers who have identified these stages and developed educational methods to respond to them.

Montessori pointed to what she called "sensitive periods" in a child's life, when particular aspects of the environment would have a stronger than average meaning for the child and you should observe each child and know when to connect them with the right things in the environment. Montessori told us that "the hands are the instruments of man's intelligence." She insisted that children, especially young children, need to grasp the world literally before they can grasp it intellectually. Education flows from experience, a basic point of holistic education.

Fifty years after Montessori, another Italian educator, Loris Malaguzzi, and his colleagues in the city of Reggio Emilia developed a system of early childhood programs in which children explore and interpret their world through creative arts and stories and elaborate cooperative projects. This model is now influencing thousands of preschool teachers around the world, including those in the United States.

The difference is Reggio Emilia is a community, a city that's completely dedicated to the welfare of its children, and the schools that they've set up for their young children are beautiful places. I don't know that we have the equivalent of that kind of commitment in this country. But that's what we're working for.

American progressive educators, primarily influenced by Jean Piaget, have spoken about "constructivism" in early childhood education, where the child does not take in information and knowledge, but interprets and makes sense of the world. Teachers need to give children the opportunity to construct their understanding.

For children of a somewhat older age, there is Waldorf education. Waldorf is a very important model of holistic education. It was founded in 1919 by Rudolf Steiner. In the U.S. right now there are about 130 or 140 Waldorf schools. I do not have the space to explain this very complex approach, but I want to try to give you a bit of the flavor. The teacher is trained very carefully to be deeply sensitive to the ways that the soul or life force unfolds within each child. It is an explicitly spiritual approach to education. The teacher nourishes the soul

through story, myth, art, music, and movement. The teacher remains with his or her class from first grade all the way through eighth grade. A strong relationship and community is formed.

My oldest son will be starting a Waldorf school next year. Recently he went to visit the first-grade class this year which he will be joining. He came to the class actually quite scared to be in this new environment, and all the children just welcomed him in and said, "Oh, we're so happy you're here. We look forward to seeing you next year." And the teacher beamed in the background, saying, "Oh, I'm so proud of my kids." That's the kind of community that can be formed when that's your goal in education.

The curriculum in a Waldorf school takes children on a journey through humanity's history. Each phase of civilization is seen as analogous to stages in the soul's development. There is a high degree of structure in Waldorf education, but Waldorf educators have a very good rationale for that. They believe that a person achieves true autonomy and freedom only through the careful disciplining of life energy during childhood. The teacher stands in front of the children as a moral being, as an integrated, mature being, and Steiner believed the child would really imbibe that. And it does seem to work.

Another aspect of Waldorf education I want to mention is each Waldorf school is an island of sanity, an island of this emerging culture where organic and ecological values are honored and the gross influences of modern materialism, such as television and plastic toys and processed food and all that, are effectively banished. Waldorf schools are little oases for children, and that's a place to start.

Now I would like to turn to public education and talk about some important developments in public education that point toward holistic directions, and the whole language movement is one of these. Whole language is an effort to bring meaning, relationship, and critical inquiry into the process of learning literacy. Although it's not explicitly "spiritual," whole language is the closest that we're likely to get to genuine holism in public education in most communities in the foreseeable future. It is, of course, under severe attack from reactionaries and fundamentalists, who do not very much appreciate teachers encouraging critical inquiry among young people.

There's another progressive movement taking place in public schools today calling for more open, dynamic, multi-aged communities of learners. I find this movement very promising because these teachers are really concerned about the quality and not just the quantity of their students' learning, and this is a heroic stance.

We need to encourage people in these movements, even though they're not speaking our language, not speaking of spirituality, per se, because people come to holism through various entry points. Not all of us start with Ken Wilber's books or with a meditation practice. Teachers who are on the front lines and see how people are being damaged are looking for answers, and when they first come to whole language or multi-aged classroom or multiple intelligences, and they keep studying and looking, eventually they discover the bigger picture where all these approaches are connected.

I also want to talk about a very exciting development that's quite recent, just the last couple of years. You may be familiar with Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Literacy*. Back in the 1970s there were small groups of affective, humanistic, and confluent educators who talked about self-esteem, values clarification, and other romantic notions that also stirred up the wrath of reactionaries, and of course the reactionaries prevailed. But emotion literally has come back. We realize more and more that we are damaging children in the schools. And a great deal of research has shown that young people can make more sensible and, if you like, more moral choices when they are more in touch with their own internal emotional processes.

There are also educators such as Rachael Kessler who developed the Mysteries Program in California to help teens work through the problems of growing up in this culture, and Chip Wood and his associates at the Northeast Foundation for Children in Massachusetts who have developed what they call the "responsive classroom" and do workshops with thousands of teachers on the East Coast. They work with a lot of inner-city teachers, to make classroom communities places where everyone feels at home. These are significant breakthroughs, and we need to encourage them.

For older children, high school age, we have rites of passage. One in particular is the walkabout program that was developed by Maurice Gibbons, and it has been practiced for several years right here in Colorado at the Mountain Open High School in Jefferson County. A walkabout program sends teenagers out into the world. They can do volunteer work or have a wilderness adventure or intensive study of some topic, and then they come back to their community to report on what they've learned, on how they've grown, and their community supports them and welcomes them back.

I want to make a point about this search for techniques and for methods that we can apply. It is ironic that the two greatest and most influential holistic educators, Steiner and Montessori, deliberately emphasized that the teacher's open-hearted responsiveness is the very core of their pedagogy. And then they went ahead and gave very specific prescriptions for educational practice, which generations of their followers have interpreted literally, and if I might say so, quite slavishly sometimes.

Listen to these words of Rudolf Steiner himself. This is from a lecture in 1919, right at the time he was founding the first Waldorf school. Steiner said,

> For the true teacher, pedagogy must be something living, something new at each moment. We could even say that the best pedagogy is one that the teacher continually forgets and that is continually reignited each time the teacher is in the presence of the children and sees in them the living powers of developing human nature. (Steiner 1995)

I cannot end without mentioning Dee Coulter, who teaches at the Naropa Institute, because several years ago she contributed an article to *Holistic Education Review*, which I think nicely expresses what I'm trying to say here. Coulter (1991) compared Montessori and Steiner and asked why they are different. Why do they look like symmetrical opposites? She observed that each one was responding to a specific cultural and historical situation. Each was addressing specific facets of the complex wholeness of human beings.

Coulter argued that holistic educators today would be truer to the spirit of Montessori and Steiner by reclaiming their "seed" qualities rather than by adopting their methods in every detail. And that's what we need to do. We can learn from these methods, we can see why they were developed and what contexts they work in, but ultimately it is up to each of us to come to our students, come to our learning communities with an open-hearted responsiveness, a "teaching presence," as Rachael Kessler (1991) calls it, and that's the heart of holistic education.

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Editorial Board Appointments

Dale T. Snauwaert, Ph.D., has been appointed to fill the position of Associate Editor. He is Assistant Professor of Philosophy of Education at Adelphi University in Garden City, NY. His central scholarly commitment is the development of a philosophy of education that provides an educational experience based upon a vision of humans as spiritual beings living in an ecologically, morally, and politically interdependent world. He is the author of *Democracy, Education, and Governance: A Developmental Conception*, winner of an American Educational Studies Association Critics' Choice Award in 1996.

Atsuhiko Yoshida joins our Editorial Board. He is an associate professor in philosophy of education at Osaka Women's University and a lecturer at Kyoto University in Japan. He is co-author and co-editor of several books, including *The Foundations of Holistic Education* and *Holistic Education in Practice*. He is an editor of *Journal of Holistic Education* (Japanese) and co-founder of Japan Holistic Education Society.

tion. This Holistic ToM (HToM) curricular approach calls for an emphasis on Miller's notion of holistic/transformational, learning where learning is a process that involves all aspects of the child. I offer a reconceptualization of curriculum as a dynamic, synthetic eclectic by drawing on both my own personal experience as a holistic researcher/educator and on various theoretical frameworks. These include holistic education, psycho-culturalism, and social-cognitive psychology, which do not privilege a specific segment or create a concrete curriculum map/model (Bellack 1978; Dewey 1938; Eisner 1994b; Doll 1993; Schwab 1969), but resemble a "door by which one might enter the curriculum arena" (Lincoln 1992, p. 85).

Approaches to Curriculum Studies and Theories of Mind

Given that the process of education has to do with the creation of mind, and that conceptions of mind may be the product of curriculum just as well as the reverse (Bruner 1990, 1996; Eisner 1994b; Strauss and Shilony 1994), it is not surprising that a growing number of theorists have attempted to make the connections between conceptions of mind and curriculum more explicit through the use of frameworks and models (e.g., Tomasello, Kruger, and Ratner 1993). While I agree with Jackson's (1992, p. 18) claims that models of curriculum can only be "sketchily presented" and "are clearly interpretive" (p. 21), when one considers the dynamic and complex "web of significance" (Geertz 1973) spun by the curricular process of mental states, teaching/learning, and curriculum content (Eisner 1994a), an overview of the dominant approaches could be of some assistance by illustrating the relationships among conceptions of teaching/learning, curriculum, and mind.

In an attempt to link conceptions of curriculum with conceptions of mind, I will outline three approaches to the mind by connecting Miller's (1993a, b) three holistic curriculum positions and their (roughly) corresponding psychologies: transmission/behavioral, transaction/cognitive, and transformation/transpersonal, to various curriculum approaches and various theories of: teaching/learning, theories of mind, persons (teacher/learner), and the relationship between child and curriculum (Astington and Pelletier 1996; Olson and Bruner 1996).

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Transmission position.

Within the transmission position, reality is represented as fragmented, unconnected atoms or facts and focuses on the physical/functional explanation of experience (Dennet 1987; Greig, Pike, and Selby 1989). This atomistic or Newtonian view provides the philosophical context for a behavioral psychological approach which in turn provides the psychological context for atomistic approaches to curriculum. An atomistic curriculum focuses on the reduction of the curriculum content into small, separate units and the behavior of the child (Miller, 1993a) and corresponds to Prakash and Wak's (1985) notion of a Technical conception of education and Eisner's (1979) orientation of Curriculum as Technology. According to Miller (1993a, p. 13), this atomistic perspective corresponds to Bobbit's (1924) notion of curriculum.

The transmission approach to curriculum relates to teachers' behaviorist conceptions of mind and learning (Astington and Pelletier 1996), where the child is viewed as "an ignorant, empty vessel" (Astington 1993, p. 182) unable to interpret or make meaning (Astington and Olson 1995), relying on causal explanations (Habermas 1973). From this perspective, the child acquires the ability to do and know through imitation (Olson and Bruner 1996, p. 24), and is viewed as a "silent" knower (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule 1986) waiting to receive content or body-based knowledge (Berlak and Berlak 1983; Wilber 1983) from the teacher who acts as an "authoritarian expositor" (Olson and Bruner 1996). Within this traditional, premodern teacher/content-centered curriculum model, the focus is on the acquisition of skills and mastery of content (Astington and Pelletier 1996), where the relationship between learner and curriculum is uni-directional (Miller, 1993b). Given this over-emphasis on behavior and social conformity (Giroux and Penna 1979), with, according to Miller (1993a), the exception of mastery learning (McAshan 1979), very few educators interested in a balanced, connected education work from this stance (Miller 1993a; Belenky et al. 1986).

Transaction position.

A transaction position corresponds to a pragmatist perspective which views the world as a process and focuses on the intentional explanation of experience (Dennet 1987; Greig, Pike, and Selby 1989). From a pragmatist position, persons are viewed as rational agents and assumed to act to fulfill their desires, given

their beliefs or value judgments (Astington 1993). Pragmatism provides the philosophical context for a cognitive (Miller 1993a) and folk psychological approach, which in turn provides the psychological context for pragmatic approaches to curriculum. Such an approach focuses on scientific inquiry in the form of reflective thought, or "turning a subject over in the mind," (Dewey 1933, p. 3) (Miller 1993a), and roughly corresponds to Prakash and Wak's (1985) notion of a Rational conception of education, and Eisner's (1979) orientations of Curriculum as Development of Cognitive Processes, Curriculum as Personal Relevance, and Curriculum as Social Adaptation.

The transaction approach to curriculum relates to teachers' constructivist views of mind and learning (Astington and Pelletier 1996), where the child is assumed to have a constructivist development of Theory of Mind (for further discussion see Carruthers and Smith 1996) which is viewed as "a repository of privately held beliefs and ideas" (Olson and Bruner 1996, p. 19) creating and sharing meaning through interaction and discussion. From this perspective, the child can be viewed as an epistemologist (Piaget 1929) who learns to understand through interpretation (Astington and Pelletier 1996), thus knowledge can be viewed as a process (Berlak and Berlak 1983), or mind-based (Wilber 1983). Often referred to as progressive or modern vision of education (Doll 1993; Gardner 1992), the focus is on the development of problem-solving and decision-making skills acquired through dialogue or collaboration between the child and teacher where the relationship between the child and the curriculum is transactional (Miller 1993b).

Currently, the vast majority of educators work from pragmatistic approaches corresponding with the transaction position, often referred to as "child-centered" (Samuels 1996), or inquiry-based (Miller 1993a). However, there is a growing amount of criticism surrounding this pragmatic approach, particularly concerning pragmatism's inability to resolve the dichotomies of emotion/thought, child/curriculum, and the emphasis on logico-scientific thought or logical, linear thinking (Bruner 1990; Gardner 1991).

Transformation position.

The transformative position corresponds to a holistic perspective (Greig, Pike, and Selby 1989) based on perennial philosophy which holds that "all things are part of an indivisible unity or whole" (Miller 1993a, p. 17), and thus fosters the development of the whole person and relates to strands of psychology that emphasize the development of the whole person or an emotional/cognitive unity (Kaufman 1994) (e.g., transpersonal psychology, psycho-cultural psychology, social-cognitive psychology). In turn, such psychologies correspond to curriculum approaches either emphasizing social and political reform as in Eisner's (1994b) Social Reconstruction Curriculum Orientation (e.g., Giroux and Penna 1979; Friere 1971), or personal integration (e.g., Neill 1960). However, a truly transformative position promotes the integration of both personal growth and social change where equal focus is placed on the individual as well as the social community (Prakash and Waks 1985). Thus, the goal of a transformative curricular approach is to emphasize the development of both personal and socio-cultural understanding and the interconnections between the two (Miller 1992). An example would be Tager's (1986) Modern School of New York and Stelton which was a synthesis of political and humanistic consciousness.

The transformative position can be linked to social-constructivist views of mind and learning that stem from Vygotskian theory of cognition as a socially mediated process (Astington and Pelletier 1996). The child's development of a ToM is viewed as a process of enculteration where interpersonal social processes lead to the co-creation of intrapersonal cognitive process (see Astington 1996; Tomasello et al. 1993). From this perspective, the child can be viewed as an transformational epistemologist or a "connected knower" (Belenky et al. 1986) who comes to share and manage what is referred to as "objective knowledge" (Olson and Bruner 1996) through dialogical discourse or the reading of "cultural text" (Gilbert and Taylor 1991) where knowledge is viewed as the integration between personal and public (Berlak and Berlak 1983), or spirit-based (Wilber 1983). Often referred to as postprogressive or postmodern visions of education (Doll 1993; Gardner 1991), the focus is on the intersubjective understanding of self and other by means of problem-finding, intuition, wisdom, reflection-in-action (Schon 1992), and critical consciousness (Giroux and Penna 1979) where the activities promote the negotiation of intentions (Wells 1990). This social-constructivist approach goes beyond a "child-centered" curriculum by promoting interconnections among child, curriculum, and teacher where teaching and learning are viewed as a process of sharing or coming to share beliefs, goal and intentions, thus forming a "curriculum matrix" (Doll, 1993) that is "dialogue centered." Hence, a transforma-

tional approach envisions the classroom as a culture or a community of inquiry that provides the opportunity for a variety of voices (students, teachers, parents, etc.) to engage in discourse with one another (Wells and Chang-Wells 1992) resulting in the co-construction of knowledge.

Although rarely applied to ToM theory, psycho-cultural (Bruner 1996), ecological, and feminist approaches to mind/self and knowledge (Belenky et al. 1986; Bowers and Flinders 1990; Goldberger, Tarule, Clinchy, and Belenky 1996) provide a strong link to the transformational approach claiming that the nexus of mind, culture, education, and universe are interconnected. Such an inter-disciplinary approach to epistemological development can act as a lens for understanding students' perspectives on learning and for devising corresponding teaching strategies. A Holistic ToM (HToM) curricular approach that encompasses psycho-cultural theory improves upon the mainly cognitive, transactional model of education by viewing the child as a reflective epistemologist/intersubjective theorist (Bruner 1996) who connects with the teacher and curriculum in all aspects of development. Thus, a HToM curricular approach emphasizes both the inter and intrapersonal processes in knowledge construction and self development (see Bateson 1972; Csikszentmihalyi 1993, Eisner 1994a; Miller 1993; Vygotsky 1978). Accordingly, given that both reconceptualists (Friere 1971; Giroux 1979; Pinar 1975) and recent psycho-culturalists have pointed out that schools are part of a wider societal process and are considered a complex, ambiguous culture in their own right (e.g., Bruner 1996; Cole 1996; Rogoff 1990), a HToM view of curriculum aims to increase the complexity of the self by means of personal integration and social awareness which is needed to deal with our increasingly complex society. Furthermore, from a curricular perspective, a HToM approach shares similarities with social reconstructionists in the sense that it promotes both personal and social change by combining Dewey's psychological, individualistic approach to curriculum with the concern for social reform (Bobbit 1924; Giroux 1979).

Holistic ToM as a Curricular Approach: Curriculum as Content and Process

Although the notion of folk psychology or the ability to think of people as psychological beings who have thoughts and feelings may be far from modern (Wundt coined the term in 1916), using this way of thinking to educate children in school may be considered a post-modern method of education (Astington and Olson 1995). Furthermore, despite the fact that interest in both ToM and holistic education emerged at approximately the same time (mid-1980s), there have been few attempts to explicitly link the two paradigms (for an exception see Olson and Bruner 1996). Accordingly, within the context of curriculum studies, building on Tyler's (1949) questions concerned with educational objectives, and the general curriculum questions "How long is it?" and "What kinds of things does it contain?" (Egan 1981, p. 66), a more inclusive analysis of a Holistic ToM (HtoM) curricular approach occurs within Schwab's (1983) curriculum commonplaces of teacher/student, subject matter, and teaching-learning by answering the questions: Whom does this curricular approach include? What will the curricular content consist of? How will it be applied/taught in the classroom respectively?

Whom does this include?

A Holistic ToM (HToM) curricular approach considers the mind as a whole, as a construction of knowledge and emotion (Kaufman 1994) and thus envisions the child as a human, intentional being where "learners are not only minds or knowers but bundles of affects, individuals, personalities, earners of livings ... possessors of private lives" (Schwab 1969, p. 9). This vision also includes the assumption that both child and teacher hold implicit theories and are equally capable of envisioning themselves as "intersubjective theorists" (Bruner 1996; Olson and Bruner 1996). According to this transformational, holistic view, the teacher and student share the role of learner and co-constructor of knowledge. The classroom provides the child and the adult equal opportunities to participate in knowledge construction and to contribute to the cultural archive of legitimate knowledge claims (Olson and Bruner 1996). Potential power struggles between teacher and student may be eliminated once the student realizes that s/he has an equal opportunity to learn and to teach (Giroux and Penna 1979). Furthermore, given the elimination of traditional teacher/student roles, children may develop a greater sense of "agency" (Bruner 1996, p. 37) based on a greater belief in their ability, which in turn may lead to greater competence in all areas of school (Dweck 1986). Finally, by suggesting that teaching and learning are transformational, HToM supports Dewey's (1902, p. 11) view "that the child and curriculum are two simple limits which define a single process."

What should be taught and how?

A HToM curricular approach emphasizes an internalist or first-person perspective on learning and social aspects of theory construction which have the potential for creating a psychological-social curriculum. A curriculum that generates educational activities to promote critical consciousness and social awareness will help foster higher order cognitive processes such as self-reflection, metacognitive skills, or the ability to "go meta" (Bruner 1996, p. 88) or "reflection-in-action" (Schon 1992), and social-communicative skills such as empathetic sensitivity (e.g., Tomasello et al. 1993). For example, the promotion of an "inner curriculum" (development of self and social awareness) would include the combination of self-reflective activities (e.g., journal writing) with dialogical/social reasoning activities (e.g., critical analysis/discussion of media portrayal of social groups). However, although reflexive thought or "the best kind of thinking" (Dewey 1933/1966, p. 3) has been mentioned by various educators/psychologists in the past (Bruner 1965; Piaget 1929; Vygotsky 1978), the majority of critical reasoning curriculum remains within the domain of gifted education (Lovecky 1995). In addition, given the recent claims that language may play a critical role in the development of a ToM (Astington and Pelletier 1996), language activities that encourage dialogical reasoning and critical reflection such as those found in many gifted education programs (e.g., Silverman 1995), may be developed from a HToM perspective. For example, within the framework of narrative, recursive curriculum models such as Dewey's "loops" (1938), Bruner's (1965) Spiral Curriculum, and Drake's Story Model (1992) of cyclical journeys, educators can work collaboratively with their students at making their own implicit theories or psychological explanations more explicit by encouraging the use of metacognitive and psychological language within the classroom, which may promote individual growth as well as a united classroom consciousness.

In accordance with Gough's (1993) proposal to apply narrative and complexity theory to curriculum studies, I argue that to comprehend the magnitude, ambiguity, and complexity of the social relations that occur within the school milieu, we need more complex and complicated discourses such as HToM to assist children to make "human sense" (Donaldson 1992) out of their social interactions. Given that the roles of teacher and student are similar to that of a psychologist (Bennett 1992), a HToM curricular approach recognizes the important role psychology plays in education by applying the psychological "inside-out" approach to learning (Hunt 1987). Such an approach is facilitated by a non-threatening and reciprocal classroom climate that will help to ensure the psychological safety of teacher and student by giving credence to their inner thoughts and emotions. Within a psychologically safe classroom environment, classroom activities that encourage reflection on one's own and other's mental states supports a dialogical or co-constructionist model of curriculum by emphasizing the multiplicity of voices in inter and intrapersonal functioning (Valsiner 1994). For instance, a curriculum that includes holistic learning experiences that focus on the arts (e.g., guided imagery activities, visual arts, bibliotherapy, autobiographical writing) may help to encourage teacher and student to develop self-knowledge, communicate effectively, and test their own implicit theories and those of others irrespective of curriculum content.

In addition to encouraging educators and students to express their ways of interpreting and making sense of information, a HToM curricular approach relates to the notion of the "hidden/implicit" (Eisner 1994b) or "underground" curriculum" (Bruner 1996) which views schools as "agents of ideological control which function to reproduce and to maintain dominant beliefs, values, and norms" (Giroux and Penna 1979, p. 214). To "uncover" or "decipher" this hidden social curriculum, educators need to be cognizant of the learner's need to express one's own mental states or implicit psychological theories by paying attention to both what is said and NOT said in the classroom. In other words, sometimes the key to understanding how others think and feel are the silent thoughts that are not articulated.

Accordingly, a HToM curricular approach would include educational activities that promote verbal and nonverbal ways of expressing one's mental states and implicit theories. Given the notion that there may be theories of minds and emotions, a HToM curricular approach may help to unveil the multidimensionality, social aspect of the mind. For instance, reflecting on my own experience as both a learner and a researcher/educator, I have found the use of drama in the classroom to be a valuable holistic learning experience by providing students with the opportunity to choose their mode of expression, either verbally (e.g., participating as an actor or director) or nonverbally (e.g., creating the visual scenes and stage props, writing the screenplay/script), and to participate in dialogical rela-

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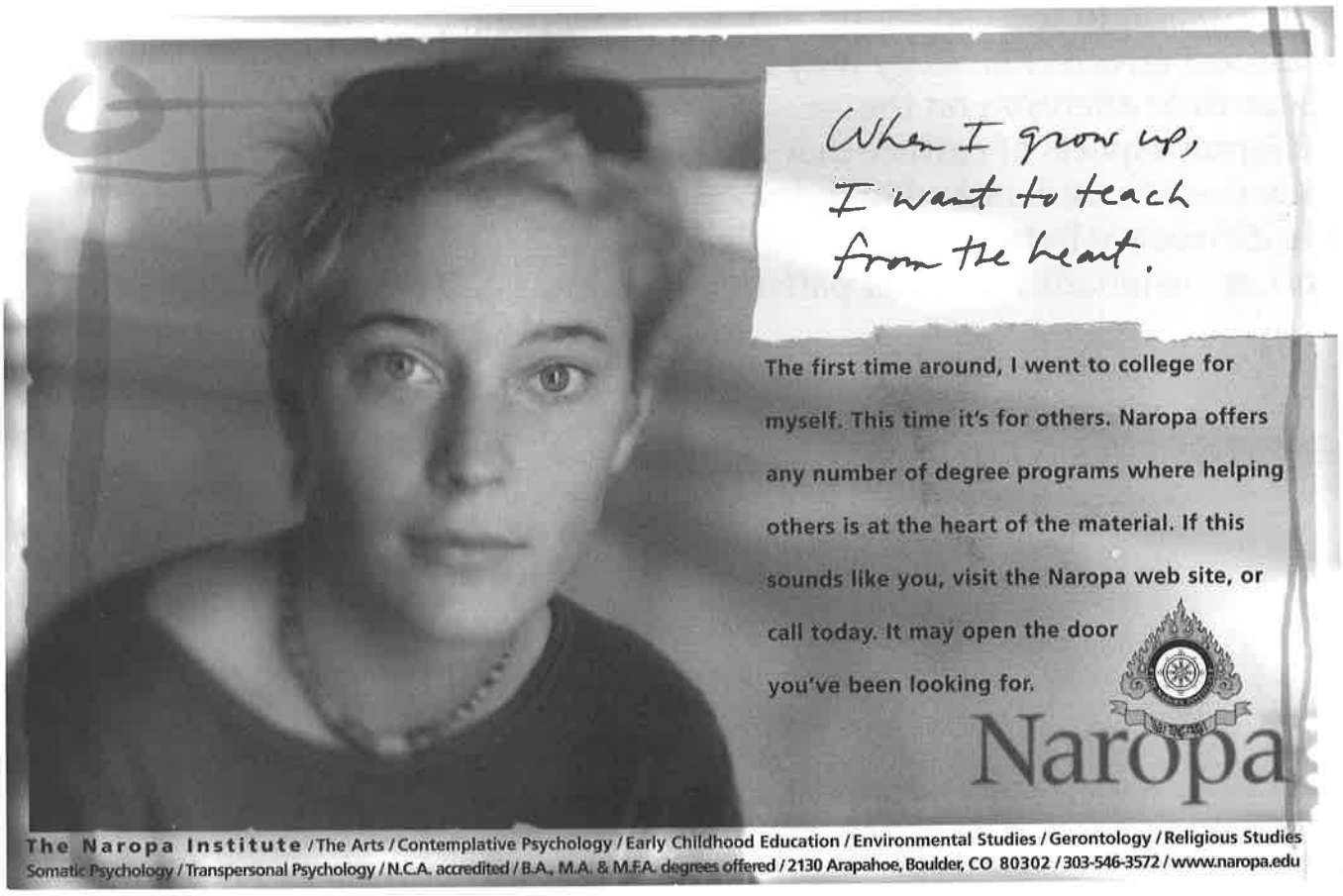

The Politics of Environmental Education

Strategies for Challenging Critics on Their Own Grounds

C.A. Bowers

As environmental education becomes more of a political issue, it is vital that educators continue to define what they want to conserve and present data on environmental degradation to their students, but the most effective strategy may be focus their attention on the different aspects of culture that they need to understand to judge the difference between sustainable and unsustainable cultural patterns.

C. A. Bowers lives in Eugene, Oregon, where he continues to lecture and write internationally. His most recent book is *The Culture of Denial: Why the Environmental Movement Needs a Strategy for Reforming Universities and Public Schools* (SUNY Press).

Environmental education is drawing increasing attention from ultra reactionary political groups that want classrooms to present the message of how corporations such as Shell Oil, DuPont, and International Paper, are caring for the environment. Groups such as the Center for Environmental Education Research at the Claremont Institute (which is part of the 500 interconnected Wise Use groups spread across the country) and the Alabama Family Alliance (connected with the Focus on the Family network based in Colorado) are not only attempting to reverse public support for the National Environmental Education Act, but are publishing books for parents and teachers on how environmental education should be presented in the classroom. The most noteworthy is *Facts Not Fear: A Parent's Guide to Teaching Children About the Environment* (Sanera and Shaw 1996), with the foreword written by Marilyn Quayle. As critics of environmental education also have the direct and indirect support of the Heritage Foundation, which receives its funding from such corporate giants as Chevron, Dow Chemical, General Motors, and IBM, the future of environmental education is going to become an increasingly contested political battleground.

These efforts to restrict environmental education to the presentation of "factual" information that represents corporations as responsible stewards of the environment, or to eliminate environmental education entirely from the curriculum (which is being attempted in several states), are inevitable outgrowths of the modern tradition of viewing the environment as a resource to be exploited in the name of progress. To such critics, teachers who encourage students to study environmental changes caused by the many forms of techno-

logical intervention are bound to be seen as an economic threat, and as betraying a sense of trust owed to the taxpaying public. Environmental educators are, in effect, now being penalized for reversing the long history of environmental miseducation that reinforced the modern assumptions and values underlying the consumer-oriented and technologically dependent culture that these critics now take for granted.

The earlier decades of environmental miseducation reflected the dominance of the economic stream of liberal thought that had its origins in the Industrial Revolution. Today's critics of environmental education simply want to continue, without constraint, what is now becoming the digital phase of the Industrial Revolution, but with technologies that contribute to the globalization of the Western consumer lifestyle. This digital phase of the Industrial Revolution, which is mistakenly interpreted as representing the inevitable next stage in the evolution of humankind, is also contributing to the loss of local knowledge of how to live in sustainable relationship with the environment, and the loss of how to maintain the noncommodified traditions of community life. The reliance of the critics of environmental education upon the liberal assumptions that gave the Industrial Revolution its legitimacy and messianic qualities needs to be taken into account, especially as these critics identify themselves as "conservatives."

The irony of these critics identifying themselves as conservatives when they should be called Classical Liberals is not simply an incidental matter. Nor is the irony of labeling environmental educators as "liberals" insignificant, particularly when their efforts are directed at *conserving* the viability of human and biotic community relationships. The confusion that characterizes the current discourse among environmental educators, and the increasingly heated rhetoric about the subversive nature of environmental education, brings to mind the advice of Confucius, the Chinese sage, who suggested that in times of trouble attention should be given to rectifying the use of language. That is, attention should be given to using language in ways that name the basic human relationships, identify the essential attributes, and, in the process, encode the moral norms that are to govern these relationships. Rectifying the political language in a way that highlights the human/nature relationships constituted by the terms "liberalism" and "conservatism" will help clarify the strategy that environmental educators should take in countering the attacks now being directed at them.

The argument of environmental educators that a science based approach to environmental education has no ideological orientation, and that the critics are thus misguided, simply will not be accepted when these critics (many of whom have ties with some form of religious fundamentalism) see science being elaborated into an increasingly powerful and encompassing metanarrative that explains the origins of life and human behavior as genetically determined. While developments in biotechnology currently dominate media attention, it will not be too long before it occurs to the reactionary critics that current scientific metanarratives both secularize and relativize the moral authority derived from their own taken-for-granted metanarratives — which is an insight that concerns many other citizens. Nor should environmental educators try to claim that the classroom can be an ideology free zone where just the facts are presented. Aside from the Marxist use of the the word, "ideology" can be partly understood as a shorthand way of referring to the modes of knowing encoded and reproduced in the language of a cultural group. To relate this point more directly to the classroom, the language of the curriculum that names relationships and attributes reproduces the cultural group's patterns of thought and values — which, in turn, serve as the conceptual and moral basis of interpretation. Accordingly, the language of the curriculum reproduces the cultural group's ideological/epistemological taken for granted conceptual patterns. And what cannot be interpreted by these conceptual patterns is often ignored or misunderstood. For example, when the language of the curriculum is based on the deep cultural assumption that equates change with progress, the nature of our dependency upon traditions too often is explained in overly simplistic terms or ignored entirely. People who have been educated to think theoretically often combine the lived ideology that is reinforced in the patterns of everyday life with a visionary ideology that represents a more ideal future form of social existence, as well as providing the strategies for attaining it.

While the latter form of ideology is often learned in teacher education courses along with management techniques, and contributes to the current need for the rectification of language, I want to focus more directly on the implications of how the language of the curriculum (regardless of content area) reproduces an ideological orientation. When learning is mediated by language, students are learning to think in the categories made available by the root metaphors of the language.

When the root metaphors of the culture include patriarchy, human-centeredness, mechanism, and progress, it then becomes normal to think of relationships that privilege men, that regard the environment as an exploitable resource, that interpret thought as the "firing" of neurons, and assume that all forms of technological change are the expression of progress. The more general point that environmental educators should keep in view is that when a cultural language system is part of the process of learning, a cultural schemata (or ideology) organizes thought into the deep patterns taken for granted by other members of the cultural group — even when there are on the surface, more individually based interpretations. This is one of the givens of the educational process. Explaining this to critics of environmental education is not likely to placate them, given that their real concern with environmental education is that it might lead the public to demand that they cease exploiting the environment in order to enhance profit margins of corporations.

The usefulness of the insight into the language of the curriculum is in the recognition that since there is no ideologically neutral curriculum (because there is no ideologically neutral cultural language) environmental educators cannot be held responsible for meeting the mythical standard of non-neutrality that their critics want. It may also help educators become more sensitive to the ways that culture is reproduced by language in the classroom, thus alerting them to the need to rectify the language of environmental education.

This leads us to the practical question: How will rectifying the political vocabulary of environmental educators, as well as that of their critics, help win public support for environmental education? As the general public has over the last few decades become more comfortable with identifying themselves with so-called "conservatism," we need to ask the question that David Orr raised recently in a British journal (1995): "What is it that the conservative critics of environmentalism want to conserve?" The answer is indicated by the values and ideas they cite as the reference point for their criticisms of environmental education. This answer clearly establishes that what they want to conserve is the nineteenth-century ideology of Classical Liberalism — which is also being revived and given new life by Libertarians and neo-Social Darwinists. They are not interested in conserving the current chemical composition of life systems as we now know them, nor are they concerned about conserving old growth forests, topsoil, aquifers, or plant and animal diversity. Rather, what they want to continue is a way of life where, in a cultural environment of survival of the fittest, individuals can pursue their own economic self-interest. Underlying their assumption about the supposedly natural law of supply and demand is the modern myth that represents technologically based change as the progressive expression of a culture's evolution. They also assume that to "truck, barter, and trade" represents the essential core of community life, and that the role of government should be limited to enforcing contracts and protecting private property from those elements of society that lack the competitive qualities necessary for winning their share of the economic pie. This nineteenth-century, Industrial Revolution ideology further upholds the individual as the basic social unit, which is represented in viewing intelligence, creativity, and freedom as essential attributes of the individual. It also assumes that human progress can be achieved independently of what is happening to natural systems — which are viewed as natural resources and as private property.

To allow this group's claim of being the true conservatives to go unchallenged is a serious mistake for environmentalists in general, and for environmental educators in particular. Environmental educators who justify their curriculum with the language of liberalism, given its genesis in the transformation of self-reliant communities that was dictated by the economic and moral logic of the Industrial Revolution, further contributes to the problem. In not having learned about the genealogy of Classical Liberalism, and how it spun off a set of beliefs about the competitive marketplace of ideas, the freedom of the individual to think critically, and the educational need to be emancipated from the constraints of tradition, the critics of environmental education mistakenly see therein a threat rather than the educational extension of their own basic assumptions. Rectifying the political language of both critics and environmental educators would help to quiet the critics, as well as foster support from the more genuinely conservative segments of society.

The rectification of the environmental educators' basic political categories with the overall goals of their curriculum would lead to representing themselves as cultural/bioconservatives. The central concern of environmentalists, regardless of whether they are ecofeminists, deep ecologists, or social ecologists, is with conserving (and restoring) the viability of natural systems. A careful reading of important environmental writers such as Aldo Leopold, Wendell Berry, Dolores

LaChapelle, and Vandana Shiva will put in perspective how conserving traditions of noncommodified community knowledge and relationships are critical to reducing the impact on the environment of technology and anomic, consumer oriented individualism.

The following statements clearly reflect what I call the cultural /bioconservative orientation of environmental thinkers:

> The basic value of a sustainable society, though, the equivalent of the Golden Rule, is simple: each generation should meet its needs without jeopardizing the prospects of future generations to meet their needs. (Durning 1991, p. 165)
>
> A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise. (Leopold 1966, p. 262)
>
> Sustainability is embedded in the processes that occur over long periods of time and are not always visually obvious. It follows that ecological design works best with people committed to a particular place and the kinds of local knowledge that grow from that place. This knowledge is slowly accumulated, season by season, through active engagement with the land. (Van Der Ryn and Cowan 1996, p. 65)
>
> For local indigenous communities, conserving biodiversity means to conserve the integrity of ecosystems and species, the rights to these resources and knowledge, and their production systems based on biodiversity. (Shiva 1996, p. 1)

These quotations are noteworthy in that they do not assume that change is progressive, that the emancipation of thought and values from tradition is the highest educational goal, and that the primacy of individualism (which is really an extreme form of anthropocentrism) is the basic category for understanding human/nature relationships. The political term that most accurately represents the basic relationships and responsibilities expressed in the above quotations is conservatism. But it is a form of conservatism that recognizes that cultural practices and values must meet the test of ecological accountability.

A more accurate political labeling of environmental education will help broaden the support within the general public. It may also contribute to a much needed discussion within Classical Liberal/Libertarian oriented groups about how to reconcile the deep cultural assumptions that justify the economic part of their political agenda with their less clearly articulated commitment to localism and the autonomy of the family. As most environmental educators are not accustomed to thinking comparatively about cultural patterns that relate to the ecological crisis, the strategy of rectifying the political discourse that contributes to the double binds within their field will require that they be able to explain how cultural/bioconservatism would be reflected in the curriculum.

I would like to suggest that the writings of Leopold, Berry, Shiva, among others, as well as what we have learned from ecologically centered cultures, point to the need to introduce into the curriculum what I have described elsewhere as a cultural/bioconservative view of temporality (that is, how the culture patterns of interacting with the environment take in what has been learned from the past and how they will effect the prospects of future generations). One of the deep cultural myths that has given legitimacy to the Industrial Revolution is that change is linear and progressive in nature, and that the rate of progress can be improved as we separate ourselves from the authority of traditions. Today, tradition continues to be represented in the liberal discourse as a constraint on new ideas, values, technologies, and our ability to become completely emancipated individuals. Indeed, this is an example of the power of a visionary ideology to obscure the recognition of how the patterns of everyday life, even new technologies, involve the reenactment, renewal, and extension of traditions handed down from the past. A cultural/bioconservative understanding of the temporal dimensions of culture involves a more complex understanding of the continuities between the present, past, and future — as opposed to the liberal stance of looking to the future with the expectation that all the experiments with the symbolic foundations of culture and with the chemical basis of ecosystems will be progressive steps forward. In addition to recognizing the continuities of our embeddedness in culture, and culture's embeddedness in natural systems, a more complex understanding of the traditions of the dominant and minority cultures is necessary for assessing which traditions contribute to the viability of community patterns that do not have an adverse impact on the environment.

Furthermore, as Keith H. Basso's book, *Wisdom Sits in Places* (1996) demonstrates, the importance of the intergenerational narrativizing of the experience of place, as well as developing technologies that incorporate the principles of ecological design (to cite two examples) cannot be determined as worthwhile or even

carried out within the time frame of the individual's subjective judgment or the expert's theoretically based approach to problem solving. These forms of knowledge are accumulated slowly and are refined in ways that take account of changes in natural systems — over generations of experience. As I have argued elsewhere (1995, 1997), this orientation toward carrying forward ecologically sustainable cultural practices and patterns is partly dependent upon a tradition of elder knowledge, which is a form of transgenerational responsibility that had no place in the Industrial Revolution. It is seen as even less relevant in the Age of the Internet. But this form of cultural/bioconservatism cannot be renewed if the educational process fails to maintain a balance between critical reflection, and an understanding of the complexity of our embeddedness in traditions on the one hand, and the need, on the other, to assess and renew traditions on the twin bases of whether they contribute to an equitable and just community and have a minimal impact on the environment.

The words introduced here — "tradition," "community," "narrative," "elders" — refer to essential aspects of environmental education. They are also words that critics of environmental education will have difficulty reconciling with their ideology of the free marketplace, and of competitive individualism that, out of historical ignorance, they choose to call "conservatism." If environmental educators had better access to public forums, these Adam Smith/Ayn Rand pseudo-conservatives could be exposed by highlighting the destructive impact that has resulted from the commodification of knowledge, relationships, and nature — which is one of the transformative practices that began with the Industrial Revolution, and is now being globalized by the increasingly widespread dependence upon computers. Activities such as play, mentoring, nurturing, entertainment, relationships with nature are being further commodified in order to yield the profits that will further stimulate economic and technological innovation that will, in turn, increase market opportunities. But the basic dynamic of this process is dependent upon a society of individuals who have no loyalty to community traditions and no deep attachment to place — that is, a society of rootless individuals. Noncommodified relations and forms of knowledge, on the other hand, are expressions of community reciprocity and living traditions, and consist mostly of face-to-face relationships that do not result in more toxins being spread over the land and water and the wasteful use of various forms of energy. Furthermore, these noncommodified forms of community do not depend upon the ethos of competitive and self-reliant individualism. Indeed, the presence of this ethos undermines noneconomically based relationships. To summarize a key point, the noncommodified aspects of community life are important expressions of cultural/bioconservatism that the critics of environmental education have no interest in conserving.

Because environmental educators do not have equal access to the media and to influential legislatures, I would like to suggest another strategy that is less confrontational. Actually, this alternative strategy represents a deeper and more sophisticated cultural approach to environmental education, and it can be carried out in areas of the curriculum that are not usually associated with environmental education. That is, it has the twin virtues of strengthening ecologically sustainable cultural patterns, while not attracting the attention of the reactionary critics. If teachers clearly understand that introducing students to a deep understanding of culture needs to be framed in terms of what Mathis Wackernagel and William Rees call the "ecological footprint" (1996), they can introduce students to examples of transgenerational communication that involve elder knowledge, as well as examples based on modern assumptions and technologies — including computers. Teachers can also introduce students to a comparative examination of cultures that will help clarify for students how modern assumptions and technological developments have influenced the students' understanding of how they are embedded in traditions — which is the first step in the process of examining how traditions both empower and constrain. This will help establish the basis for understanding that viable communities are complex ecologies of reciprocal relationships and responsibilities that have codeveloped along with changes in the environment over generations of time. Without this perspective on their connectedness to traditions, students are more easily swayed by the media into becoming consumers of the latest technological innovations or other fads. Cultural groups with a clear sense of their traditions tend to be more resistant to the spread of commodification — the Amish and indigenous American cultural groups being prime examples.

Teachers should also help students understand how the culturally based root metaphors constituted in the pre-ecological past continue to influence current ways of thinking and practice. Because of the widespread

acceptance of the liberal view of the rational process as individually centered, along with the conduit view of language that is necessary for viewing thought as free of cultural influence, understanding how current thinking and material culture (including technologies) reproduce past forms of cultural intelligence, as well as the role of language in this process, are perhaps the most empowering and enduring contribution of formal education. As I have already written extensively on how language thinks us as we think within the metaphorical constructions of the language (1990, 1993a, 1993b, 1995, 1997), I will limit my elaboration of this point to saying that if students understand how past forms of metaphorical thinking continue to exert an influence on how current relationships are understood they can then more easily recognize the pre-ecological ways of thinking that continue to represent the environment as a natural resource and technology as capable of overcoming temporary environmental dislocations. This connection between the earlier metaphorical constructions of a cultural group and current patterns of thinking can be taught in different areas of the curriculum, and without being labeled as environmental education.

As many social groups are beginning to express an awareness that the forces of consumerism are undermining values and relationships essential to morally coherent families and communities, there would be widespread support for introducing into the curriculum another set of issues that are critically important to an ecologically sustainable future. But instead of framing the discussion in terms of consumerism, which puts the primary focus on the unrestrained and easily manipulated buying habits of the public, the distinction should be drawn between commodified and noncommodified areas of community and individual experience. As mentioned earlier, turning relationships, skills, forms of knowledge, and nature itself into commodities that are bought and sold represented one of the most basic changes introduced by the Industrial Revolution. Before this change, market activities were restricted to a specific space in the town or between towns, and often limited to certain days of the week. As the factory system extended the idea of the market to include all aspects of the community and the environment, and as economic relationships were represented as governed by a universal law or principle that had no limitations, the moral frameworks that previously held the commodification process in check were undermined. Today, every aspect of human experience and, now , even genetic material are being commodified. And with the commodification of such activities as play, healing, education, mentoring, and craft knowledge, there has been a corresponding increase in the disruption of natural systems that has resulted from the misuse of natural resources and creation of toxic wastes.

The concept of commodification opens up for discussion a wider range of cultural assumptions and technological practices, and it also establishes a conceptual framework for focusing on the more constructive side of a cultural approach to environmental education. This involves identifying within the dominant and minority cultures the various forms of noncommodified relationships, activities, and forms of knowledge that contribute to the viability of community life, while at the same time having a low impact on the environment. As the students begin to carry out a cultural inventory of noncommodified dimensions of individual and community life, and to consider the impact on the community and environment of the technological and economic forces that are continually transforming the noncommodified areas of community into niche markets, they will be learning about the cultural characteristics of ecological sustainability.

A comparative analysis of the extent of commodification between the dominant and minority cultures will also open up important questions about social justice, and the dangers of technological colonization. It will also help students understand the complexity of tradition, transgenerational communication, the role of elders, and the power of metaphorical thinking to reproduce earlier forms of cultural intelligence within the context of considering the characteristics of sustainable human and biotic communities. Students might even be able to understand the dangers present in globalizing the technologies that further the process of commodification, as well as recognize how the educational process is contributing to this process. The role that computers play in commodifying nature and globalizing markets might even be considered. Parents who might be critical of classroom discussions about the importance of saving old growth forests and about animal rights, are likely to be more supportive of their children understanding why jobs are relocated to regions in the world that pay the lowest wages, and to understanding why so much of their budget goes for expensive toys, entertainment, healing, and other activities previously taken care of as part of the noncommodified commons.

The strategy of challenging critics to clarify what they want to conserve, as well as the strategy of giving them scientific data on the degraded state of natural systems, should not be ignored. But the strategy that is more likely to succeed, particularly in states enacting legislation limiting environmental education, is the one that focuses on the different aspects of culture that students need to understand in order to judge the difference between sustainable and unsustainable cultural patterns. As students learn, first of all, to recognize in their own and other communities the technologies that incorporate the principles of ecological design, and then how to participate in renewing the wisdom of local elders, and finally the differences between commodified and noncommodified relationships, as well as other aspects of a cultural/bioconservative approach to environmental education, perhaps we will have less need for eco-management — and fewer critics.

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Curriculum as Window and Mirror

Emily Style

All students deserve a curriculum which mirrors their own experience back to them, upon occasion; but curriculum must also insist upon the fresh air of windows into the experience of others.

Consider how the curriculum functions, insisting with its disciplined structure that there are ways (plural) of seeing. Basic to a liberal arts education is the understanding that there is more than one way to see the world; hence, a balanced program insists that the student enter into the patterning of various disciplines, looking at reality through various "window" frames.

Years ago a Peanuts cartoon illustrated this vividly for me. Schultz's dog Snoopy was pictured sitting at his typewriter, writing the cultural truth, "Beauty is only skin deep." When the dog looked in the mirror however, it made more sense (to the dog) to write "Beauty is only fur-deep."

In the following day's comic strip, the bird Woodstock had apparently made a protest; Snoopy responded by shifting the definition to "feather-deep." Woodstock, too, had looked in the mirror and insisted on naming truth in a way that made the most sense to him.

Perhaps the only truth that remains, after such an exchange, is that "Beauty is," still no small truth to expound upon.

For me, the beauty of the classroom gathering lies in its possibilities for seeing new varieties of Beauty. This multiplicity, in turn, enables both students and teachers to be engaged in conversation about an evolving definition of the beautiful. Such dialogue requires the practice of *both/and* thinking as participants acknowledge the varied experiences of reality which frame individual human perspective.

In considering how the curriculum functions, it is essential to note the connection between eyesight and insight. As the Peanuts cartoon illustrates, no student acquires knowledge in the abstract; learning is always personal. Furthermore, learning never takes place in a vacuum; it is always contextual.

This brief paper will explore the need for curriculum to function both as window and as mirror, in order to reflect and reveal most accurately both a multicultural world and the student herself or himself. If the student is understood as occupying a dwelling of self, educa-

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tion needs to enable the student to look through window frames in order to see the realities of others and into mirrors in order to see her/his own reality reflected. Knowledge of both types of framing is basic to a balanced education which is committed to affirming the essential dialectic between the self and the world. In other words, education engages us in "the great conversation" between various frames of reference.

Theologian Nelle Morton, who taught for years at Drew University in Madison, NJ, has made a significant contribution to balancing the Western educational emphasis on the importance of the Word, the logos of communication. She suggests that the opening lines to the gospel of John, "In the beginning was the Word," are often understood as the whole truth — when, in fact, they probably more accurately render only half of the dialectic when she insists, "In the beginning is the Hearing."

At this point, I would link hearing and seeing to emphasize a further aspect of shared framing. The delightful truth is that sometimes when we hear another out, glancing through the window of their humanity, we can see our own image reflected in the glass of their window. The window becomes a mirror! And it is the shared humanity of our conversation that most impresses us even as we attend to our different frames of reference.

In her commitment to inclusive seeing, Eudora Welty wrote,

> The frame through which I viewed the world changed too, with time. Greater than scene, I came to see, is situation. Greater than situation is implication. Greater than all of these is a single, entire human being who will never be confined in any frame.

In acknowledging the fluidity of framing, however, it is essential that dialogue about differences not get lost. Sidney Jourard, in his commitment to education as dialogue, once put it this way:

> Another person's words are the windows to his or her world, through which I see what it is like to be that person. When another speaks to me in truth, he or she becomes a transparent self, and releases in me an imaginative experience of his or her existence. If he or she cannot speak, if I do not listen, or if I cannot understand then we must remain suspicious strangers to one another, uncognizant of our authentic similarities and differences.

Jourard's statement makes obvious that another person's words will not function as window — if no one hears them or if, for some reason, the words are not even voice — which is exactly the case in the following narrative poem by New Jersey poet Lew Gardner (1973).

> My mother's uncle had a horse
> The best time of a deadly relatives' Sunday
> was to walk with him to the stable
> and watch him feed the quiet animal,
> to give it sugar from my own hand and jump back away
> from the big warm tongue,
> to smell the hay and manure, to see
> the white horse in the next stall,
> with tail and mane like yellow silk
>
> if my mother and I ran into him
> as he and the horse were making their rounds,
> buying up the wonderful junk
> they heaped and hauled in the wagon,
> he'd lift me up to the seat
> and let me hold the reins and yell "Giddy-up!"
> In the spring of 4th grade,
> one afternoon of silent division
> we heard a clanking and looked outside.
>
> My great-uncle! I could tell them all
> how I had held those reins!
> But everyone laughed at the hunched old man,
> the obsolete wagon and horse,
> the silly, clattering junk.
> I did not tell them.

While everyone in that fourth-grade classroom looks out the same window, they do not all see the same old man. For all but one, their knowledge is "detached" and "objective." And all but one of them suffer (unaware) from the limitation of their detachment. The poem's narrator, on the other hand, is aware of his suffering as he acquires another view of the old man to whom he is intimately connected. Prior to the classroom window experience, the narrator's view had been purely provincial. Now he is forcefully educated during "one afternoon of silent division" to see more than he has before. He sees his great-uncle reduced to being a mere "Other" in the eyes of the others.

But there are more observations to be gleaned from this poetic incident. The child's (understandable) silence means that the others in the classroom remain trapped in their limited, "objective" view of the old man. His otherness, his alien nature, is all they can see. This is a particular shame in the light of the insight of

the painter Van Gogh who once asked in a letter to his sister-in-law,

> Could it not be that by loving a thing
> one sees it better and more truly
> than by not loving it?

Recent scholarship (including Howard Gardner's *Frames of Mind*, Edward De Bono's *Six Thinking Hats*, and Belenky et al.'s *Women's Way of Knowing*) distinguishes various kinds of knowing. Credit is due to Harvard scholar Carol Gilligan who pioneered attention to the gendered dimension of different ways of seeing in her 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*.

Scholar Peter Elbow has also done important work in naming how the dominance of the "doubting game" in the Western educational tradition obscures the equal, but different, benefits of taking an empathic approach to something or someone which is seen initially as Other, alien to one's own experience and frame of reference.

In *Women's Ways of Knowing* and other feminist scholarship, the terms "connected-knowing" and "detached-knowing" are used to clarify the differences between kinds of knowing which have frequently been aligned with traditional gender socialization. Females have been taught the importance of feeling *with* another in the "care perspective," while males have been taught the importance of thinking critically (*against*) another in order to protect their own "right(s)" perspective.

Recent scholarship not only increasingly delineates between kinds of knowing, however. It also returns again and again to the basic need for the whole spectrum of thinking/feeling competencies to be taught to all students, regardless of gender and other cultural variables.

To return to the central metaphor of this paper, the need for curriculum to function both as window and as mirror, we need to acknowledge that this perspective is in line with the ancient liberal arts tradition which pursues multiple perspectives (in insisting on a variety of disciplinary paradigms). Intrinsic to this classical perspective is the actuality and validity of differences.

Traditionally, American education has been more comfortable focusing on similarities. Despite our democratic rhetoric, differences have made us uncomfortable. In fact, there are still American educators who pride themselves as being "colorblind," thinking that ignoring "accidental" differences of race or gender or region or class creates the best classroom climate. Promoting such partial seeing is highly problematic for the creation of curriculum which will serve all students adequately.

Perhaps noting the wording of the traditional Golden Rule will clarify the importance of building both windows and mirrors into the educational process. To "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" takes one's own sensibilities and projects them through the window onto the other. Granted, at times when similarities abound, this Rule can lead to ethical decision making of the highest order. Its strength comes from the knowledge of one's own humanity which we can liken to studying oneself closely in a mirror.

I would suggest, however, that there are times when to "do unto others as they would have you do unto them" is the more appropriate ethical guideline, one which frames a window into the humanity of another whose preference might be very different from one's own. One who is blind to the existence of such difference might, for instance, purchase a gift for another which she herself would like but which, in fact, is highly inappropriate, unwanted, or even resented by the recipient of the gift.

Now, the common sense of needing to provide both windows and mirrors in the curriculum may seem unnecessary to emphasize, and yet recent scholarship on women and men of color attests abundantly to the copious blind spots of the traditional curriculum. White males find, in the house of curriculum, many mirrors to look in, and few windows which frame others' lives. Women and men of color, on the other hand, find almost no mirrors of themselves in the house of curriculum; for them it is often all windows. White males are thereby encouraged to be solipsistic, and the rest of us to feel uncertain that we truly exist. In Western education, the gendered perspective of the white male has presented itself as "universal" for so long that the limitations of this curriculum are often still invisible.

Linda Nochlin asked, in a 1972 essay, this question, "Why have there been no great woman artists?" Think about how the understanding of women's quilts as art has evolved in the last twenty years. Imagine the neglect of a curriculum which teaches a female student to look always through the window at the art done by others while ignoring the art of the quilt made by her own grandmother which is reflected in the mirror of her very own bedroom.

By now it should be obvious that some of the "missing" great women artists were making quilts. But, if

what is close to home and reflected in your own mirror is excluded from the very definition of art, your gaze will only see "the windowed half" of art history. Such an education will be unbalanced, incomplete and inaccurate — though pretending to be otherwise.

Consider another example. In the summer of 1987, *Sports Illustrated* magazine published a photo essay in a special baseball issue which illustrated the poet Donald Hall's definition of the sport. In Hall's words, "Baseball is fathers and sons playing catch," and in twelve pages of father-son photos, the magazine pictured this relational (connected-knowing) definition of the sport by featuring some of the faces of the sixty-seven ones (and one grandson) of former major leaguers currently playing organized baseball in the United States.

Then, abruptly, but without any fanfare, the final page of the photo essay switched to the heading *Mother and Son*. The following words accompanied the essay's last two photos:

> The All-American Girls Baseball League was big in the '40s, and one of its starts was 5'1" Helen Callaghan. One of Helen's five kids, Casey, grew up to be the Montreal Expos' 5'9" second baseman. If someone tells Casey he throws like a girl, he won't mind.

Unless one's life experience is otherwise, one might never notice that Hall's poetic definition of the sport of baseball excludes half the population from participation by rendering them invisible at the basic definitional level. In other words, girls cannot see themselves mirrored in the line "Baseball is fathers and sons playing catch." It is only a window for them, to others' lives. Even the altered caption of Mother and Son still excludes girls' experience as daughters, sidelining the female-female connection central to their development.

The challenge of integrating women and minority studies into the traditional school curriculum comes at this very basic level. More than half of our culture's population (all girls, and boys from minority groups) are trained and expected to look through windows at others who are viewed as the valid participants in a sport; an exclusionary curriculum, often perpetuated by the unaware, holds no mirrors for the majority of the students. Females are taught their "proper role" as spectators on life's playing field. But that is only half the damage.

At the same time those whose (white male) experience is repeatedly mirrored are narrowly and provincially educated to see themselves (and their own kind) as the only real players on life's stage. Like the disadvantaged fourth graders who see the old man only as Other, they miss half of what a balanced education should be for all of us: knowledge of both self and others, and clarification of the known and illumination of the unknown.

All students deserve a curriculum which mirrors their own experience back to them, upon occasion — thus validating it in the public world of the school. But curriculum must also insist upon the fresh air of windows into the experience of others — who also need and deserve the public validation of the school curriculum.

Differences as well as similarities exist. The mathematician and the linguist see the world in different ways. One is not superior to the other; a balanced education encompasses both.

Differences exist. They never melted down into "the melting pot" and, now, in a nuclear age we have no choice but to educate youngsters (and ourselves) to handle them more realistically so as to avoid, at all costs, a foolish nuclear melt-down of all of us. One "sandlot" of encounters with difference is located in classroom curriculum and dynamics. Imagine how students' sense of historical perspective (on sandlot encounters) would shift if the academic subject of history were taught using the definition suggested by South African playwright Athol Fugard at the Georgetown University commencement in June 1984:

> I am talking about the living of life at the most mundane level, and what I am saying is that at that level — at the level of our daily lives — one man or woman meeting with another man or woman is finally the central arena of history.

Of course, students' educational diet is not balanced if they see themselves in the mirror all the time. Likewise, democracy's school curriculum is unbalanced if a black student sits in school, year after year, forced to look through the window upon the (validated) experiences of white others while seldom, if ever, having the central mirror held up to the particularities of her or his own experience. Such racial imbalance is harmful as well to white students whose seeing of humanity's different realities is also profoundly obscured.

Such inaccuracy and imbalance diminish the education of all our children. Some students, like the narrator in Gardner's poem, remain subordinated and silent, though their vision is actually wider, while others strut their stuff on the life stage insensitive to other points of

view. All of us lose when education is framed this way.

It is limiting and inaccurate to only educate our children provincially when they must live their lives in a global context, facing vast differences and awesome similarities. They must learn early and often about the valid framing of both windows and mirrors for a balanced, ecological sense of their place(s) in the world.

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Book Reviews

Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum: A Student-Centered Approach

by Edward T. Clark, Jr.

Published by Holistic Education Press, 1997

Reviewed by Kathryn De Lawter

Are you an active reader ready to be engaged in dialogue? If so, Edward T. Clark, Jr. is well prepared to bring you into his discourse on "integrated curriculum" with his book *Designing & Implementing an Integrated Curriculum: A Student-Centered Approach.* Currently an educational consultant, the author brings thirty years of experience in teacher education to those interested in site-based educational change.

Clark sees the problem with schooling as twofold: classroom talk that does not meet the needs of students, and curriculum discourse that does not create learning communities which would be sites for change within and beyond classrooms. He believes that if teachers shape the curriculum to correspond to the questions students are asking, the content of instruction and approaches to teaching will change. Clark is aware that teachers are concerned about what to teach and that "covering" content is an overriding concern. His response is to focus attention on what children know and the kinds of questions they ask in classrooms. This strategy elicits qualitatively different ways of approaching content, i.e., "questions worth arguing about." He further suggests doing this "in the absence of textbooks — except as possible resources" (p. 79). In this way content is exploration and experimentation.

Clark argues that change will begin when teachers internalize the belief that all children are learners as well as teachers. He sees students and teachers in small highly participatory groups building "learning communities." Together, they will integrate curriculum for change. Clark's vision is to ignite teachers by affirming their reasons for going into teaching in the first place, and to spark and channel the awesome talent and energy of children and youth. His book offers an elaborate schema with which to reconceptualize and actualize human potential.

Over years of interacting in schools and piloting programs, Clark's concepts evolved as integrative ecological principles that form a structure for reconstructing and constructing knowledge. Clark and his colleagues coined the term "ecoliteracy" to describe the principles underlying their work. "Ecoliteracy" involves all participants in creating questions that engage their full potentials as meaning makers.

Clark's approach to questioning draws upon the ecological principles of interdependence, sustainability, diversity, partnership, coevolution, energy flow, and fluctuating cycles. These principles emphasize the dynamism of living as a human being. Clark describes the movement from and between "questions worth arguing about," to "focus questions," to "contextual questions," to "perspective questions," and "student questions." This approach values the meanings of both child and adult curriculum makers who are called upon to create and explore their own contexts of meaning with an emerging global perspective. Clark argues that a global context is necessary to the learner's need for understanding in the twenty-first century.

So when is a question not worth arguing about? A good rule of thumb for teachers is to consider whether their conversations elicit answers to questions students never ask. Clark describes four contexts for posing questions that are worth arguing about. They form the basis for "connectedness" within learning communities: 1) the Subjective Context which allows for the formulation of questions related to self; 2) the Time Context which locates a focus question in time; 3) the Symbolic Context which organizes the purposefulness of a focal idea; and 4) the Ecosystem Context which orients the scope of the inquiry in the real world. The "focus questions" help students and teachers become conscious of contextual relationships which lead to a recognition of different ways of knowing.

Clark calls on educators to think of themselves and their students as creators of knowledge rather than as discoverers of truth. "Facts," he argues, are points of view. He makes the case that every action someone takes makes a difference to everyone else. Further, he states that "systems thinking" does not

Kathryn De Lawter has taught for the last 14 years at Pace University in the undergraduate and graduate pre-service teacher education programs as well as the college freshman reading program. She brings a Constructivist Perspective and an insatiable interest in language and meaning, global perspectives, the sociology of knowledge, and critical pedagogy.

need to be taught. The job of adults is to nurture the innate potential of making meaning with others. Learning is about learners making connections.

Clark locates his understandings in context and makes the underlying assumptions of his "integrated curriculum design solution" explicit. He does not take for granted that individuals are responsible for a given situation or result. Rather, he argues that decisions are made by people in positions of power within complex environments where events and meanings extend in time and beyond the individual. The shaping of people by structures is essential to understanding what Clark offers as a resolution to "the problem" of American education and its need for curriculum reform.

Designing and Implementing an Integrated Curriculum was written to influence how teachers engage in the educational enterprise. Nevertheless, the discipline and comprehensiveness of Clark's "systems thinking" may undermine originality as well as the capacity to be surprised. There seems to be an underlying perscriptiveness that could easily be taken as formulaic. As a reader, the layers of imbedded questioning format a system of critical thinking not unlike encountering the weight of a bureaucratic structure. In practice these layers might not overwhelm, but there is a danger of this occurring in the reading of his text. Clark offers a system for thinking which he believes will support innovation and creativity. The problem is that operating within any system for too long is circumscribing. "Systems thinking" may not be for everyone over an extended period of time. Will there be room for those teachers or students who would prefer new and different ways of thinking?

It may be worth it to belong to a learning community with the goal of curriculum reform even if it means subscribing to one approach, at least for a time. Near the end of his book, Clark describes high schools he visited where the class time and arrangement of the school day, not to mention how students are grouped and what they can accomplish, are all called into question. Along with Clark, I take this as a sign of hope. The constraints at the high school level have been more intransigent than those at the elementary and middle school levels where he has piloted ecoliteracy programs.

Clark's work is student-centered "systems thinking" aimed at integrating the curriculum. On the one hand, his project is as simple as involving learners (both teachers and students) in posing questions that will engage their talents to their full potentials. On the other hand, his is an ambitious project to locate and identify the problems of curriculum design and to foster the use of a framework with strategies for change.

Clark's approach makes sense and is firmly grounded in the reality of the education world that I know. He is aware of the power relations that could dominate decisions affecting the future of schooling. Acting as a leader, his "integrated curriculum" could entice administrators, teachers, students, parents, union leaders, business leaders, and others to listen to each other's common and conflicting interests. Were they to follow his lead and actively engage in communicating and negotiating a shared vision, changes would occur, person to person over time. Clark, himself, shows how to keep the focus on students' explorations and he expects us all to act, not only in our own interests, but collectively to think, young and old — meaning makers — alike.

Starting From Scratch

by Steven Levy

Published by Heinemann, Portsmouth, NH, 1996, 205 pp.

Reviewed by Jack Petrash

Teachers are like dowsers. We move among our children with an inner awareness, searching for some subterranean movement. And when we sense that place within a child, or a group of children, where something vital resides below the surface, we probe, we dig deeper, hoping to unearth a wellspring that will nourish and refresh.

This is true for our work with educational ideas, as well. When we tap into an educational idea in a new way, with both courage and determination, putting ourselves at risk, we can uncover a source of insight and inspiration that will flow with such abundance that all our work with children is renewed. This is what we witness when we read *Starting From Scratch*, by Steven Levy.

Starting From Scratch is the account of a fourth-grade teacher in Lexington, Massachusetts who has sought a deeper response from his students. That

Jack Petrash has been an elementary school teacher for twenty-five years. During that time he has written numerous articles on Waldorf education. He is on the faculty of the Rudolf Steiner Institute and a member of the editorial board of the *Holistic Education Review*.

response is the starting point from which all of the teaching proceeds. And it is apparent from the beginning of this book, that all children are capable of this deeper response. In the chapter "Finding the Genius," the author presents one of the fundamental assumptions of his work with children.

> I use the word *genius* intentionally. I do not mean to suggest that every child is a genius as we understand that word today, but rather that everyone has a genius according to the word's most essential meaning of "a particular character or essential spirit." It is the quality that makes something unique.... We especially need to recognize the genius in our students, that quality or collection of qualities that makes them who they are, that distinguishes them from everyone else. I want to celebrate the unique expression of humanity that each one represents. Even the ones who drive me crazy! I have discovered that when children know that I recognize who they are, they will open up in trust and present me with the fullness of their capability to learn. (p. 4)

Starting From Scratch is an account of the exploration of genius. There is perhaps no better example of this than the tale of "Leroy's Sneakers" (p. 8). This account helps us to remember that it is the depth of a child's soul, not affluence, which gives expression to this unique spirit. At the same time we are reminded of the wonder in a child's world and how fortunate we are to share that world daily. These stories and anecdotes will help us remember that as teachers we share common ground, and that inspired teaching is not as far away as it sometimes seems.

Steven Levy affirms that each teacher has a genius, as well. It is out of that genius that we should create our pedagogy. "Our natural authority in the classroom is based on our authorship of the activities and experiences we use to engage the children. Because each teacher needs to find his or her way, there is no one right way to do it" (p. 11). Implicit here is the idea that our work with children, the actual course of study, should arise out of the meeting of what is best in both the children and the teacher.

On the topic of curriculum, Levy observes that regardless of the subjects which are suggested by the state or the school district, it is possible for meaningful and enlivened teaching to arise.

> I do think we need some curriculum guidance from the central administration. We need to have a framework so that in the course of the children's education they will be exposed to an integrated and coherent course of study. We also need to coordinate the subjects across the grades so that the children do not learn about electricity three years in a row. We need an outline of when the children are expected to master sentence structure, fractions, scientific procedure. What I want from my system is a very broad sketch of subjects to teach and the freedom to teach them out of my own design. Tell me the children should learn about China, the Civil War, botany, or New England geography. Define the habits of mind, heart, and work that the community decides are important, for all children to develop. Then let me have room to explore the topic with the children. (p. 28)

Steven Levy believes that within this general framework an atmosphere of real inquiry will lead children to ask their own unique questions. These questions, when addressed in the right way, will lead to an authentic curriculum, something which cannot be set down in a text book or orchestrated in a learning kit. Rather, it is a curriculum that arises within a specific class of children. These questions cannot be predicted. They can only be taken up in earnest.

The chapter "How Did Our Town Get its Name?" details an effort to respond to a question raised during the study of local geography. This question becomes the starting point around which the fourth graders worked, locating and writing to all the Lexingtons in the United States, doing original research on each town, its history, its importance, and the origin of its name. The children felt their classroom extend out into the world and felt the greater community reach into their room. Letters with information and mementos began to pour into the class. Each student reported on a different Lexington and the reports and materials collected by the students were displayed in an exhibit which was later housed at a local museum. This was an affirmation to the students that their learning reached beyond the boundaries of the classroom.

The teaching that is detailed in *Starting From Scratch* has characteristic features. It is spontaneous and reaches beyond the classroom into the broader community. It is both practical and idealistic. It is teaching that awaits a question with openness and then acts with boldness. It is courageous to pursue a good idea when it leads to the most surprising places.

The heart of *Starting From Scratch* is a chapter entitled "What Is The Ideal Classroom?" Steven Levy and another colleague, independent of each other, conceived the idea that the ideal classroom would be completely empty on the first day of school. Filling that empty classroom with the children's help would be the starting point of the year's work. That empty room would lead to a most remarkable classroom experience, one which you

should read firsthand in its entirety to appreciate fully.

It is no wonder that Steven Levy was named the Massachusetts State Teacher of the Year and one of the Outstanding General Elementary Teachers in America. His book is inspiring and instructive. It has the mark of genius, but genius that we all share. The example he provides is within the reach of all teachers. It is accessible. It challenges us to go beyond the limits of conventional classroom thinking and to "hold ourselves as teachers, individually and collectively, to the same high standard we expect for our children" (p. 176).

Multicultural Education as Social Activism

by Christine Sleeter

Published by SUNY. Press, 1996, 284 pp.

Reviewed by Eduardo Manuel Duarte

If Christine Sleeter were asked to choose a theme song for her most recently published book on multiculturalism (a collection of previously published, revised, and new essays) a top ten choice would have to be the Motown hit "Nowhere to Run to Baby." With the attitude that she (and we) have nowhere to run and nowhere to hide from our race, gender, and social class locations, Sleeter offers up a version of critical multicultural pedagogy that is determined to break the culture of silence toward racism in education. This pernicious but persistent silence amongst white American educators, which Sleeter first noticed when working as a teacher in Seattle, is the real subject of this book. Although, to a certain extent, it is "Christine Sleeter" herself as the embodiment of the dominant position in education (white, middle class, straight, able bodied, female) that we are wrestling with.

Because there is nowhere to run or hide, Sleeter demonstrates how and why the interrogation of self is the take-off point for educational authenticity. The substance of her self-reflection is what she calls the white silence and solidarity about race and racism. Sleeter observes that the economic and racial security of her upbringing did little to develop any form of critical consciousness. On the contrary, growing up in southern Oregon in a hometown that "was over 99% white" offered her an overtly narrow and racist upbringing. "The racism I was raised with was grounded in taken-for-granted acceptance of white people as the center of the universe, but not active hatred directed toward people. My racial and social class background conferred advantages on me which I was unaware" (p. 19).

Sleeter's autobiography recalls the slow emergence of a critical "voice" that was, for a long time, without a supporting chorus. This emergence began with her ambivalent entry into feminism after graduating from a university in Oregon "attended mainly by white, relatively affluent students" for whom the social activism of the 1960s was nonexistent. While students in Birmingham, Berkeley, New York, and Paris chanted revolution, sang for peace, and hymned for freedom, Sleeter and her classmates "were worrying about the next football game or fraternity party. I didn't really get involved in the 1960s until the 1970s" (p. 21). All of this changed dramatically when she moved to Seattle.

Her formative years as a critical multiculturalist occurred from 1971-1978 while living in south central Seattle. Here, Sleeter lived and worked, for the first time, in a social context that was racially diverse. She formed friendships with people of color (mostly African American), but some of these relationships were deeply flawed. For example, as a teacher she positioned herself as a friendly authority figure, and learned to form positive relationships with students of color, "fairly quickly." However, she accepted low academic expectations and thus propagated what Delpit (1995) names as a particularly subtle form of discrimination. "I could get the students to do what I wanted, but what I wanted them to do embodied racism" (p. 24). What's more, Sleeter's "control" over her students, and her intimate relationship with an African American colleague, left her unprepared for the rejection she faced from women of color. As she tells us, her need to repress, deflect, or even transcend her location and positionality as an intelligent, white female left her ignorant to the fact that she "could not use the same strategies with women of color ... to deflect my racism" (p. 27). "With women of color, I felt as though I had no defense mechanism to hide behind." Indeed, as a heterosexual, she

Eduardo Manuel Duarte's areas of research include critical pedagogy and multiculturalism. He has written articles on the relationship between multiculturalism, liberalism and post-colonial theory, and is currently researching the philosophic genealogy of Paulo Friere. He teaches in the Department of Administration and Policy Studies and Literacy at Hofstra University.

"couldn't flirt" (p. 26) with women of color, and thus, could not use her body as a shield and/or sword to protect and control the people of color she interacted with professionally and socially.

The lesson her students and colleagues provided is one Sleeter learned well. Women of color, in particular, reminded Sleeter that her miseducation as a white, middle class woman would not easily mend with moral imperatives and good intentions. With no place to hide her "unprocessed racial baggage" Sleeter has been compelled to confront her privilege as an able-bodied, intelligent, white female. Beginning with the insight that "Whites benefit from white supremacy every day," Sleeter developed an activist-educator stance toward dismantling systems of white supremacy. For Sleeter, this stance involves the whole person and their entire life's work:

> How one spends one's time and energy, where one chooses to live, who one chooses to associate with, the stands one takes on issues, and so forth. Remaining uninvolved means conferring tacit acceptance on the status quo. The more aware of racism a white person is, the more fear one feels of either being recognized as a racist, or of stepping out into the unknown as one changes much about one's life, such as refusing to live in a segregated neighborhood or speaking out against racist statements friends make. (p. 27)

How does this transformation begin, how do educators learn to embrace a process of critical self-reflection, and how do we learn to speak out and take action about injustice and inequities? Sleeter analyzes the Big Two political ideologies of conservatism and liberalism vis-à-vis multiculturalism, and contrasts these with a third, preferable option which she calls "radical structuralism." For Sleeter, neither of the Big Two offers much room for multiculturalism to act as social criticism and activism. Both share a commitment to the notion of autonomy and to the "capitalist economy as facilitating individual striving in the free market" (p. 37). On the contrary, "radical structuralists reject the individual as the main unit of analysis and focus on relations among groups, although they diverge in the perspectives regarding the relative importance of various forms of difference.... Radical structuralists characterize society as involving continuous struggle for power among competing groups" (p. 43). Thus, while liberals/conservatives share the belief that injustice and inequities within society can be "fixed" through a rationalization/reform of society's institutions which will liberate/free the individual within the system to act according to his/her capacity as a rational being, radical structuralists remain committed to a completely new/distinct organization of human relations which is understood to be necessary when systems of power are interrogated and revealed to be incompatible with fundamental democratic ideals.

Sleeter's presumption that most citizens of the United States have endorsed the capitalist political-economic system leads her to an important and fundamental question: Given the general laissez faire attitude toward capitalism, how can educators act in a way that actually furthers social justice? Sleeter begins to answer this question with the results of a "two-year ethnographic study of thirty teachers, twenty six of whom are white, who participated in a staff development program in multicultural education" (pp. 65-66). For the most part, the teachers in the study, rather than identifying multicultural education as an occasion to engage in systematic analysis and social criticism, "took as given the social context of the individual and asked how to prepare the individual to live within that context. Most further assumed that, with some variations, society's rules apply similarly to everyone; the rules may not always be fair, but they are acceptable, and processes for setting them are fair" (p. 89).

To Sleeter, the teachers in this study are not unlike "most (white) Americans" who will simply ignore or resist any intellectual vehicle (e.g., critical multicultural education) which would place them in a position of radical discomfort in so far as it requires them to interrogate systems of power that privilege them. The difficulty (impossibility) of taking the step toward critical consciousness is that such a move will implicate one in an unjust and inequitable educational system, and, by default, define one as racist. The outcome of this study leads Sleeter to her fundamental question: How do (can) we compel our mainstream (predominantly white, female) teachers to confront "Whiteness"? For Sleeter, this question is personally and professionally her educational problem:

> While I agree with [James Banks'] emphasis on empowering oppressed groups, I believe there is a value in attempting to educate others who (like me) are white and relatively secure economically. There is a challenge I have struggled with for several years, and it presents an enormous challenge. (p. 118)

Sleeter realizes the struggle to (re)educate secure and aloof white educators can only occur when these educators make room for the silenced voices of those marginalized and oppressed. Thus, in Freirean (1994) fashion, Sleeter makes the case that those who hold power cannot by their own will transform the

unjust conditions they have created and/or benefit from. Rather, they need to enter into a transformative dialogue in which they "hear" oppressed voices clearly. Sleeter's own claim to have done just this leads her to developing a curriculum that arranges the distinct "minority," "alternative," and "dominant" voices polyphonically; that is, dialogically. "A genuinely multicultural curriculum develops concerns, perspectives, and experiences rooted in minority as well as dominant positions, without trying to synthesize them all into one whole" (p. 114). To do this, of course, requires that one recognize the multiplicity of perspectives that are generated by groups who "share minority positioning" (p. 96). As a model, Sleeter identifies six related themes that differentiate minority discourses from dominant discourses on issues related to [a] the reading of history, [b] social construction of theory, [c] subjugation and liberation, [d] critique and redefinition of social collectives, [e] culture as a product of literature and arts, and [f] the vitality and verve of oppressed groups.

Exposing her predominantly white students (students who remind Sleeter of her younger self) to these alternative discourses is part of her overall strategy for breaking the silence and solidarity white Americans have toward race and racism. Once broken, the silence can bring forth a transformative dialogue, critical self-reflection, and, ultimately, the preconditions for new solidarity. This notion of solidarity, of course, represents her most profound hope as a multicultural educator, that her white students will ally themselves with the disenfranchised.

Sleeter reminds her reader that the process of initiating a dialogue among students and colleagues about racism is not only about awakening critical consciousness but is also about keeping alive and making more meaningful her own self-interrogation. "Those of us who are white," she tells us, "should be spending as much time working on ourselves as attempting to draw in other whites" (p. 152). To live as an activist intellectual is to constantly enliven one's consciousness with the active memory that one lives within intersecting systems of power which simultaneously empower and subordinate us. For Sleeter, such critical consciousness (and the unease that accompanies it) begins with the recognition that "I am a racist and I am also a capitalist because I benefit from racism and from capitalism. Yet I am also a critic of both systems, which produces a discomfort I live with" (p. 30). To live with and accept the discomfort is, ultimately, the profound lesson of Sleeter's text. To live with and accept the discomfort is not to resign oneself to the inevitability of white supremacy as the dominant ideology within our society and institutions of learning. Rather, it is the refusal to seek refuge in momentary victories, or within the safety of strategies we have deemed to be "effective" in our struggle for justice. Like Sleeter, educators must be wary of "comfort zones" and the lure of "safe spaces" where ethical amnesia is likely to set in.

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