

QUESTIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN EDUCATION

BY

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Policy Studies
in the Graduate College of the
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2013

Urbana, Illinois

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is deeply influenced by my background as a teacher of literature and writing, offered as response to students who challenged me to confront perplexing issues. Much formal education has fallen prey to market-oriented ideology on a global scale, and such a framework determines the long-term goals of learning and the orientation of daily schooling. Human issues are often viewed as technical engineering problems, rather than as spiritual, existential questions. My project addresses some questions and assumptions that surround the *spiritual dimension* of education, and I invite educators to confront questions of spirituality, to see that education is remiss when it omits these questions that help to formulate and communicate meaning. I suggest putting such inquiry at the heart of learning, to encourage deeper consideration of a spiritual imperative in education, to draw attention to new conceptualizations and articulations of these questions. My interpretive approach to this nebulous topic is informed and guided by multiple traditions and texts, as well as staying true to my own encounter with the world as a person who wants to understand life, to uncover more meaning, and finally to express my wonder and love for existence. The significance of this study involves a dialogical engagement with writers who help me better contemplate questions of spirituality in education, a project seen not just as a local phenomenon, but also as a global concern that is evolving as an educational interest. While language is my medium of expression, to articulate my suggestions and confusion, I also argue for silent contemplation as a vital learning experience. Ultimately, my project points to possible practical application in schools, to further enrich and enliven the classroom, to nourish teachers and students in their individual and collective spiritual journeys.

Keywords: spirituality in education, existentialism, environmentalism, human rights

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There is not enough space here to acknowledge all the wonderful, inspirational teachers in my life, those brilliant beings from so many classrooms throughout life, both formal and informal. Likewise, so many wise, compassionate and funny students have challenged me to listen more carefully, to look at my own assumptions, and to become a better teacher. Throughout my life, my family has showered me with tender love and offered strong support for which I am grateful beyond words. Lastly, my dove, my all and everything, without you, this would be nothing.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Setting the Context

In 2007, my wife and I moved to Phuket, Thailand, where I had been offered a position at an international school to teach Literature and Writing. That same year, in the summer, I travelled to South Africa to join a study-abroad program with the Global Studies in Education (GSE) group from University of Illinois (UIUC), when I met Professor Fazal Rizvi, who convinced me to continue my studies on-campus in Illinois. The plan was that I would write about educational policy in Southeast Asia, as this was among the ideas I was considering. I had just signed a contract to teach in Phuket, so I postponed my studies for two years, and returned to Thailand. In Phuket I began a much stronger meditative practice than I had previously experienced, and I became fascinated by the power of sitting still in silence, rather than just continuously working with words to make sense of the world. Also, I was intrigued by the students I taught in Phuket, a dynamic amalgam of individuals from around the world, with blended backgrounds and varied perspectives (in one class of ten students, they spoke more than twelve languages). Most of all I was enthralled by the questions these students asked!

They were trying to make sense of the world where they lived, and it wasn't easy. Ideas, images, and information moved so quickly. People were not always kind to other people. The natural environment of Earth was suffering. Who were they? What could they do? Where would they go? How might they form their futures? And of course, Why? These students wanted to understand themselves, each other, and the world, and not only in material, rational terms. They were searching for depth of meaning, asking ancient questions of existence, struggling to understand, helping each other to understand. It was apparent that learning was a

spiritual quest, individually and collectively. I wondered if it was possible to write about such things for a doctoral dissertation.

The initial reaction I received from most people in academia, when I suggested writing about questions of spirituality, was that I ought to consider a different word. How about holistic education? Or humanism? Contemplative practices? Mindfulness? Oddly enough, the more that people tried to dissuade me from the word (to which I was not strongly attached at the outset), the more convinced I was that “spirituality” was the perfect word and the perfect topic for my writing. So I began to ask some questions.

My Project

My project is born of my life as a student and a teacher, driven by my curiosity as a human being engaged in the world, inspired by so many people and varied traditions, and it speaks to other educators who are committed to being involved with teaching for expanded consciousness that moves toward the creation of a more loving world. My academic research and pedagogical methods merge with my life in continually shifting and transformative ways, and my approach to education is framed in terms of spirituality and the questions that arise around that word. The questions I encounter when discussing spirituality and education have to do with developing relationships; one relates to oneself, to other humans, to the social world, to the natural environment, and existence as a whole. For both educators and students, these different relationships deserve equal attention and development, requiring commitment and openness, and awareness of the inextricable interconnections between these relationships. That is, one cannot think of one’s “inner world” without considering one’s “outer world” (in fact, this dichotomy itself is problematic), just as one cannot think about Earth without the context of a universe. Just as importantly, my conceptualization of spirituality is not simply about

recognizing these patterns of relationship to life and existence; spirituality also entails awe, love, and reverence that must be nurtured and challenged continuously. However, this reverence and love, based on a shared existence in a single universe does not at all suggest a Oneness equivalent to sameness; rather, it involves a direct confrontation with difference, where one must struggle to understand alternative perspectives and practices with critical respect. These differences might demand that one examine one's own life, cultural traditions, and daily practices, considering them in new light. Spirituality, then, is not simply an aspect of human life, but weaves like a golden thread of light through the facets of existence. Metaphorically, it is the wind that moves through the trees, blows the desert sand, shakes the horse manes on ocean waves, and gives breath where it is needed. The wind itself is invisible to the eye, but as it blows, one can feel it and perceive its power; one can hear the bamboo whisper in the morning, watch hair ruffle in afternoon winds, smell Leelawadee in night breeze, and know the wind is there. Just as the wind blows and manifests its presence in myriad forms and produces infinite effects in the natural world, so spirituality breathes through existence, experienced in unending phenomena and articulated in continuously evolving attempts of communication. It is the One that is many, felt, contemplated and celebrated by the many that are one.

Human existence, then, is framed (or woven) in terms of spirituality, these sacred relationships that change and are changed with every breath, and education needs to acknowledge and develop these relationships, allowing time for students to listen and express themselves, to enjoy silence as much as the spoken word, to find space for creative acts and compassionate practices, to engage with the natural world just as one does with oneself, gently and sympathetically, with wonder and awe. At the core of such learning is love, but not a love that is simply accepted as present so that one can move on to more important matters; love is that

from which one acts and is that toward which one moves. It is the wind that blows and is blown. As an educator and as a student, and ultimately as a human being, I strive to strengthen my spiritual relationships on a daily basis, to challenge myself intellectually and emotionally, to share the wonder of life with other people around me, to enjoy the beauty of the natural world, and to struggle for a social system that accords everyone this same opportunity. I endeavor to develop more fully these spiritual relationships, so that I may grow as an individual and experience existence with more depth and abundance. Further, I turn my attention and intention to spiritual relationships so that all people can flourish as human beings, so that humanity itself might feel more intimately the shared connections and the dependency all have upon one another as beings and upon the natural world as a whole. As a teacher, I step into the classroom with the awareness of infinite possibilities, for the lesson at hand, for the group of students as a community, and for the world as an evolving creation.

The Problem

What does the spiritual imperative in contemporary education encounter today? Education systems have largely fallen prey to market-oriented ideology on a global scale, and this ideology determines both the long-term goals of learning and the orientation of daily practices in teaching and learning. National measurements of educational testing are openly and unabashedly discussed in market terms, as a sign of current and future failure to compete in the global scheme. The market-focused ideas of efficiency and accountability increasingly are looked to for models of teaching and learning, so that administrators, teachers, and students themselves succeed or fail in terms of an ever-narrowing spectrum of thought and action, as easily measurable outcomes are pursued in purely quantitative assessment. Standardized testing regimes quickly categorize students and educators alike, in terms of success based on a grasping

of particular preset material, reducing the process of learning to one's performance in a limited mode of expression.

Furthermore, the global educative focus is technological in its orientation, so that problems are seen as “fixable” in particular technical modes. Things are deemed to be “useful” or “not useful” in these technical contexts, and are valued as such. Ultimately people themselves are caught up in this scenario, so that people are seen with regards to their use-value, ready at hand to be manipulated and exploited for particular ends (often simply for profit), rather than being seen as ends in themselves, as human beings. That is, the problematic orientation of education systems as a contemporary phenomenon leads to technology-focused and market-directed solutions. Education's ultimate goals become framed within particular perspectives and discussed in terms that approach problems in a manner consistent with the dominant techno-economic worldview. Human problems are viewed as technical engineering problems, rather than as spiritual, existential questions. This technological reduction of complex human problems has given rise to specific educational practices that dominate institutions of learning. As a result of instrumental framing of problems and technical solutions, the questions and problems of education are flattened and bleached of the particulars in historical context, but even more worrisome is the trend toward a future that depends upon this techno-economic model for all aspects of the global life-world, limiting the scope of thought and practice, confining the potential of learning, imprisoning the social imaginative powers of people, and diminishing the spiritual capacity of humanity.

My Project Map

This project addresses a number of questions and assumptions that surround the *spiritual dimension* of education, beginning with an attempt to define “spirituality” and to lay open the

multiplicity of understandings. If spirituality is a core dimension of human existence, then it appears education has a responsibility to assist students in making sense of the spiritual aspect of life, just as education has a duty to help students negotiate the intellectual and emotional realms. Central to this line of thought is the question whether “spirituality” can be understood in such a way to make it available for discussion in terms of secular schooling, and if such a discussion can occur, what might be some of the possible approaches to teaching and learning *within a spiritual dimension*?

Spirituality has to do with the communication of meaning through relationships with the self, others, the natural world, and beyond. The interactions that can lead to spiritual awareness depend upon imagination and creativity to move beyond the rigid confines of many instrumental, formal modes of learning. Here is a call for a more holistic education as reaction to reductionist modes of schooling that have reduced much learning to basic literacy and numeracy, injecting students with marketable skills in order to prepare them for roles in a technological, materialistic, consumer society. Absent in much of contemporary education is a sense of wonder and awe, as well as respect for relationships built on love, compassion, and awareness.

If spirituality is an aspect of being human, an aspect of consciousness, or a thread that runs throughout existence, then education appears badly remiss if it fails to address spirituality in the development of both students and teachers as beings who generate and communicate meaning. The present age requires a re-articulation of “spirituality” that recognizes the multiplicity of understandings of the word around the world, seen through a perspective of intercultural knowledge. Obscure language and elevated states are not essential to notions of spirituality, and the ambiguity of certain spiritual terms can in fact be helpful in exploring notions of personal development. Such language and assertions will doubtlessly be contentious,

but this is not necessarily a negative development (Wringe, 2002). On the contrary, expressions of the human spirit will likely be highly disruptive, and such disruptions can lead to expanded conceptions of education, rather than being detrimental.

Descriptions and definitions of the term “spirituality” range from the vacuous and simplistic to the confusingly dense and complex, but within this difference of understanding lies an agreement upon a recognizable dimension of human life that has been acknowledged and explored in a variety of ways. A pursuit of truth is supposed to exist at the center of liberal education, and attention to the immaterial dimensions of life is just as important as the attention education gives to material realms of life. The different understandings of the spiritual realm represent the diversity of spiritual practices and texts that attempt to make meaning of that which seems to elude meaning.

Is the spiritual dimension an inner or exterior realm, or is it both, with the two not in opposition to one another? Do questions of spirituality help people to become more conscious human beings, aware of their lives as interconnected and interdependent, and thus instill one with a devotion to other beings, or does spirituality cultivate an individual sense of being that turns inward upon itself? Ultimately, the question remains whether a single understanding of “spirituality” can be or should be agreed upon, and whether such a consensus is necessary for a discussion to occur concerning the spiritual dimension in the many manifestations of education.

The approaches to including spirituality in education are diverse, but the common idea of “contemplation” is a recurring theme that fits well with the more general goal of education, as deep consideration of any subject matter seems like a necessary part of learning. To synthesize reason and intuition, simply sitting with one’s feelings and thoughts can assist in an exploration of deepened meanings. Reasoning occurs in an affective context, and an enhanced

conceptualization of cognitive consciousness connects emotions to reason. Creativity is likewise a vital aspect of learning, encouraging students *to make a world* in the process of making meaning; the inner development of individuals is not divorced from external progress. In the same way that scientific analysis aims to break the world into parts for examination, a practice of contemplation can lend itself to relatedness in the world, and both help make the world more accessible and transparent. If learning is largely about asking important questions, spirituality seems central to the making of meaning in terms of ontological inquiries. Simply put, what does it mean to be? How can one begin to ask and contemplate such inquiries? Where does one find the light to show the path? Students shape their identities through constructs of knowledge that are available to them, and to omit a spiritual dimension is to omit an aspect of being human that is central to understanding the world.

Spirituality is not a subject to be taught, but is a strand to be woven through the curriculum as a natural part of life. Spirituality is not a point in cognitive development, but is integral to existence. The current prevalent disconnection between education and spirituality results in a “disintegrated presence,” especially in school, where a space needs to be created that allows both teachers and students the opportunity to develop deeper awareness of existence. Education has become fearful of soulful things, and different models of spirituality may help to confront deep questions of meaning. It is not enough that notions of spirituality address the interiors of human life, but they must be matched with the pursuit of outer progress. Individuals become conscious of themselves in the world, and educators need to consider how to develop different aspects of consciousness. If spirituality is to be discussed in relation to education, it may be necessary to re-conceptualize both the descriptions of the term “spirituality” and the

current goals of secular schooling, as students construct knowledge and their own identities within the classrooms where they learn.

Education happens in a social and historical context, and disconnecting spiritual concerns from learning in schools needs to be addressed in educational reform. Students are asked to categorize and disassemble the world to understand it, becoming “disciples” of physics, biology, sociology, and other disciplines, and students construct their own beings as they construct the world based on the “sacred texts” of these disciplines. To contemplate the world as spiritual beings is to find relatedness between these parts that have been discovered, and to blend the knower and the known. The idea is not to dispute the benefits of a rational scientific approach to knowledge, but to raise critical questions about spiritual intelligence in schools. A spiritual life is an embodied quest that requires openness to learning in the world, in a historical context, and to participate in the making of the world just as one makes one’s life.

If spirituality is an important part of life and learning, but there are different definitions and understandings of the term, how might questions of spirituality be encountered in a classroom? An integrated curriculum can address spirituality in the classroom, synthesizing the scientific and the spiritual. The simple act of sitting with our experiences allows for a deeper exploration of meaning, including context alongside content, imagination with knowledge, intuition next to logic, and process along with product. Inspiration and creativity are central to spiritual development and essential to the cultivation of consciousness; rather than seeing inspiration and creativity as irrational, they might be posited as trans-rational. An enhanced conceptualization of consciousness acknowledges that one-dimensional education is ineffective and irrelevant when discussing spirituality, and different approaches are necessary to access possible fountains of knowledge.

Education does not need a single center, so that a consideration of spirituality (working as one foci within an ellipse of learning) can offer a deeper emphasis on transcendence, mystery, awe, and profound considerations of human existence in the world (Coburn, 2005). A sense of consciousness rooted in wonder and appreciation of compassion and loving relationships embraces knowledge that considers the social conditions of other people, ideas of justice, and alternative futures. Spirituality is a way of being that allows students to see beyond their own selves, to experience the wonder and mystery of the world.

The cognitive map that exists for much of schooling puts science on one side, and spiritual matters on the other side; however, cognitive spirituality belongs on both sides of the map. The difficulty inherent in addressing spiritual concerns within schooling cannot be ignored, because the greater problem is the disintegrated presence of students and teachers that are disconnected from deeper meanings in life if questions of spirituality are pushed outside the classroom. While acknowledging the difficulty of defining spirituality, this does not require ignoring its presence in learning, and schools need to offer multiple models for addressing the human yearning for connection to the whole self and something larger than the self.

Of course, there are important dangers to be considered in terms of social and cultural implications that surround the current discourse of spirituality in education, as “globalized” notions of spiritual matters threaten to serve hegemonic interests. International perspectives on this question might allow the current discourse to move beyond the conceptual barriers it seems to face, and to allow for a more complex understanding of spirituality that does not depend upon a dominant globalized view. There is no limitation to the questions of spirituality or the possible approaches to these questions in education, and my goal in this project is not to discover a single framework for considering spirituality, nor do I seek a consensus around these ideas. Rather, I

want to frame some questions that arise when one thinks in terms of relating to other people and the world, not simply in material terms. At the same, I also want to recognize and confront the fact that material conditions can severely limit the educational possibilities of such spiritual inquiry, when some people struggle to physically survive in this world as it is currently arranged. However, awareness of the risks involved in pursuing ideas of spirituality and education does not necessarily condemn the entire notion, and in fact may argue for a deeper examination. How can questions of spirituality move toward a more just and humane global system?

While no clear universal definition of this “dangerous term” can be agreed upon, the discussion of spirituality in education does not come to an end. Rather, within this problematic position of the term, openness can yield multiple understandings of the spiritual dimension of human life and learning. Different approaches to this dimension of being can be examined and practiced, allowing for contemplation, a sense of relatedness, and awareness of the connectivity of life. If learning is about asking difficult questions and remaining open to new answers, then spirituality seems to be central to education and to deeper understanding of the human being and of the cosmos as a whole. Ultimately, a synthesis of the scientific and the spiritual leads to a more robust understanding of human existence in the world, situated historically and emotionally in particular times and places. To accept the presence of a spiritual dimension in life, and to acknowledge its centrality to being human, is to recognize the necessity of a broadened discussion of spirituality in education. If educators discard this golden thread of existence from classrooms, then all are condemned to teach, learn, and be incompletely. Not only will schools be omitting questions that are central to existence, but also an injustice will be done to humanity and its infinite possibilities, damaging inter-human relationships and eroding human connection to the natural world.

Definition of Terms

Tempted to avoid a set definition of the key term in my research, I plan to dance around the word “spirituality” at first, to suggest different understandings of the concept, without committing myself to a particular angle from the start. Hopefully, this ducking and dodging will allow the time and space to spread out various conceptualizations of the term and point out their inherent weaknesses and strengths, slowly revealing my own stance. I will formulate my ideas in connection with notions of an embodied self, in relation to inclusionary and exclusionary groups, competing and overlapping worldviews, painted cultural canvasses, involvement in and struggle against political structures, set within natural surroundings, technologically posited, economically situated, living with evolving dreams and anxieties, always rooted in a commitment to love and solidarity. With any luck, the term will swallow its own tail, but the many questions will remain, and I will begin again to ask more questions.

Purpose

Even the style and form of my writing here is partially determined by the structure, language, and prevalent techno-economic perspective. Like so much of the modern medical industry, one diagnoses the problem, dissects the body into parts, determines a course of action, treats it accordingly, and does so in the most timely and efficient manner possible. What is the prescription for this problem? Possible solutions appear limited by initial diagnosis, if success is measured by a particular rubric in place for educational assessment, so that the openness of possibilities is bounded, constrained, and ultimately weakened at its core from the outset. In a similar way to how current models of research and articulation restrict this written project, classroom practices are confined and regulated by social structures and educational policies.

In its most obvious form, the current dominant assessment paradigm is reflected in the standardized testing regime of power that continue to perpetuate itself globally, measuring students, schools, teachers, districts, administrators, ministries, and eventually countries on a form of test designed to measure one narrow wavelength in the spectrum of knowing. As a result of this fanatical testing fascination, the questions asked have to do with increasing the scores on these tests, at the various levels from individual to country, affecting even the most apparently holistic approach for education that takes into account all of the economic factors, technological limitations, cultural nuances, and political complexities. Just as it continues to be a challenge for educators to resist against these fanatical testing regimes, I posit my own struggle for articulating questions of spirituality in an environment of market-oriented educational discourse.

An alternative indicator of the success or failure of an educational system might be a democratic republic where principles of human equality and dignity hold fast, where myriad environmental concerns are weighed with every decision for long-term sustainability of life on this planet, where an individual's dreams are cultivated in relation to a group's dreams, where the ultimate goal is not only economic success or technological progress, but something else entirely. What is one example of an alternative ultimate goal? I suggest putting questions of spirituality at the center of education. I hope to put forward a deeper consideration of the spiritual imperative in education, to bring attention to the need for renewed conceptualization and articulation of questions concerning spirituality. Here, the ground becomes more watery and unstable, as the realm of "spiritual" meaning shifts and transforms with history, eludes a concrete definition, always deepening, always widening in its scope and possibility, shaking free from the hook of clear articulation. The watery metaphors run throughout my writing as I resist the solid absolutes that might better satisfy the expectations for an educational prescription for schools.

Instead, I embrace the ineffable inquiry, with its doubt, difficulty, and wonder. There might be an awareness of something, a sense, in the gut or the chest, maybe a tingling at the top of the head or at the tips of the fingers; questions arise, always more, for consideration and contemplation, for debate and discussion. So one can begin again to envision the world anew.

The questions are always unfolding, revealing further paths for inquiry, possibly encapsulating the previous questions, including and not negating them, with no clear end in sight, without the desire for end. The questions seem easy sometimes, but danger lies in the supposed answer that brings temporary cessation to the interrogation, a closing off of the path with the belief that something is finally and conclusively known. What is this thing called “spirituality”? How can it be taught? Can it be defined, and ought it be? Where does it fit into education? Who is ready to teach these issues and approach these questions? When has it been included well? Why is it important?

The importance of my research is an attempted articulation of questions of spirituality in education, placed in a contemporary global setting of increasing connectedness and interdependence. Spirituality is seen here as both a ground of being and a goal of being; that is, spirituality is viewed as inherent in humanity, but also as a capacity for further development. The importance of this study is related closely to this moment of human history, as the economic models have repeatedly shown themselves unstable (at best) and inhumane (at worst), while all aspects of life are increasingly constructed and evaluated in terms set by these models. As technology appears poised to leap beyond critique, to assume again a false position of neutrality (or worse yet, to make a claim for positive progress in all its forms), questions of spirituality do not depend upon technical speed, technical knowledge, or technical capacity. Rather, the questions I raise are ancient and contemporary, set in the context of today’s technology and

looking back to bygone eras at the same time; wisdom here is not packaged for sale and marketed by the experts, but is available for contemplation without demands and without bounds.

Scope

Chapter Two begins with an analysis of recent literature concerning spirituality in education, mostly focusing on publications from this millennium, noting the examples are primarily from countries where English is an official language, but then I move from those examples into a larger overview with the basic argument that the problematic term, “spirituality,” needs to expand its possible understandings by a further engagement with more perspectives, so that more traditions influence the possible meanings. My scope of research, therefore, entails a widening scope of inquiry; I hope to cultivate openness to views that challenge my own, grapple with an admission of uncertainty and fallibility, and make a plea for compassionate assistance in my search for better questions. Finally, the scope of this work asks forgiveness for the unseen or unexamined assumptions that arise in the framing of such an idea, as well as the many errors and shortcomings inherent in such an attempt. I call for dialogue to help me challenge these flaws.

In Chapter Three, I draw attention to the dominant technological mode of being in the world that frames human interaction with others and with the natural environment. The question of technology is approached by engaging with the phenomenological work of Martin Heidegger, coupled with a pedagogical inquiry that brings Paulo Freire into conversation with Heidegger. The question of technology is ultimately framed in terms of *who* one is *how* one is; one exists in such a way that technology has come to be perceived in particular ways (highly technical, rational, and instrumental), and as a result has imposed itself upon various modes of life, impacting how humans exist in the world. Alongside these technological conceptions, Freire

asserts that a human's ontological vocation is to be a critically reflexive subject acting upon the world to transform it. Together with Freire's pedagogy of liberation and Heidegger's phenomenology of Being, I pursue a mode of inquiry that discloses a capacity toward experience of transcendental, trans-rational knowledge inherent in existence, becoming *more* human through a praxis of reflection and action, grounded in love and reverence.

Chapter Four involves a textual exploration and interpretation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "Emile," choosing a canonical Western text of education for certain purposes. Rousseau creates a hypothetical situation in which a tutor, Jean-Jacques, teaches a single student, Emile, grounding the learning of this boy in "natural religion," wary of the religious authorities and traditions of his time. The tutor chooses to avoid all discussion of "spiritual" matters until Emile reaches an older age, rather than expose him to potentially dangerous dogma at a young age. I argue that this evasion of spiritual matters continues to take place in contemporary education, for similar reasons, not wanting to expose students to nebulous ideas without clear borders and definitions. This chapter is not intended to set up Rousseau as a straw man to be knocked about, but rather I intend to explore the ideas traced back to the eighteenth century to help understand the current dilemma in which education is embroiled, in relation to matters concerning spirituality.

From the hypothetical realm of Jean-Jacques and Emile, I go to Chapter Five, to the very real world of Henry David Thoreau and his experiment in the woods by Walden Pond. Thoreau plants his feet firmly in the natural world in order to experience reality as both practical and spiritual, writing a book that is both simple and sacred, a text that serves well to guide educators in a contemporary approach to environmentalism and aesthetics. Most importantly for my own project, Thoreau offers a grounded approach to spirituality, keeping his feet in the dirt as he hoes

the bean rows, and plunging his hands into the cold waters of the pond, feeling the hard stones, and responding to the mysteries of existence. To consider the many questions of spirituality in education involves rooting oneself in the natural world as part of the cosmos, not distinct from it. Here, in this chapter as well, questions of spirituality begin to intersect with ideas of beauty and duty, drawing attention to one's responsibilities to the world in which humans live.

In Chapter Six, I turn to the work of Pierre Hadot to examine the idea of “spiritual exercises,” as he elucidates traditions of Antiquity that have much to offer contemporary education in terms of transforming one's vision of the world, requiring imagination and sensibility. Further, I argue that such a turn to Antiquity has much to offer current attempts at Human Rights Education, as philosophy comes to be practiced in terms of daily conduct in life, rather than simply as a cognitive exercise. The spiritual exercises of philosophy raise individuals from an “inauthentic condition” of life, to an authentic state, so that one attains a more exact vision of existence, transforming one's modes of seeing and being in the world. This approach to living “authentically” as a human, offered by Hadot's synthesis of Stoic and Epicurean teachings, offers an excellent framework for considering human rights education, to envision a world where humans treat one another with the dignity they deserve, as beings submerged in and emerging from the totality of an infinite universe.

Finally, in conclusion, I synthesize these chapters to strengthen an argument for considering questions of spirituality in education, and I call for a reconceptualization of the framework in which education is established. I am not seeking simple classroom solutions, although ultimately I do have suggestions for how questions of spirituality might be approached in a classroom. I am not just playing phenomenological games of inquiry so that one circles back in upon the previous question asked, although this is part of my project, stepping in and

stepping away at the same time. I am not just looking to Rousseau to poke at his hypothetical student and look for life or to hearken back to his ideas of natural religion, although I think there is something there worth considering. I am not saying that walking into nature will cure all environmental problems and human ailments, though I do think experience in nature has much to teach. Finally, I am not just pointing to schools of Antiquity as precious examples of exercises that can lead one to deepened consciousness, free of fear and desire, in dialogue with one's community, but I do think ancient wisdom traditions have ideas worth learning. So, what am I doing? I am calling for deeper awareness, or a bolder admission and recognition, of the mystery and power of existence, and I call for the collective courage of one and all to partake in difficult debate around the questions that arise when one starts to think about the spiritual imperative of education.

In speaking of spirituality in education, I want to acknowledge the importance of considering the incommunicable, the ineffable and indefinable. Must one abandon those ideas that cannot be easily articulated, but perhaps may be perceived or "sensed" in some way? Even these words fail to speak of that which I most want to communicate. One hears a whisper, feels a breeze, sees a glimmer, senses a glance, or intuits a hint. How can one challenge and transform one's basic existential relationship to the world? How does one ask the questions that think anew about being in the world? How does one share Earth with other humans, other animals more generally, with plants, with bodies of water, with matter itself, in a relationship of respect and caring? How does one expand perception and fields of perception, both unique and shared as they are, to better *perceive* the universe and humanity's place in terms of the cosmos? These are the types of questions that drive me as a student, as an educator, as a human present on Earth in precarious and fascinating times.

As for methods, my interpretive approach to this nebulous topic is to be informed and guided by multiple traditions, to explore varied texts, to open myself to diverse perspectives, but also I want to *listen* ever so carefully to my own voice, to hear and see my own encounter with the world as a person who wants to understand, to find meaning, to experience life, and ultimately to love (myself, others, the cosmos). I want to listen and observe with openness and reverence, with both gentleness and exactitude, to find a voice to speak what needs to be spoken in the eternal dialogue, yes, but to find the ear that can listen too, suspecting all along that language may be inadequate for my purposes.

Significance

The significance of this study is an enhanced articulation of the questions of spirituality in education, not just as a local phenomenon, but also as a global concern that is evolving as a mode of inquiry. The inquiry is not only a matter of discourse, but also involves practical application in schools, in real classrooms, among real students and teachers. The questions of spirituality here are about the continuation of communication and celebration, a song and dance of existence in infinitely varied forms. I crow like Thoreau's chanticleer, first to wake myself and perchance to waken other educators who have dozed off in complacency or closed their minds to a spiritual imperative in education. In the end, I am a student and a teacher trying to understand and explain, and I am a human trying to live a more meaningful and authentic life. From a place of inquiry and wonder, I am calling out for a dialogue that situates education in spiritual terms and I am listening for voices that might respond with critical love and demand for meaningful change.

CHAPTER 2

A LITERATURE REVIEW

This review addresses a number of questions and assumptions surrounding the idea of a spiritual imperative in education, which begins with an attempt to define “spirituality” and to lay open the multiplicity and complexity of possible understandings. When some common themes emerge, the next issue that quickly follows is whether issues of spirituality can be discussed in conjunction with the current model of mass schooling. If spirituality is a core dimension of human development, as many of the authors herein assert, then it appears education has a responsibility to assist students in making sense of the spiritual aspect of life, just as education has a duty to help students negotiate the intellectual and emotional realms (and perhaps the strict division into such realms—spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical, political, economic—is not helpful at all). Central to this review is the question whether “spirituality” can be understood in such a way as to make it available for discussion in terms of secular schooling, and if such a discussion can occur, what might be some of the possible approaches to “teaching and learning” issues of spirituality.

Spirituality has to do with making meaning of existence and it has to do with the communication of meaning through relationships with the self, others, the natural world, the cosmos, and unknown (and maybe even relationships with the unknowable). The interactions that lead to spiritual considerations might depend upon imagination and creativity to move beyond the rigid confines of strictly rationalistic formal modes of learning. I want to call for a more holistic education as a reaction to the reductionist mode of schooling that has reduced learning to basic literacy and numeracy, injecting students with skills in order to prepare them for roles in a technological, materialistic, consumption society. That which appears to be absent in

so much of contemporary education is a sense of wonder and awe, as well as a respect for relationships built on love, compassion, and awareness. How does one begin to confront the mysterious aspects of existence, the ultimately unknowable and arguably inexpressible aspects?

If spirituality is an aspect of being human, an aspect of consciousness, then education appears to be remiss if it fails to address spirituality in the development of both students and teachers as beings who generate and communicate meaning. The secular division of religion and state in Enlightenment Europe resulted from a historical and political intersection of events that made such a duality necessary for consciousness to expand at that moment, but a new age of humans advances, evidenced at least in part by the widespread technological progress in the past few decades that increases connectivity and points to human interdependence and ecological co-survival. This age requires a re-articulation of “spirituality” that recognizes the multiplicity of understandings of the term around the world, not necessarily viewed only in religious terms, but rather seen through a perspective of intercultural knowledge.

The articles selected for the first part of this review have mostly been published in the past decade, reflecting an increased interest in these ideas, collected from a variety of educational journals within the United States and the United Kingdom. A later section of the review looks to a number of collected essays from an international handbook focusing on questions of spirituality in education, seen as a global phenomenon. The authors of the articles largely acknowledge that there is a spiritual dimension inherent in human life, thought of as distinct from religion, and most of the authors contend that spirituality deserves some attention in educational policy, curriculum, and reform. My search for articles began with the simple query within different educational journals, looking for articles that included a keyword, “spirituality.”

My review is organized into four broad sections. First, I examine some of the basic definitions and descriptions of spirituality as understood in the articles chosen for review. Second, I look at why some of the authors find issues of spirituality to be important in education. Third, I offer a number of possible approaches to spirituality in education, as put forth in several articles. Fourth, I investigate some of the conflicts that arise in the articles as spirituality collides with the realm of education, and look at some of the solutions offered by a number of authors.

Definitions and Descriptions of Spirituality

Wringe (2002) looks at the term “spirituality” and the possibility of its inclusion in a discourse around public education, writing specifically in terms of a British context, as the British Education Reform Act of 1988 required that curriculum address spiritual development in students and society. Wringe begins by asking whether “spirituality” is a vacuous term? He examines the assumption that a process such as spiritual development can be identified, and through analyzing handbooks for primary and secondary schools, he finds that it is said to involve four dimensions. First, spiritual development has to do with students answering questions for themselves about some of life’s fundamental questions. Second, students are to develop a sense of self and potential in their lives, understanding their strengths and weaknesses. Third, students are expected to develop an ability (based on knowledge, skills, and qualities) to foster their own inner lives. Finally, spiritual development is connected to the non-material wellbeing of students.

Wringe (2002) is clear in stating that spiritual development, as conceived of in this British curriculum reform act, is not simply about religious studies. In order to pursue some of the objectives listed above, it seems necessary to develop a language of inner states, or else one must follow Wittgenstein’s advice to remain silent about that which one cannot speak. Wringe

writes, “If the language of inner states is difficult to understand it is because these are essentially private and the words by which we attempt to describe them cannot be validated against the situation in the shared public world” (p. 166). Obscure language and elevated states are not essential to notions of spirituality, Wringer argues, and the ambiguity of certain spiritual terms can in fact be helpful in exploring notions of personal development. Education largely has been concerned with “external” phenomena, and Britain’s recognition of the spiritual domain may lead to a broadened conception of learning, Wringer asserts, as the “life of the spirit” appears in educational documents. The fact that such language and assertions may be contentious is not necessarily a negative development; “On the contrary, powerful expressions of the developed human spirit may be highly disruptive” (p. 169). Such disruptions can lead to expanded goals of education, rather than being detrimental.

Zajonc (2003) wonders whether humans are experiencing a historical moment similar to the one faced by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century, concerning the controversy between spirituality and secular learning. Zajonc calls for a radical re-conception of education, one that includes addressing the spiritual and contemplative realms within the existing disciplines themselves. The author defines “spiritual” as being about “those immaterial dimensions of life that give it meaning and purpose, and which have lived at the heart of liberal education since its inception” (p. 51). If the central objective of liberal higher education has to do with *veritas*, then spirituality needs to be framed in relationship to truth, which Zajonc sees as an integral part of the search for spiritual insights.

Similar to Zajonc, Astin (2004) argues that spirituality has a central place in liberal education; if the purpose of education is for humans to become more conscious of themselves and the world, then educators need to consider how to best cultivate human capacities to observe

the different aspects of consciousness in relation to the world. Astin initially asserts that spirituality has to do with human *interiors*, subjective life, and human consciousness. Secondly, it involves *affective* experiences, human values and beliefs, as well as having to do with who humans are, origins, meanings, purpose, and more; everyone, therefore, is a spiritual being, as a human. Astin tries to match the importance of inner development with the current pursuit of outer progress, and he does so by putting human consciousness at the center of spiritual meanings.

Discussion

Descriptions and definitions of the term “spirituality” range from the nebulous and simplistic to the dense and complex, but within this difference of understanding lies an agreement upon a dimension of human life that can be explored in a variety of ways. Pursuit of knowledge and questions of truth lie at the center of liberal education, and attention to the immaterial dimensions of life is just as important as the attention education gives to material realms of life (Zajonc, 2003). Inner human development needs to occur alongside outer developments in the world, and educators need to consider different ways to cultivate spirituality that looks to the interiors and affective experiences of human beings (Astin, 2004). The different understandings of the spiritual realm represent the diversity of spiritual practices and texts that attempt to make meaning of that which seems to elude articulation. At the center of this discussion, is the spiritual an inner realm or an exterior dimension? Do questions of spirituality help people to become more conscious human beings, aware of their lives as interconnected and interdependent, and thus instill a devotion to other beings, or does spirituality cultivate an individual sense of being that turns inward upon itself? Ultimately, the question remains

whether a single understanding of “spirituality” can be agreed upon, and whether such a consensus is necessary for a discussion to occur concerning the spiritual imperative in education.

Importance of Spirituality to Learning

Palmer (2003a) argues that secular education is already a covert type of spiritual formation, and he offers contemplation as a form of research encouraging individuals to go beyond first appearances. Simply put, if things simply are as they initially appear, education itself would not be necessary; all would be readily apparent, without further research. Prayer and contemplation, for Palmer, have their counterparts in educational settings: “The purpose of these disciplines is to see through and beyond the appearance of things, to penetrate the surface and touch that which lies beneath” (p. 59). This assertion echoes the basic principles of research and analysis in secular education, calling for an empirical, logical approach to knowledge by penetrating the appearances of the world. Palmer suggests three spiritual disciplines for consideration in education that assist individuals to see a deepened complex reality amidst misleading appearances: he recommends a combination of texts, contemplation, and a gathered communal life.

Scientific methods frequently disassemble and categorize the world, to understand the parts of the whole, and then try to relate these parts to the greater whole, to apply the reasoning based upon a fragment in terms of connectivity. For Palmer (2003a), scientific analysis aims to break the world into parts, while contemplation (or prayer) aims at relatedness: “But both prayer and analysis seek to make the world transparent” (p. 59). It is this drive towards deeper knowledge and transparency that relates the school to the monastery, connects research to spiritual contemplation. Schools retain remnants of the monastic tradition, argues Palmer, as

students are required to read and make sense of new “sacred texts” in order to become disciples of physics, sociology, philosophy, biology, and the other disciplines in the education system. As disciples of these school texts, students form images of their selves and of the world, so that the shape of knowledge becomes the shape of life. Students construct themselves and the world as they construct knowledge and forge different types of relationships with existence.

Palmer (2003a) examines a few terms that are often used in conjunction with constructs of knowledge, to uncover what he refers to as some epistemological images; specifically, he looks at the words “fact,” “theory,” “reality,” and “objective.” Palmer deconstructs these terms, ultimately arguing that the knowledge people value is related to their mastery over property (things and objects of human making and the natural world), which involves breaking the world into parts for control. To contemplate the world as a whole, on the other hand, gives deeper meaning to life. Modern knowing is open to self-criticism and correction, Palmer points out, and active agents can reformulate ways of knowing, *wed* the knower and the known, rather than persisting with the duality of subject/object.

Palmer (2003a) looks to the work of physicist and systems theorist, Fritjof Capra, to speak of a shift of perspective in the physical sciences that can acknowledge the disappearance of duality: Capra (1980) writes, “The electron does not have properties independent of my mind. In atomic physics, the sharp Cartesian split between mind and matter, between I and the world, is no longer valid. We can never speak of nature without, at the same time, speaking about ourselves” (p. 132). Contemplation of the sort that Palmer advocates brings both the teacher and the student closer to a realization of this interdependency and interconnectivity of the world; at the same time Palmer roots his ideas in the tradition of empirical research, challenging the distinction between the spiritual and the scientific. To go beyond appearances, research is a

necessary human activity, just as is integrative and contemplative study, to develop a more complete system of experience, learning, and knowledge-creation.

Neiman (1999) challenges educators and educational policies that have placed spiritual concerns in the private sphere, a result of an Enlightenment ethos that put politics centrally in the public sphere. The modern ideal of human identity became based on notions of rationality, autonomy, and critical openness; Neiman does not dispute the benefits of the scientific approach, and he acknowledges the importance of reason in developing democratic society, but he wonders whether the scientific processes since the Enlightenment “have diminished our capacities as religious and spiritual beings” (p. 430). Neiman asks how spirituality and democracy might be reconciled within schools, and he points to the vision of Thiessen (1993) who raises critical questions about John Dewey’s educational philosophy in relation to a supposed lack of spiritual intelligence in schools.

Neiman (1999) reads Thiessen’s work as a challenge to democratic education, and he points to Thiessen’s preferred form of spiritual education, Christian nurture, as being able to avoid the charge of “indoctrination.” Thiessen (1993) describes the concept of indoctrination in terms of four approaches to define the term: content, method, intention, and result, or some combination of these terms. Neiman argues that Thiessen’s most fundamental assertion is “that all concepts, including education and indoctrination, exist not only in a purely conceptual space but, rather, in an evolving social and historical realm” (p. 431). Schools have been involved in forms of indoctrination, Neiman charges, as they have historically promoted doctrines that support racism, sexism, and alienation from the self. The self is shaped within particular traditions, in certain places and times, and science initiates its practitioners into its ruling paradigms in the same way that religions initiate people into particular ways of seeing and being

in the world. Practice is required in order to learn and understand the paradigms, and only then can one be critical of the practice. A “commitment” is necessary at first, in order to think critically and openly about all traditions, including those in the spiritual realm.

Beliefs and practices exist in both the scientific and the spiritual aspects of human existence, and both paradigms involve an “embodied quest.” Beliefs need to be exercised in order to be tested, and Neiman (1999) here looks to William James, who puts truth as primary in an ethics of belief, rather than avoidance of error. “In Jamesian terms, such educational practice and its associated institutions keep us at the fork of the road, as spectators to rather than active participants in the authentic life of spirit” (p. 435). A spiritual life is an embodied quest, and education is a form of inquiry based on an ongoing commitment to learning and openness in the world, in a historical context.

Neiman (1999) acknowledges the problem of mandating spiritual education in a pluralistic society, especially as it is conceived of by Thiessen in terms of Christian nurture, which “suggests that such education must be sectarian and, hence, unsuitable for . . . democratic ends” (p. 437). The question arises here for Neiman whether a choice must be made between advocating spirituality or liberal democracy in schools, and he connects Thiessen with Dewey (1929) here, arguing that both viewed teaching as “a form of inquiry possible only on the basis of ongoing commitments, and the educated person can only enact her rationality and autonomy through such commitments” (p. 438). Obviously, a decision must be made as to which beliefs and practices are expected for students’ commitment. Whereas Dewey opposed any type of religious commitment in democratic, public schooling, Neiman suggests that Dewey’s philosophy might be reconstructed to “provide a nonsectarian education for spirituality as well as democracy” (p. 439). Ultimately, Neiman finds the work of Noddings (1992) as being the most

helpful in moving toward such a form of spiritual education; Noddings' focus on caring offers a bridge between Dewey's notions of democracy and Thiessen's sectarian vision.

Discussion

A number of articles concerning spirituality in education acknowledge the difficulty of agreeing upon a particular definition of the term in question, but simultaneously the authors recognize that ignoring the presence of spirituality in education is a mistake. In the same way that scientific analysis aims to break the world into parts for examination, a practice of contemplation can lend itself to relatedness in the world, and help to make the world more accessible and transparent (Palmer, 2003a). An emphasis on rationality since the Enlightenment has diminished human capacity for spiritual development, and schools have been involved in a process of indoctrination that has emphasized reason (Thiessen, 1993). If learning is largely about asking important questions, spirituality seems central to the making of meaning in terms of ontological inquiries. Students construct their identities through the paradigms of knowledge that are available to them, and to omit spiritual issues is to omit an aspect of being human that seems central to understanding the world one inhabits.

Possible Approaches to Spirituality in Education

Iannone and Obenauf (1999) relate the question of spirituality in education to the more general search for meaning, asking whether a more integrated curriculum can address spirituality in the classroom. The authors connect spirituality to a search for deeper philosophical meaning in life, a search that is an essential component of education and a necessary response to increased modern materialism, and so the authors look at the curriculum offered at Waldorf schools as a possible approach to spirituality in secularized settings. The debates around spirituality in the past few decades, the authors argue, have been attuned to an apparent spiritual awakening in the

West (both in terms of traditional religions and “Eastern” teachings), alongside continued materialism and intellectualism. “Underneath all our discussions, whether it be the traditional spirituality of our religions or the great prophets of the eastern religions, we spent most of our time debating and intellectualizing without actively engaging and experiencing the spiritual, ourselves” (p. 738). Individuals need to engage and experience spiritual aspects of life and educational curricula need to address this need, synthesizing the secular and the spiritual.

Iannone and Obenauf (1999) offer a simple approach to this necessary synthesis, following the work of Noddings and Shore (1984) who assert that intuition needs to be added to the rational. To assist in synthesizing reason and intuition, Iannone and Obenauf suggest the simple act of sitting: “We are in need of sitting with our experiences, our feelings, sensations, thoughts and desires and exploring their meanings” (p. 739). A spiritual curriculum would involve an “awakening” to an inner voice, but also a movement toward unity between the outer and inner voices. The authors point to the Waldorf system founder, Rudolf Steiner, who believed that a child could be taught “to develop, harmonize, and unite that power of spirituality, thought, feeling, and action” (p. 742). A holistic curriculum, such as that at Waldorf schools, would include the context alongside content, concepts alongside facts, questions with answers, imagination with knowledge, intuition with logic, and the process along with the product.

At the core of Western liberal tradition, Astin (2004) asserts, is the maxim, “know thyself,” but ironically self-development receives little attention in schools and colleges. Astin asks the logically pertinent question, “If we lack self-understanding--the capacity to see ourselves clearly and honestly and to understand why we feel and act as we do--then how can we ever expect to understand others” (p. 35)? Driven by the question of self-development and the inner lives of students, Astin was instrumental in conducting a 2003 survey of 1680 college

juniors in forty-six institutions, the results of which revealed a strong interest in spiritual matters among the student population.

The results of Astin's (2004) survey suggest that over half (58%) of all college students place a high value on "integrating spirituality" into their lives, and more than two-thirds report that they have had a "spiritual experience." More than three-fourths of the students (77%) believe that "we are all spiritual beings," and significant numbers of students acknowledge that they are experiencing challenges and struggles in their spiritual development. Two-thirds (65%) report they question their religious/spiritual beliefs "at least occasionally" (18% say "frequently"), and a similar number (68%) say that they feel "unsettled about spiritual and religious matters," at least to some extent. Three-fourths (76%) of the students have "struggled to understand evil, suffering, and death" at least occasionally (21% said frequently), and one-third (38%) of the students report feeling "disillusionment" with their religious upbringing, at least "to some extent" (Astin, p. 38).

From the results of this survey, Astin (2004) noticed that student values were supportive of human rights in terms of gender, race, and sexuality, but that students were much less actively engaged politically and academically as compared to a previous generation, and students now were focused largely on making money. Astin writes, "These contrasting values-- the material and the existential-- have literally traded places since the early 1970's In other words, a focus on the spiritual interior has been replaced by a focus on the material exterior" (p. 36). Astin suggests that this situation is a result of an education system that focuses on what students do in the material world, with little focus about what they feel, a neglect of "affective" states and skills that are the essence of sentient human beings.

In connection with writing a book he was working on, Astin (2004) assumed the tedious task of going through a dictionary to identify different terms in English for labeling affective or feeling states, and created a list of more than 1,000 words, and he noticed that dozens of these words have to do with *thinking*. Astin shares an abbreviated list of these affective-thinking terms: “surprised, doubtful, focused, reflective, skeptical, comprehending, mindful, astonished, unsure, interested, confused, amazed, curious and -- the feeling state that most frustrates those of us who teach -- boredom” (p. 37). From such a list, it is easy to understand that cognition cannot be separated from affect; Astin argues that human thought and reasoning take place in an affective “bed” or context.

Astin (2004) sees a gradual movement in higher education towards understanding this enhanced conceptualization of cognitive consciousness, connecting emotions to reason, searching for more whole meaning in one’s life and community. He raises a number of questions that surround the issue of spirituality, such as renewal, community, purpose, the causes of fragmentation and disconnection, and the practices that make it difficult for people to be authentic in an academic setting. For too long, academia has encouraged teachers and students alike to lead fragmented and inauthentic lives, denying the spiritual aspect of life, or keeping it separate from school. Astin laments this practice, “Under these conditions, our work becomes divorced from our most deeply felt values and we hesitate to discuss issues of meaning, purpose, authenticity, wholeness, and fragmentation with our colleagues” (p. 38). Astin interviewed seventy faculty members from four institutions of higher education, and one major finding was that many faculty members were “eager to discuss issues of meaning, purpose, and spirituality” (p. 38). Both students and educators seem poised and prepared to confront questions of spirituality in secular education.

Inspiration and creativity are central to spiritual development, for Astin (2004), and function as primary human aspects in nurturing the cultivation of consciousness. Creativity is central to liberal learning and is a fundamental part of human existence; Astin gives a number of examples from different artists that connect creativity to the spiritual dimensions of life and moves towards the connection of the creative and the cognitive. Rather than positing the mystical and spiritual as “irrational,” Astin suggests that the processes of creativity and intuition are *trans*-rational, transcending rationality.

While some academics may be inclined to view the mystical and the spiritual as “irrational,” the processes of intuition and creativity are, in fact, more *trans*rational than *irrational*. The point here is that the mystical or spiritual aspects of our conscious experience are by no means contrary to, or otherwise opposed to, rationality; rather, they *transcend* rationality. (p. 40)

In conclusion, Astin looks to how education might emphasize the neglected aspects of human conscious experience. He suggests that faculty be encouraged in the direction of *learning*, not just teaching, and that the emphasis on learning happens at the community level, not just the individual. Additional ideas for educational reform include promoting ideas such as connectedness, holistic learning, service learning, and personal reflection.

Gross (2006) confronts the question of spirituality in the classroom from the perspective of recent developments in information communication technology (ICT), and she asks how computers and other new media in the classroom can enhance spiritual identity and socialization. Gross begins with a simple, straightforward question: “Is it possible to teach religious and humanistic spirituality” (p. 51)? If it is possible to do so, then perhaps ICT can be helpful in

expanding access to alternative systems of knowledge and a variety of perspectives from spiritual educators.

Gross (2006) contrasts two theories of learning (behaviorist and constructivist), and asserts that the latter is the more modern approach to learning that recognizes different learning styles and levels, recognizing that knowledge is acquired subjectively depending on background and experience. A behaviorist approach focuses on specific goals and content, regardless of learning context, and a spiritual education based on this model would present a single body of knowledge to be transmitted to the students. Gross writes in support of the constructivist approach as it enables each student “to create his or her own spiritual world and function within it . . . to be exposed to information and to different spiritual experiences from various sources and to reflect on these with their peers or teachers” (p. 52).

The complexity of student identity makes one-dimensional education ineffective and irrelevant, especially when discussing spiritual identity. Gross (2006) sees a possible solution to the multidimensionality of students in the use of sophisticated ICT, with the idea that a greater scope and diversity of spiritual knowledge can be accessed to meet the broader and deeper needs of teachers and students. Gross explains, “Generally, the spiritual classroom (both religious and secular) is constrained by the limited facilities of the religious education and only the most charismatic and talented teacher can meet this standard” (p. 53), but advanced ICT might broaden the possibilities of the classroom.

Every human has a spiritual dimension that entails a search for meanings, and this search occurs within both educational and cultural systems; Gross (2006) puts forward a typological model to define religious and secular learning in terms of *conceptual* and *heritable* parameters. Following Taylor (1989), Gross asserts that an understanding of one’s identity requires

processing information into knowledge, and spiritual experience can be developed through three perspectives (social, emotional, and cognitive) to assist in meaning-making and identity-construction. Gross conceives of secularity as a distinct entity, and argues that spirituality can be manifested religiously or secularly, motivated by theocentric perception or anthropocentric perspective. The conceptual-heritable distinction can be further divided into secular and religious comparisons.

Ultimately, Gross (2006) argues that the dichotomy of “religious” and “secular” as conceptual types is misleading in terms of the complexity of spirituality as conceived of by modern individuals, and curricula need to be accordingly reassessed. “A systematic instructive-didactic strategy should be developed and greater social awareness of these pluralistic options should be encouraged” (p. 56). ICT can provide the required diversity for such a strategic curriculum, and it also allows for a certain degree of anonymity as students search for spiritual meaning across Internet connections. Spiritual instruction, in both religious and secular settings, needs to be open to the diverse and heterogeneous student population with “diversified and heterogeneous religious and secular definitions” (p. 60); students need to be involved in the decision-making process of instruction as they are constructing their identities through inherited beliefs, cultural contexts, and education, all of which increasingly are mediated through ICT advancements. Gross concludes, “Modern education should listen to the voices of students in its search for better practice. To incorporate students’ voices one needs accurate descriptions of the differential and diverse definitions of spirituality” (p. 60).

To confront the seemingly simple question of whether secularism and spirituality can coexist in education, Coburn (2005) suggests a heuristic model for spiritual education, arguing that a balance of the inner and outer life was central in the Western tradition of learning (as well

as Eastern traditions), but he says that this heritage went into remission during the Enlightenment. “The challenge of incorporating spirituality into liberal education today is therefore an effort to recapture a balance of inner and outer in our vision of education” (p. 58). To elucidate the distinction between inner and outer visions, Coburn examines two phases of Western liberal education; one emphasizes the *personal-cultural*, positing knowledge as understanding, while the other phase emphasizes the *object-objective*, positing knowledge as information.

Coburn (2005) introduces a new model for learning in the liberal academy, rather than joining the battle between the “ancients” and the “moderns”; he suggests that no single center is necessary in learning. Coburn’s model is *elliptical* in nature, allowing for both secular and spiritual foci set in dynamic tension. Contemplative education requires a new model for learning, beyond the modern/ancient dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity, and the ellipse places the two foci in relation to one another, rather than at odds.

What the encounter of spirituality and secularism in liberal education promises is therefore a fresh instance of the vitality that has animated our heritage for a very long time. It holds high promise for helping the contemporary academy out of its centuries-long overemphasis on the secular, thereby coming to a more apt understanding of the contemporary world, in which the secular and the spiritual intertwine and complement each other in complex and wonderful ways. (p. 61)

To look at a tradition outside of the Western models, Fraser (2004) writes specifically about the growth of Maori education initiatives in New Zealand, theorizing about elements of spirituality that form an important part of indigenous values, beliefs, and practices. Fraser points to a national curriculum document from 1999 that includes a statement of spirituality in health

and physical education, and then she sets this statement alongside developments in Maori education initiatives. Maori schools reflect indigenous values and the development of ethical decision-making that speaks to a search for deeper meaning and purpose in education. New Zealand state school curriculum emphasizes *values*, such as honesty, reliability, respect for others, respect for the law, tolerance, fairness, caring or compassion, and the teaching of these values, asserts Fraser, involves ethical decision-making; “Such decisions can reflect one’s search for meaning and purpose, which increasingly is defined as spirituality” (p. 87).

Fraser (2004) relates spirituality and values based on her reading of government documents, which defines the idea of spiritual wellbeing (in Maori, *taha wairua*):

In this definition, the ‘values and beliefs that determine the way people live, the search for meaning and purpose in life, and personal identity and self-awareness (for some individuals and communities, spiritual well-being is linked to a particular religion; for others, it is not).’ This statement signals an inclusive approach that may accommodate religious beliefs but is not limited to religion alone. (p. 88)

Spirituality, for Fraser, is not a subject to be taught, but a strand to be woven throughout the curriculum as a natural part of life, both for the individual and the collective. In Maori culture, the centrality of spirituality makes it essential to include it in curriculum initiatives. To ignore the spiritual realm would be to communicate to students and teachers that such issues are irrelevant or unnecessary, Fraser concludes, whereas spirituality is central to Maori worldview.

Brummelen, Koole, and Franklin (2004) also question the absence of spirituality in curriculum, in the context of public schools in Canada. The authors contend that neglecting the spiritual dimension of learning leaves a void and fails to address essential questions of the “heart and soul.” Learning requires the contemplation of mystery and the omission of the spiritual

aspect of experience in learning makes it appear unimportant. “The spiritual dimension of life can nourish students’ educational context, experience, and understanding and thus enrich their knowledge and discernment” (p. 238). To omit this dimension is to learn and teach in skewed incompleteness.

Canada projects itself as multicultural country, assert Brummelen et al. (2004), and its education curricula are strictly secular, but the “scope of spirituality is broader than that of religion. Religion does not encompass all of spirituality” (p. 238). The challenge in such a secular setting is to approach the spiritual dimension without a particular religious angle, respecting the multiplicity of beliefs. While there is not a consensus on the definition of spirituality, it does seem to involve questions of “transcendence, mystery, value, and universality . . . and the quest for spiritual transformation has always been a manifest aspect of human nature and culture” (p. 240). The authors attempt to move beyond both modern and postmodern conceptions of spirituality; while the modern positivist focus on instrumentalism in schooling is not viewed as the correct path, postmodern constructivism can lead to self-centeredness with continually shifting world-views and relativistic understanding of beliefs and values.

Brummelen et al. (2004) suggest nurturing a “sacramental cosmology,” an awareness of visible signs of grace to foster gratitude, reverence, and openness. Love and compassion connect individuals to meaningful knowledge, and further awaken human consciousness. “In education, the ultimate horizon of such a sacramental cosmology is an unfathomable mystery that leads to contemplative wonder and appreciation, and is rooted in compassionate and loving relationships that embrace meaningful knowing” (p. 245). A consciousness rooted in such a cosmology, the authors hold, invites contemplation and critical thinking about the social conditions of other people, notions of justice, and the construction of alternative futures. Controversial as it may be,

the spiritual dimension can be taught sensitively and responsibly, helping students to find the profound in the “commonplace;” this aspect of life is significant and evocative, and encourages students to strive for wisdom and creativity. Brummelen et al. write that for students, such an education involves the “quest for truth, goodness, and beauty. It challenges them to develop an awareness of and responsiveness to the need for respect, compassion, hospitality, and justice, both within their personal networks and within the global village” (p. 251). Here, a cosmology rooted in compassion and love help foster increased social justice and fairer social conditions on a global scale.

Are classrooms spiritual spaces? If so, how might teachers honor and be sensitive to spiritual experiences in the classroom? Schoonmaker (2009) tries to answer these questions by juxtaposing the literature on children’s spirituality with her own personal experiences as a classroom teacher and researcher, arguing for classrooms as spiritual spaces. Spirituality is referred to as a way of being that includes the capacity for humans to see beyond themselves, to feel the wonder and mystery of the world, to experience moments of awe. “Education in the deepest, most inclusive sense is a spiritual endeavor, and human beings are inherently spiritual. Classrooms are spiritual spaces whether or not we intend them to be or recognize that they are” (p. 2714). Spirituality is not a point along the way in cognitive development, but is integral to being human, for Schoonmaker. Teachers need to carve out spaces for children’s wholeness in classrooms, so that human nature can express itself through the weaving of meaningful threads.

Given the increased interest in spiritual development in schooling, which includes research and policy initiatives, Carr (2008) suggests that a particular focus in music is a possible approach to cultivate spirituality in education, and he looks at methodological means that might be developed with this in mind. By connecting arts and aesthetics to questions of spirituality,

education can address the attitudes of materialism, hedonism, and individualism that Carr says are pervasive in student behavior that is experiencing a trend towards nihilism. If spirituality is connected to moral questions, Carr wonders how this connects to music education. “Moreover, if it is widely assumed that exposure to various arts can have real spiritual benefits, it has often also seemed natural to associate music, of all the different arts on offer, with spiritual experience or growth” (p. 17).

Music can console, motivate, increase emotional intelligence, be therapeutic, and purge negative emotions while articulating positive emotions. However, Carr (2008) is quick to point out that music is not just about understanding emotions, because music is more than just understanding. Music is about harmony, order, and proportion, and can be entirely without “purpose.” Carr looks to the work of Santayana (1954) who wrote “music is essentially useless, as life is” (p. 315). Music is not causal in nature, and spiritual education is likewise non-utilitarian and non-instrumental. Carr notes the problematic nature of this argument, as it could be said that all education has the goal of understanding different forms of knowledge for their own sake, and therefore spiritual education is not distinctive. “The trouble is that if all education is spiritual education, then we might as well (for all practical purposes) say that none is” (Carr, p. 27). Following the logic of Wittgenstein (1921/1961), humans must remain silent of that which they cannot speak, and thus spiritual education may be impossible. Carr recognizes this problem and in conclusion he acknowledges the pedagogical difficulty of educating for spiritual development, in the case of music, if spiritual experiences of this nature are not articulated in a linguistic sense.

Lodewyk, Lu, and Kentel (2009) want to reorient physical education to promote balanced mindful dispositions and spiritual awareness, to enable students to become more aware,

enlightened, harmonious, and integrated. The authors ask whether “spirituality” be seen as a process that involves joy, sacrifice, and connection, and if it is seen this way, can it engage the psyche, body, and culture in unique ways? “Through understanding the meaning and significance of spirituality, its role in health and physical education, and possibilities for fostering this awareness in students, educators can disrupt the current tendency to overlook an integral component of being” (p. 177). The ultimate goal is a sense of whole self for students, as well as a striving to understand the complexity of experiences in life, and physical education represents a good way to foster this sense of spirituality.

While the absolute meaning of “spirituality” may not be possible to define and articulate, Lodewyk et al. (2009) argue that it can be understood as an integral part of the teaching and learning process. Being spiritual involves an awareness of the whole self, a quest for understanding, and a connection to other people, to nature, and to the self. The authors follow Daly, who understands spirituality this way:

An inner life of feelings (awe, appreciation, respect, and delight) and encompasses a sense of the infinite and of powers and forces beyond human experience or control and gives life a meaning and purpose . . . It means having a proper balance between one’s outer and inner world and is a search for quality and unity in life.

(in Lodewyk et al., p. 215)

A greater holism is possible in physical education, connected to comprehensive programs that include health and a sense of wonder and delight; it cannot be just about the body. A lack of emphasis on the spiritual dimension leads to “spiritual atrophy” in students.

Movement of the human body also has an element of beauty, so Lodewyk et al. (2009) connect physical education to aesthetics as well. Activities can help students become focused,

relaxed, and connected, and such aims can be attempted by connecting aesthetic appreciation with physical education. Dance, drama, and art all can lead in this direction, as can disciplines such as martial arts and meditation. Importantly, silence and solitude are a necessary component of spiritual development, so spaces and time must be provided. Finally, the authors recommend combining physical education with activities in natural settings, connecting students with ecological beauty, to develop a spiritual sense. “Such activities also promote contemplative and emotional connections to the beauty and power of nature” (p. 177). Such a comprehensive program of physical education develops a more whole person with more meaningful existence, and recognizes spirituality as an essential component of being human.

To look at the feasibility of a mindfulness training workbook for young children, Reid and Miller (2009) conducted a qualitative study rooted in action research methods, allowing for adjustments to be made as needed in a mindfulness program. The participants of the research, consisting of twenty-four children (rising fifth graders) of low socioeconomic status from urban areas in Connecticut, were enrolled in a summer program. The mindfulness program was found to be feasible, using a workbook that asks students to become detectives and activate their five senses in exploring the school environment. “Self-awareness, acceptance, increased attention, and working in groups are all part of the goals in using this manual. There is no right or wrong way to use this workbook” (p. 2779). Reid and Miller found a strong correlation between awareness and creativity, a correlation between awareness and perceived capacity for learning, and a correlation between creativity and a perceived capacity for learning. The children who needed the most help at the onset of the program showed the greatest improvement by the end, and the school setting seems to be an ideal environment to reach children for conducting a mindfulness program, as they spend so many hours there every day and it already serves as a

center for learning and social experiences. Results from a post-program questionnaire demonstrated that students enjoyed the mindfulness program. Of the twenty-four students, 100% reported that their enjoyment of experience in the program was due to “learning and fun,” and results from the questionnaire suggested that the “children’s experiences could be broken down into three themes: creativity, connectedness, and compassion” (p. 2781). In conclusion, the study found that school becomes a more interesting place for both teachers and students when the focus is on process and learning, rather than outcome and test scores. Mindfulness here can be viewed as one approach to issues of spirituality, as it looks to develop deeper senses of relatedness dependent on compassion, connectivity, and creativity.

Cohen and Miller (2009) understand “mindfulness” as a set of skills that can be taught and developed with practice, independent of spiritual traditions, to better relate to present-moment experience. The authors investigated a six-week “interpersonal mindfulness training” (IMT) program that was integrated into a semester-long graduate course in psychology, to advance research in an area that they see as deficiently studied. “Despite the growing support for mindfulness-based interventions for symptom reduction, research on relationally oriented interventions designed to improve interpersonal outcomes is scant” (p. 2772). IMT aims to reduce perceived stress and enhance interpersonal wellbeing, and the study explored whether such training can be beneficial for nascent mental health professionals at risk from stress. The results of the study suggest that IMT with psychology graduate students is a feasible intervention that positively affects mindfulness, social connectedness, emotional intelligence, and perceived stressful anxiety. Mindfulness training may be successfully taught within a graduate psychology curriculum, complementing standard training, encompassing awareness of both self and other,

both internal and external worlds. Such training would have obvious beneficial effects for educational curriculum as well.

Can an increased awareness of synchronicity develop an individual's sense of personal spiritual awareness and mental health? This question propelled a study by Cho, Miller, Hrastar, Sutton, and Younes (2009), as they evaluated a six-week synchronicity discussion group known as "Synchronicity Awareness Intervention" (SAI); the study focused on post-intervention data collected through semi-structured interviews. The participants were emerging educators and human service professionals, and the program was well received by the participants, indicating that it was an acceptable form for a spiritually informed discussion group. "Awareness of synchronicity might initiate a process of general spiritual awareness, a sense of the spiritual significance in daily lived events" (p. 2787). Synchronicity awareness provides "concrete and symbolic directions and creative answers to difficulties" (p. 2787), and daily lived experiences come to be viewed as indications of the sacred universe. Data from the study suggested that SAI was associated with increased awareness of synchronicity and suggested beneficial effects on personal spirituality and mental health. The preliminary study showed feasibility, acceptability, engagement, and helpfulness of an SAI group; SAI may be helpful for educators to understand life events as "meaningful" and "illuminating," and provided "the emotional space to examine, explore and even debate the meaning and impact of synchronicity" (p. 2790). Awareness of synchronicity entails spiritual openness and a commitment to viewing one's experiences in a new light, challenging students to explore their lives for more complexity and depth.

Similar to the idea of synchronicity-awareness, Richards (2009) looks at how one might develop pedagogy of self-awareness for leaders in education, specifically by looking at a study that describes a leadership development program in self-awareness. The intervention consisted

of daily 45-minute sessions of sensory awareness training (SAT) that focused primarily on breath, body sensations, listening, and visualizations. The SAT occurred as part of a six-week intensive leadership development master's degree program over two summers; participants were enrolled in the Summer Principals Academy at Teachers College. The forty-five student participants recorded their thoughts and feelings in journal entries immediately after the daily training sessions, and wrote a weekly reflection of the practice; they also wrote three-week, six-week, and summative reflections. These qualitative data were entered into NVivo software, coded, and analyzed for themes.

Pedagogy for self-awareness training can be central to “expanding and deepening our capacity for multisensory awareness -- including our capacity for sustained self-awareness -- leading to a more relaxed, present, and meaningful life” (Richards, 2009, p. 2734). Individuals in educational leadership can benefit from such a training, in order to promote classrooms where “spirit is alive” (students are focused and eager), leading to insight into one's situation in the world, increased empathy, reduced stress and psychological suffering, and the ability to locate the path to self-actualization. SAT is a form of systematic training and effort that represents a “delicate empiricism to uncover hidden patterns in the physical, emotional, and mental structures of our own being” (p. 2752). As individuals practice this training, they can experience the depth and presence of self-awareness to enlighten themselves about cycles of attention, distraction, and reaction. Ultimately, a capacity to recognize these patterns develops into critical self-awareness that informs one's own instruction, and this “pedagogy of being” provides an opportunity to attend to everything and give deeper perspective into teaching and life situations. In conclusion, Richards wonders whether the possibilities of SAT offer something richly rewarding in more evolutionary terms: “Is it too much to believe that these experiences and their self-conscious

integration into our lives can collectively set the stage for the next step in our evolution” (p. 2755)? Again, a critical self-awareness and attention to mindfulness, continually developed by educators and students, can foster deeper and broader perspectives that enhance instruction and learning.

Discussion

The approaches to including issues of spirituality in education are diverse, as a number of authors engage with the question specifically how educators might be able to grapple with this potentially contentious issue in the classroom. The practice of “contemplation” is a recurring theme that fits well with the more general goal of education, as deep consideration of any subject matter is a necessary part of learning. To synthesize reason and intuition, simply sitting with one’s feelings and thoughts can assist in an exploration of deepened meanings (Iannone & Obenauf, 1999). Reasoning occurs in an affective context, and an enhanced conceptualization of cognitive consciousness connects emotions to reason. Creativity is likewise a vital aspect of learning, to encourage students to make one’s world in the process of making meaning; the inner development of an individual is not divorced from external progress (Astin, 2004).

A synthesis of the scientific and spiritual leads to a more robust view of the world, a trans-rational understanding of life. An elliptical model of education (Coburn, 2005), including the spiritual as one of the foci of learning, yields a helpful model of understanding a possible location for spirituality in education, whether it be in health, law, business, medicine, music, or ICT education (Carr, 2008; Gross, 2006). Importantly, spirituality is not a subject to be taught in school, but is a strand to be woven through the curriculum as a natural part of life (Fraser, 2004). Spirituality is not a point in cognitive development, but is integral to being human (Schoonmaker, 2009). A number of studies find that practices of mindfulness and self-

awareness can enhance spiritual awareness, and that art, music, and physical education all help in developing this deepened mindfulness and awareness (Cho et al., 2009; Lodewyk et al., 2009; Reid & Miller, 2009; Richards, 2009).

Potential Conflicts /Solutions Concerning Spirituality in Education

Is the current crisis of education a spiritual one, and if so, can the classroom be developed as a space for the cultivation of spirituality? L. Miller (2009) sees this issue as central to the problem in schools where children are asked to check their inner lives at the classroom door, rather than welcoming students to exist wholly in the present. The result of this disconnection between schools and spirituality is a “disintegrated presence” in students who contemplate questions of spirituality, in terms of their relationships and connections to present experiences in the world. “By the term spiritual is meant our relationship to the great surrounding world, absolute values experienced personally, an ultimate connection to meaning and transcendence, as expressed in every moment, most importantly right here and now” (p. 2706). Miller writes about the relationship between teachers and students, positing students at the center of the learning process, existing with questions of spirituality; the teacher needs to listen. “The way into spiritual awareness is to be present, and listen. The student brings the material, and we have an opportunity to reach our students right where they live” (p. 2707). Such an approach is referred to as “deep teaching,” and it depends upon the teacher’s ability to be present, to listen, and to allow for possibilities to arise. If teachers and students are asked to leave questions of spirituality outside the classroom, they are asked to turn their backs on the potential of deep learning in school and deep existence in life. It is possible to create a space and depth in the classroom that allows individuals to both develop a greater self-awareness and to see beyond

themselves; additionally, this space de-centers educators from rigid perspectives, allowing for new learning possibilities and enhanced human existence.

Palmer (2003b) explores the spiritual considerations that might be put in place for teacher education, accepting the premise that there is a spiritual dimension to good teaching. Palmer looks at the implications of a “pedagogy of the soul” that emphasizes the spiritual dimensions of teaching, and asks how such pedagogy might respect cultural diversity and the separation of church and state. Acknowledging the difficulties (and dangers) of defining this term “spirituality,” Palmer takes a simple approach: “Spirituality is the eternal human yearning to be connected with something larger than our own egos” (p. 377). If schools do not address this yearning, if schools are not the place to raise deep questions of meaning, and if schools are offered few models for spiritual issues, then schools violate the “deepest needs of the human soul, which education does with some regularity” (p. 379). Palmer indicts much contemporary schooling, but he also offers solutions for teachers and students.

Education has become fearful of soulful things, Palmer (2003b) argues, and so he employs an understanding of the seasons to discuss spirituality in a secular society. Such a metaphorical approach is helpful as it welcomes “diverse voices in respectful discourse about difficult things” (p. 380). Palmer developed a teacher-education program entitled “Courage to Teach” (CTT) to put his ideas into practice, holding eight retreats of three days each, over two years, for educators to voluntarily develop a pedagogy of the soul. When CTT meets in autumn, the season when nature plants her seeds, participants are encouraged to consider the “seed of true self,” to reflect autobiographically about their passion for teaching. In winter, these seeds appear dead and gone, but in fact this represents dormancy, and teachers can consider moments in their teaching careers when things seem dead and finished. Spring represents a time of surprise and

hope, as new life arises, while summer is the season of abundance, revelation of the seeds' potential and capacity for growth, blossom, and fulfillment. Palmer's metaphor of the seasons offers a common ground to explore meaningful matters, but also allows for a diversity of voices to be heard in teacher-education concerning spiritual dimensions.

Zajonc (2003) gives a number of examples of how contemplative practices can be implemented across various disciplines, as a result of a hundred "contemplative practice fellowships" that supported faculty in developing courses at different institutions. Eighty institutions were involved in this program, established by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, and ranged from poetry and contemplation at West Point, to contemplating the cosmos at UC Santa Cruz, and contemplative practice and health at the University of Arkansas. The program has also explored the relationship between science, values, and spirituality, and Zajonc has realized that "formidable barriers block the integration of contemplation and spirituality into higher education" (p. 53).

Zajonc (2003) writes of higher education, and therefore addresses the teaching of adults and not children, so that the barriers are not legal in nature, as students can make their own decisions rather than their parents. Rather than legal constraints, Zajonc argues the barriers are informal; the academy is not truly open to new methods of inquiry into new domains, as liberal higher education claims to espouse. However, he further argues that the more complex barriers are conceptual, based on an incorrect "map." On one side of the map lies the group of religion, faith, values, and moral code; the other side of the map is the domain of science, reason, facts, and natural knowledge. Such a conceptualization assumes there is no empirical dimension to spirituality, which Zajonc finds wrong. Spirituality belongs on both sides of this map, and thus Zajonc seeks a *cognitive spirituality*: "On this new map we locate spirituality on the side of

knowledge and *veritas*” (p. 54). A cognitive spirituality allows for a more comprehensive understanding of every field of inquiry, and neglecting the spiritual aspect of life is neglecting an aspect of facts, necessary for making decisions in the world.

In neglecting an aspect of cognition, educators reduce the range of possibilities in cognitive understanding. Zajonc (2003) acknowledges the importance of mastering the methodologies of one’s discipline, but also recognizes the importance of knowing the limitations and problems of these methodologies. As a physicist, he writes of rational analysis and what Erwin Schroedinger called “the principle of objectification”; objects around us are objectively real, but reality lacks any qualities. Such models can be useful in terms of quantum physics, but are problematic when we see them literally. “The models are not the point, but rather they represent to us a hidden intelligibility of the world” (p. 56). More important than the model is the capacity to see, to theorize, following the Greek meaning of *theorein*, to behold. Here, Zajonc hearkens back to the Platonists who distinguished between two ways of knowing; logical reasoning was spoken of as *dianoia*, whereas direct perception of truth was called *episteme*.

Zajonc (2003) emphasizes “episteme,” to address what he sees as an imbalance in current approaches to knowledge, with the end goal to include contemplation on the path of knowing. He suggests a methodology that would include contemplative insights, outlining five basic methodological elements. To begin, experience is granted central significance. Second, cognition is recognized as always being participatory. Next, cognition’s ultimate goal is direct perception, which requires the capacity “to behold” deeply, to see what would otherwise remain hidden. Fourth, the first three elements are just as valid for spiritual experience as they are for other forms of experience. Finally, human actions can be based on “a moral judgment grounded

in an empathetic connection to a lived world. This contrasts with action governed by a calculus of utility or cost-benefit analysis” (p. 56).

Zajonc (2003) writes of various levels of awareness in spiritual traditions, and applies this notion across the disciplines, arguing that every field “can be deepened by sustained, contemplative engagement with the phenomena of that field” (p. 57). In conclusion, he urges for a “phenomenology of the spirit” calling for education that develops human insight further through contemplative faculties. While spirituality has long been heresy in secularized higher education, Zajonc maintains that now is the time for the discourse to develop that allows a space for spiritual contemplation in the realm of liberal education.

Crossman (2003) assumes an international perspective in examining the secular development of spirituality, and warns of the cultural implications that surround the current discourse, with the potential of dominant “globalized” notions of spirituality. Crossman cautions that educational spiritual development can lead to particular modes of shaping identity and behavior, working as “the instrument of social control serving the hegemonic interests of the West” (p. 506). Crossman compares two approaches to understanding spirituality in education, looking at the global versus international perspectives; the latter approach, she argues, allows for community-based initiatives, as opposed to ideas being pressed upon people from elsewhere.

While shared meanings of spirituality may be found across cultures, Crossman (2003) argues, the meanings need to be generated from the “bottom-up” if awareness is to be developed across cultures, with different groups acting as both “donors” and “borrowers.” Crossman identifies two kinds of cognitive functioning: “deliberate, purposeful thinking versus our intelligent unconscious, from which we draw insight, intuition, spiritual orientation and wisdom” (p. 507). Both kinds of thinking need to be maximized and much is to be learned from spiritually

inclusive educational traditions around the world, and Crossman acknowledges that more university disciplines have implemented spiritually inclusive curricula in recent years. It is unlikely that a precise definition of spirituality can globally be agreed upon. Crossman argues, “What seems more likely is that we would develop an awareness of layers of meaning across cultures” (p. 512). If conceptions of spirituality can be discussed openly and with mutual respect, then Crossman sees the potential for efforts in spiritual education to foster peace, as it is “the nature of spiritual experience, rather than spiritual experiences *per se*, that appears to be most powerful in their political and cultural implications” (p. 511).

Joldersma (2009) thinks of spirituality as a discourse that depicts the everyday world in a particular way, rather than seeing spirituality as an additional, inner region or a transcendent, outer world. Joldersma employs the ideas of phenomenologist de Boer (1997), who wrote of the spirituality of the desert, and puts de Boer in dialogue with the analysis of educational theorist Purpel (1989), who sought to combine ideas of spirituality with social justice. This approach locates spirituality in a continual *oscillation* between the individual and the community; although it is philosophical in nature, Joldersma’s analysis does allow for a new understanding of classroom dynamics in various settings.

Spirituality has been framed as a theological conception for many centuries, but Joldersma (2009) offers a philosophical approach from a phenomenological perspective. He follows what de Vries (2005) calls “alternative thinking,” something he connects with *philosophy of the trace*. “This is an approach that doesn’t seek to grasp reality through application of general concepts, but instead discusses a ‘phenomenon’ by alternating between two different angles that remain irresolvably distinct” (p. 194). Alternation between *two sets of dyads* opens up a different space for consideration, such as alternating between the singular and

the general, to allow for less determinate representations. The oscillation between dyads implies what de Vries refers to as a *phenomenon of interference*, which indicates “a trace that remains allusive. All that one can make explicit in such a discussion is the interference that indicates a trace” (Joldersma, p. 194). For Joldersma, a discourse of spirituality only can indicate spirituality as a phenomenological trace, but still has valuable contributions to make.

Joldersma (2009) acknowledges the limits of philosophizing in this phenomenological mode that de Boer and de Vries follow, considering the notion of spirituality as a trace alongside ideas of social justice. “My alternative involves understanding spirituality as a trace that involves the call of justice coming from beyond the individual or the community, while remaining connected to both” (p. 194). Spirituality as a discourse indicates traces of “the good life” here and now, rather than situation spirituality as an inner dimension or an exterior other-worldliness. Joldersma looks to the work of Purpel (1989), who seeks to combine the discourse of spirituality with social justice, rather than following a model of spiritual-interiority, and in this approach, Purpel wants ideas of “suffering” and “alleviation of suffering” to inform educational reform. To uncover the phenomenon of spirituality, Joldersma works with *dyadic asymmetry*, to connect spirituality to the everyday world.

Two sets of asymmetrical dyads are particularly helpful for Joldersma (2009) in developing his notion of spirituality: “individualism versus community and worth versus achievement” (p. 197). The idea is to set dyads in apparent contradiction with one another, while recognizing that both are indispensable for meaning to be made, thus indicating something indirectly. For example, if individualism is to be prized, then the community must agree upon this valuing of the individual, thus elevating the value of the community itself. Similarly, if individual worth is to be valued, this must occur on a communal system of understanding. If

achievement is to be valued, on the part of individual accomplishment, this achievement is necessarily given more value when recognized by the community, thus elevating the value of the community. One must both choose and not choose the community or the individual, worth or achievement. For Joldersma, “It is this continuing oscillation that creates the indeterminate space in which inspiration can reside and move” (p. 201).

The notion of inspiration here returns to the etymology of the word “spirit,” connected to one’s breath and breathing. This basic act is necessary for human life, as the inhalation is required for oxygen, but also connects humans to something beyond the self, exhalation into space. The source of life comes from outside the self, but simultaneously requires the individual to inhale breath, connecting us to the exterior chaos, or the “rumbling contingency of the desert.” While the life-giving source is attractive, that is the breath we inhale which sustains us, the breath also connects us to the world in which we are tenuously situated. “We can now interpret the asymmetrical nature of these dyads as indicating a contrast between a source of life beyond the self on the one hand and the rumbling contingency that situates everyday life on the other” (Joldersma, p. 199). Within the indeterminate space for inspiration, created by the oscillation or alternation between asymmetrical dyads, the source of life is neither explicit nor located in one place; similarly, the discourse of spirituality includes the dynamic between the individual and the community.

The discourse of indirectness is marked by oscillation that points to a life-giving source of justice, but retains something that cannot be captured by clear language, and remains a mystery. “A mystery always involves excessiveness, namely, something that can’t be captured by clear, unambiguous language In a paradox, something is always left unsaid, a remainder” (Joldersma, p. 203). Just as life’s origins are outside the self, life’s actions respond to the “call of

justice” from beyond one’s self. The discourse of spirituality points to extrinsic life-giving justice as an incoming inspiration that moves us through the desert of life’s tenuous, contingent existence. For Joldersma, this discussion of dyadic asymmetry and the call of justice are never far from education, helping to interpret the role of the educator in the everyday world. The language of education “can be used to recover a broader construal of the classroom, to include an essential dynamic among all the participants in the space where education occurs” (p. 205). This dynamic includes the student as an individual, but also acknowledges that learning occurs in the community, and oscillation between these two points to an extrinsic source of life-giving justice for the classroom. We experience a “trace” of this source indirectly, through engagement with asymmetrical dyads that inspires action toward social justice despite rumbling contingencies.

Discussion

As a discussion of spirituality in education moves forward and expands, a number of authors speak to the possible problems that might be encountered. The apparent issue is the requirement of secular education to fulfill a separation of religion and the state, as spirituality is conflated with religion, but the real barriers are not legal in nature. Conceptual barriers also arise as one looks at spirituality in relation to other disciplines in the academy, and these problems require a reconceptualization of both spirituality and education, demanding new models to make sense of human understanding and knowledge-construction (Zajonc, 2003).

The prevalent disconnection between education and spirituality results in a “disintegrated presence” in schools where a space needs to be created that allows both teachers and students the opportunities to develop deeper self-awareness and enhanced human existence (L. Miller, 2009). Education has become fearful of soulful things, and secular models of spirituality can help to confront deep questions of meaning, such as a metaphorical approach to the seasons that can

reveal something to the close observer (Palmer, 2003b). The international aspect of the question is problematized when one considers that globalized notions of spirituality endanger the possible conceptualizations that occur at a more local level, risking that layers of meanings can be dissolved across cultures (Crossman, 2003). Whereas spirituality has been framed as a theological conception for many centuries, a phenomenological perspective allows for a discourse to oscillate between the individual and the community, responding to a call of justice (Joldersma, 2009). Taken together, these interpretations suggest the potential for conflict surrounding the complex questions of spirituality, but the authors also point to the clear necessity for such development of a spiritual imperative in education.

Discussion

Many of the articles in this review are involved in a project to understand the questions of spirituality in relation to education. Such attempts require some basic definitions or descriptions of this term “spiritual” that has different meanings and possible usages. Spirituality might have to do with answering fundamental questions of life, developing a greater sense of self, fostering an inner-life, and connecting individuals to non-material wellbeing (Wringe, 2002). If one accepts that the immaterial dimensions of life give it meaning and purpose, then such dimensions have a place in liberal education, as the search for *veritas* is a central objective of learning (Zajonc, 2003). It is not enough that notions of spirituality address the interiors of human life, but need to be matched with the pursuit of outer progress. Individuals become conscious of themselves in the world, and educators need to consider how to develop the different aspects of consciousness (Astin, 2004). If spirituality is to be discussed in relation to education, it may be necessary to re-conceptualize both the descriptions of the term “spirituality” and the current

goals of secular schooling, as students construct knowledge and their own identities partly within the classrooms where they learn.

Education happens in a social and historical context, and disconnecting spiritual concerns from learning in schools appears to be a problem that needs to be addressed in educational reform. A number of authors in this review have tried to reveal the importance of recognizing the spiritual component of education, making a distinction between religious and spiritual concerns. Students categorize and disassemble the world to understand it, becoming “disciples” of physics, biology, sociology, and other disciplines in education, and students construct their own beings as they construct the world based on the “sacred texts” of these disciplines. To contemplate the world as spiritual beings is to find relatedness between these parts that have been discovered, and to wed the knower and the known (Palmer, 2003a). The idea is not to dispute the benefits of a rational scientific approach to knowledge, but to raise critical questions about spiritual intelligence in schools. A spiritual life is an embodied quest that requires openness to learning in the world, in a current historical context (Neiman, 1999).

The question arises: If spirituality is an important part of life and learning, but there are different definitions and understandings of the term, how might spirituality be taught or learned? An integrated curriculum can address spirituality in the classroom, synthesizing the scientific and the spiritual. The simple act of sitting with our experiences allows for a deeper exploration of meaning, including context alongside content, imagination with knowledge, intuition next to logic, and process along with product (Iannone & Obenauf, 1999). Inspiration and creativity are central to spiritual development and essential to the cultivation of consciousness; rather than seeing inspiration and creativity as irrational, they might be posited as trans-rational (Astin, 2004). An enhanced conceptualization of consciousness acknowledges that one-dimensional

education is ineffective and irrelevant when discussing spiritual identity, and different perspectives are necessary to access possible bodies of knowledge.

Spirituality is not necessarily as subject to be taught as another discipline in the curriculum, but rather it can be woven like a thread throughout learning as a natural part of life for the individual and the collective whole (Fraser, 2004). A number of approaches are posited in this review, including ideas of self-awareness and mindfulness (Reid & Miller, 2009) in physical education (Lodewyk et al., 2009), art and aesthetics, music education (Carr, 2008), ICT interaction (Gross, 2006), synchronicity-awareness (Cho et al., 2009), and a more general assertion for spiritual practices and contemplation across leadership (Richards, 2009). Education does not need a single center, it seems, but spirituality (as one foci within an ellipse of learning) offers an emphasis on transcendence, mystery, awe, and profound considerations of human existence in the world (Coburn, 2005). A consciousness rooted in wonder and appreciation of compassion and loving relationships embraces knowledge that considers the social conditions of other people, ideas of justice, and alternative futures (Brummelen et al., 2004). Spirituality is a way of being that allows students to see beyond themselves, to experience the wonder and mystery of the world; the questions of spirituality are integral to being human, not just a step in cognitive development (Schoonmaker, 2009).

One question that appears repeatedly in some of the reviewed articles is whether the basic notion of secular schooling is in contradiction to ideas of spirituality, as the separation of church and state mandates that religious indoctrination has no place in the classroom. However, the greatest barriers are not legal in nature, but are conceptual and informal. The cognitive map that exists for much of secular schooling puts science of one side, and spiritual matters on the other side; cognitive spirituality belongs on both sides of the map (Zajonc, 2003). The difficulty

inherent in addressing spiritual concerns within secular schooling cannot be ignored, but the greater problem is the disintegrated presence of students and teachers that are disconnected from deeper meanings in life and learning if spirituality is left outside the classroom (L. Miller, 2009). While acknowledging the difficulty of defining spirituality, this does not require ignoring its presence in learning, and schools need to offer multiple models for connecting to the eternal human yearning for connection to something larger than the self (Palmer, 2003b). There are important dangers to be considered about cultural implications that surround the current discourse of spirituality in education, as “globalized” notions of spiritual matters threaten to serve hegemonic interests (Crossman, 2003). International perspectives on this question might allow the current discourse to move beyond the conceptual barriers it seems to face, and to allow for a more complex understanding of spirituality that does not depend upon a dominant globalized view. A phenomenological perspective allows for understanding spirituality by oscillating from the individual to the community, from life-giving justice to life’s tenuous contingent existence, so that one experiences a “trace” of spirituality without direct identification of a source (Joldersma, 2009).

Contemporary Spirituality: International Handbook

For this final section of the literature review, I examine a number of essays from a collected edition entitled “International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing” (de Souza, Francis, O’Higgins-Norman, & Scott, 2009), in an attempt to articulate how spirituality is being discussed in relation to education, from a few very different perspectives. Some of the authors in this book write from obvious religious backgrounds, while others intentionally approach spirituality from a non-religious perspective; an analysis of the

different usages of certain terminology (i.e., spirituality, care, and wellbeing), yields an helpful array of definitions necessary for discussing the spiritual dimensions of education.

Marian de Souza, one of the editors of the book and senior lecturer at Australian Catholic University, wrote the general introduction for this collection of essays. For de Souza (2009), spirituality is posited as relational, emphasizing the connectedness of the individual to “other”; this might mean the other aspects of selfhood, other individuals, the natural world, or some transcendent realm. Spirituality works as a core dimension of human development, and de Souza employs the notion of the “inter-psychological” relationships that arise through relations with others, involving the construction of knowledge and meaning.

The speed and scope of change in our world and the variety of experiences for the modern subject can result in superficiality, hopelessness, and disconnection, and de Souza (2009) argues that a spiritual connection can help bring meaning and purpose into an individual’s worldview. The contemporary complex of “spiritualities” involves a search for meaning in places without clear boundaries, and de Souza asserts that this quest occurs outside of strictly religious configurations. It seems that a spiritual pursuit is integral to human development here, as individuals locate the “sacred” in daily life. As an educator, de Souza situates learning in the totality of human experience and sees the spiritual dimension as inherent in the development of a person and therefore necessary for a holistic education.

Consciousness Evolution

Jennifer Gidley, a Research Fellow at RMIT in Australia, in “Educating for Evolving Consciousness” (2009), argues that new modes of thinking are required to nurture the continuing growth of consciousness. Gidley sees the global crisis as epistemological at its core, with the predominant worldview based on materialism. She notes that philosophers such as Goethe,

Hegel, and Schelling were all inspired by the notion of evolving consciousness, but this German Romantic formation was overrun by Positivism and the British Industrial Revolution. Mass education has long been based on formal modes of thinking that expresses scientific reductionism, as well as a factory model of production and discipline. Education research, as a result of these reductionist leanings, has been constrained by qualitative obsession of what Gidley calls the “audit culture.”

Gidley (2009) argues that modern formal education has been trapped by industrial, mechanistic, and technical forms of learning and knowing, hindering the emergence of new consciousness. Gidley identifies three modes of thinking that might help towards an evolving human consciousness: post-formal, integral, and planetary. The features of post-formal education include complexity, creativity, holism, imagination, pluralism, dialectic and dialogic approaches, and a pursuit of the spiritual dimension of life. The transition from formal to post-formal thinking is multi-linear and multidimensional, and Gidley warns that this crisis of consciousness will likely involve a painful transformation.

To assist in this transformation, Gidley (2009) identifies four themes of discourse that surround consciousness-evolution; the four pedagogical values are love, life, wisdom, and voice. The first core value, pedagogical love, implies a conscious, active spiritual development within life and thus posits spirituality as essential for a new education movement. Gidley points to Rudolf Steiner, as well as other examples of holistic educators, for his focus on reverence as an essential force in developing the next stage of consciousness that demands the two components of love and devotion. Steiner asserts a relationship between love and wisdom, but rationalized, empiricist language has no place for such a discussion; on the contrary, the current trend is “to privilege scientific, quantifiable words, such as objectivity, outcomes, standards, high-stakes

testing, competition, performance and accountability” (p. 541). This formal terminology limits the direction and scope of thought, restricting the potential of education and restraining the development of consciousness.

To resist the deadening nature of formal thinking and to enact life-enhancing post-formal thinking, Gidley (2009) points to chaos, complexity and systems sciences, imbuing education with the second core value of pedagogical life. Post-formal education foregrounds imagination (conceptual, creative, and intellectual in scope), as opposed to formal education’s training within a system of fixed concepts. Gidley uses the term *imagination* to suggest “an activity that enables conceptual vitality- it can bring concepts to life” (p. 543). Imagination can assist in liberating education from the confines of formal thinking, and can further assist in the evolution of human consciousness.

An increase in creativity, complexity, and multiple perspectives represents a movement of the third core value for Gidley (2009), a pedagogical wisdom. The planetary dimension of consciousness is a feature of wisdom, which flourishes in the contexts of reverence, care, and love, and is enriched by a life filled with conceptual imagination. To integrate multiple perspectives, Gidley employs an integral framework to contribute a theoretical coherence for cultivating a sense of wisdom in education discourse. Ultimately, “wisdom is about waking up- to our own presence and the presence of others” (p. 547); one needs to wake up from what Steiner referred to as “a sleep filled with intellectualistic dreams” (in Gidley, p. 547). This integral framework allows pedagogical wisdom to function as an art here, requiring complex thinking alongside creativity to represent knowledge involving multiple perspectives and different lines of ability.

The fourth core value to which Gidley (2009) speaks is pedagogical voice, which involves crossing linguistic and paradigmatic barriers, emphasizing language awareness and poetic expression as integral to emerging consciousness. Gidley uses the term *language reflexivity* to draw attention to the relationship between creativity and language. Attention must be given to the learning environments where this reflexivity is developed, requiring silent spaces and sensitive sounds to nurture the pedagogical voice. Gidley's four central pedagogical values (love, life, wisdom and voice) are interconnected, and together they inform what she calls a post-formal, integral, planetary pedagogy. Finally, she notes, "when so much education has become reduced to vocational training, it might be useful to consider that the word vocation—from *vocare*--originally meant spiritual calling" (p. 551). Gidley calls for a nurturing pedagogy that aims to nurture an evolving consciousness, repositioning the notion of progress outside of materialistic gains, situated within the spiritual dimension of life.

Secular and Religious Realms

The spiritual dimension of life is frequently associated with religious doctrine or other institutionalized texts and practices, and thus forbidden from the discussion of education that has evolved in a secular tradition. Avoiding, for the time being, a deeper examination of these problematic terms, "the secular and the religious," the next writer identifies a spiritual aspect present in both the religious and the secular realms of life. Dr. Zehavit Gross is head of the graduate program of social education in the School of Education, at Bar-Ilan University in Israel. Her essay, "A Quest for the Realm of Spirituality" (2009), argues that both religiosity and secularity are searches for meaning; they are parallel and equivalent, rather than oppositional.

Spirituality, for Gross (2009), is the "expression of a human longing to approach a supreme entity or power situated beyond human control and grasp" (p. 563), and this expression

manifests itself instrumentally and existentially. The instrumental pattern requires that people interact with mediators to achieve transcendence, whereas the human being is the medium to transcend in the existential pattern. Secularity is not just the absence of religion, but it is an independent entity of representation itself. The spiritual dimension of life offers alternative ways to make meaning and construct knowledge, and Gross situates spirituality in both the heritable dimension and the conceptual dimension. The heritable aspect of spirituality involves temporary, fleeting events of transcendence, whereas the conceptual is a permanent component of existence.

Spirituality, for Gross (2009), represents a “universal longing for convergence with the supreme moral entity” (p. 574); the secular individual might associate morality and conscience as this supreme entity, whereas the religious might invoke a divine presence. The question arises whether the yearning for such convergence is intellectual or emotional, or both (or neither). Can the divine be known rationally or can it only be sensed? Regardless of the answer, Gross posits “wholeness” as immanent to the spiritual process, a theme that many writers return to in trying to understand the spiritual dimension of life. “Spirituality is realized in abstract aspects of human life that constitute part of one’s existential secular or religious being” (p. 575). The search for more complex meaning continues for an individual regardless of religious affiliation or secular claims, and so Gross positions the two paths as parallel and equivalent.

Education and Eros

To borrow from the religious tradition of another era, Hesiod identified Eros as the most ancient of Greek gods, the one that brought harmony out of chaos. John Miller (2009) is a professor at the University of Toronto, teaching courses on holistic education and spirituality in education, and he wonders whether education has become “soulless” in its quest for

accountability, echoing Emerson when he claimed in the nineteenth century that American colleges had failed to cultivate the soul of the student. Octavio Paz writes in a similar condemnation, “Our era rejects the soul and reduces the human mind to a reflex of bodily functions” (in J. Miller, p. 581). In Miller’s essay, “Education and Eros” (2009), Eros is held up as vital for restoring soul in education; love acts as a cohesive force, in the same way that atoms depend upon cohesion, or all will fall apart. Miller looks at Eros and other forms of love in relation to education, asserting that the path to wholeness lies in love, in relationships with others, the earth, the cosmos, and one’s self.

The love of family or tribe, the Greek “storge,” can be extended to include the members of our larger human family as a whole, arising naturally from our humanity. J. Miller (2009) compares this to “Ubuntu,” the idea that one’s wellbeing is connected to the group’s well being. Nelson Mandela explained: “the spirit of Ubuntu--that profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings--is not a parochial phenomenon but is added globally to our common search for a better world” (in Miller, p. 583). Miller promotes the development of “storge” in the classroom, to create a sense of family, and he suggests the building of circles in the classroom as one method to begin to achieve this understanding of love.

A second dimension of love that Miller (2009) discusses is “philia,” the bond between friends and community that is essential for forming a polis; the self and society are connected with “philia” as the cohesion between them. Miller explains that this “philia” was cultivated at a local level, but was intended to extend outward in widening circles to include the larger city and country; now that love continues beyond national borders to embrace the world as well, and further into the cosmos, to fully integrate the connectivity of all existence. Miller suggests that

one way to promote “philia” in education is to encourage service-learning projects that bring students out into the larger community beyond the school’s boundaries.

Just as importantly, a love of strangers, or “xenia,” needs to be nurtured in students; for the ancient Greeks, gods walked the earth in the guise of humans and so any stranger that one met may in fact have been divine, so it was best to treat all as if they were gods. This tradition of caring for strangers, which included expectations of reciprocity (in contrast to “agape,” a love with no expectations of returned love), was exemplified in Homer’s “Odyssey” when the hero depended on strangers’ hospitality to assist in his journey home. J. Miller (2009) also points to the worldview of the Sioux, who assert that all humans come from the womb of Mother Earth and so none can be strangers. “Xenia,” this love of strangers, when cultivated in students, extends the notion of love to those beyond the intimate circle of friends and family, widening a spiritual worldview.

Finally, J. Miller (2009) asserts the importance of “eros,” love beyond the individual. Eros works as a unifying principle of life, situated at the center of the cosmos. To borrow the words of Martin Luther King Jr., “Love is the key that unlocks the door which leads to the ultimate reality” (in Miller, p. 589). Dr. King was dedicated to creating a Beloved Community, based on love and justice, recognizing interrelatedness of life, knowing that what affects one affects all. To speak of love in education is to approach the spiritual dimension of life, to think beyond the crude accountability of too much modern schooling that fails to recognize the human spirit in classrooms. Miller concludes his essay with words from Don Miguel Ruiz, a master of the Toltec tradition: “Love is much more than words can describe The only way to really know love is to experience love, to have the courage to jump into the ocean of love and perceive

it in its totality” (in J. Miller, p. 591). Love here is life in wholeness, available to individuals who have nurtured a spiritual dimension recognizing connectivity and interdependence of life.

Compassion and Awareness

Yoshiharu Nakagawa, an educational philosopher at Ritsumeiko University in Kyoto, locates the need for awareness and compassion in the spiritual development of students, somewhat echoing Miller’s ideas of “eros” in education, but drawing from a different tradition. Nakagawa’s essay, “Awareness and Compassion for the Education of Enlightenment” (2009), maintains that these two qualities (awareness and compassion) are essential elements in spiritual cultivation and are necessary to reveal a holistic learning experience. Even further, Nakagawa asserts that the integration of awareness and compassion allows for broadened perspective into the multiple dimensions of reality; “pure awareness” is identical to an “infinite reality” and allows greater compassion to emerge. As education discourse increasingly turns to “competition” for its impulse, Nakagawa urges a deep consideration of the role of “compassion.”

Nakagawa (2009) looks to Japanese Buddhism for much of his terminology and spiritual guidance, following the ideas of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who maintains education needs to cultivate essential human values like a “warm heart” and a basic sense of caring for one another. At the first Spirituality in Education Conference, held at Naropa University in 1997, the Dalai Lama spoke these words:

Through education we can explain to our brothers, sisters and especially the young children that there is a secret treasure that we all have, whether educated or uneducated, rich or poor, this race or that race, of this culture or that culture: we are human beings. We have tremendous potential . . . for kindness, compassion, and inner peace. Then, we can try to teach or promote the basic human values that I call secular ethics.

(in Nakagawa, p. 594)

Education here follows a path to human potential, not in terms of instrumental or technical progress, but in terms of developing secular ethics and particular values. Nakagawa (2009) draws heavily on Eastern thought for philosophical guidance, rather than for religious content, especially focused on Buddhist ideas of awareness and compassion. The teachings on mindfulness (“sati,” in Pali) locate awareness as the central path to liberation from the birth/death cycle (“samsara”), applying awareness to every action, such as breathing, walking, and sitting. A Zen Buddhism teacher urges observation without interpretation, without choice or judgment. Take a flower, for example. The teaching might follow: “Look at it alertly but passively, receptively, without labeling or judging or comparing. And as you look at it, inhale its mystery, breathe in the spirit of sense, the smell of the wisdom of the other shore” (p. 595).

Awareness cultivates a more holistic experience, Nakagawa (2009) argues, and can lead to the recognition of multidimensional reality, identifying these five dimensions: objective, social, cosmic, infinite, and universal. Pure awareness brings one to a great awakening in infinite reality, from which one can return to a total perception of all realities as a whole, and this is the universal reality. “It is this pure awareness that is also identical with true compassion” (p. 603); that is, universal reality is a manifestation of compassion. Mahayana Buddhism recognizes the necessity of great compassion, so that enlightenment turns to altruistic ends (not just individual transcendence) through the concept of “bodhichitta,” the awakening mind. Awake, wise, compassionate, and loving, one can then help other beings become likewise. Teaching compassion is central to education, and Nakagawa asserts that mindfulness can lead towards compassion.

Mindfulness meditation, as an aspect of learning, is connected to the development of loving-kindness (“metta”), so that individual enlightenment is not enough in life. Great compassion does not allow enlightened individuals to abide in the blissfulness of enlightenment. Dalai Lama expands upon this idea of loving-kindness: “In our spiritual endeavor, the most profound practice is the practice of compassion and the altruistic wish to achieve Buddha-hood for the sake of all sentient beings. There is no better practice than this” (in Nakagawa, p. 605). For Nakagawa, spiritual development integrates awareness and compassion; to cultivate a compassionate heart, one needs to develop awareness and encourage an awakening of the spirit, which in turn leads to great compassion and further awareness. Crucially, to even discuss the notion of spirituality in education demands an enlarged vision of education, looking to various traditions from human history.

Another educator who follows the teachings of an Eastern tradition writes quite specifically about mindfulness as a meditation skill that can be taught in schools as a healing and learning exercise. Ngar-sze Lau, a Teaching Fellow at the Hong Kong Institute of Education, promotes holistic learning and the development of spirituality, wellbeing, and reconnecting to the natural world as vital to education. In her essay, “Cultivation of Mindfulness” (2009), Lau looks at the situation in Hong Kong, a competitive, fast-paced, financial city, technologically saturated, driven by materialism and consumerism, where students are expected to participate in this demanding environment on a daily basis and succeed in terms of material gains. The result is what Lau sees as an attention deficit and a spiritual decrease in the young population.

As evidence of this spiritual void, Lau (2009) points to the suicide rate in Hong Kong, which rose dramatically from 1999 to 2003; the rates doubled in the age group of youth aged up to seventeen years, and stands as the leading cause of death for those aged fifteen to twenty-four

years (p. 716). Fragmentation and alienation are to blame for the separation and isolation that people suffer at various levels of existence; Lau identifies the ecological, the social, the individual, and the cultural. Humans exploit nature and ecology suffers, persons abuse other persons, individuals are disconnected, and culturally they no longer share universal values, argues Lau; the spiritual dimension of life has been sacrificed for a secular world of business and technological advancement.

Lau (2009) uses a particular definition of spirituality, developed by Hay and Nye (2006), and Lau asserts that attention to these three categories of spiritual sensitivity help foster a child's educational development. First, awareness sensing entails a reflexive awareness of being aware. The second category is "mystery-sensing," or cultivating a greater sense of wonder, awe, curiosity, and imagination. "Value sensing," the third sensitivity, involves the ultimate search for meanings, which includes encountering delight, despair, and goodness. Holistic education looks to balance, include and connect students through attention to spiritual sensitivity, encouraging a sense of wholeness within the individual, the community, and the cosmos. Mindfulness meditation benefits concentration, tranquility, and insight, Lau maintains, and this practice requires space and time for silence, solitude, and contemplation. Educational policy needs to recognize the spiritual dimension of learning, and Lau contends that a mindfulness practice can help restore wellbeing and activate deeper learning potential within young students.

Eco-spirituality

Caroline Smith, a lecturer in environmental education at Australian Catholic University, draws attention to "eco-spirituality" as the missing dimension in Education for Sustainability, a decade-long UNESCO project that attempted to foster environmental stewardship among students. In her essay, "Reconnecting with Earth" (2009), Smith argues that a spiritual

dimension is required for the sustainability project to be successful, as humanity comes to understand its deep connections with the evolution of the universe. Writing from a religious perspective, Smith attempts to recast the Abrahamic religions to account for the eco-crisis, shifting the human-nature worldview from “I-it” to “I-thou.” Smith asserts that the notion of education for sustainability is emerging alongside a transcendent consciousness rooted in this new I-thou relationship between humans and the rest of nature, a movement known as “deep ecological spirituality.”

Smith (2009) adopts John London’s definition of “spirituality” to refer to that which is understood as “the nonmaterial source participating in the emergence or evolution of the universe through which humans experience meaning, value and purpose, and which cannot be reduced to the functioning of the material world” (in Smith, p. 654). As we enter the new millennium, Smith contends that we are experiencing various transformations cosmologically, historically, and spiritually; she echoes Thomas Berry’s “moments of grace” to identify three transformative aspects of our world.

The first moment of grace emerges from a deepened understanding of cosmological sciences, resulting from centuries of evidence about the origins and evolution of the universe and humanity’s place in that history. New sciences have altered the basic principles of our physical world, including quantum physics, systems theory, chaos theory, and complexity theory, changing the conception of the universe. The seeds of all life are rooted in the explosion of a supernova five billion years ago, cosmology asserts, from which the heavier elements (i.e., carbon, nitrogen, oxygen) emerged. Smith (2009) writes, “Humanity is literally stardust, the children of the stars” (p. 655). This moment of grace, a deep cosmological understanding,

posits humans as an intimate part of nature, participating in the interconnected complexity of the universe, situating the human consciousness as a manifestation of a universal consciousness.

The second moment of grace recognizes that humans are one species among myriad species. Human survival as a species, furthermore, is tied to the survival of the planet as a whole, including each of the other species, clearly evidenced through recent ecological discoveries, neuroscience development, and systems theory. Smith (2009) claims that these developments show humans are part of a living system and every element in that system is in constant relationship with every other element.

Recognition of the destruction of the natural world at the hands of humans represents the third moment of grace; the eco-crisis of which humans have become aware and in which humans are implicated as a species yields important information for a transformative shift in worldview. Unsustainable development, to which many have become accustomed and addicted, will lead to an ultimate demise, just as it has to the demise of so many other species in what is known as “the sixth great extinction,” an extinction that occurred as the direct result of human development. Smith warns that economic discourse dominates ruling worldviews, positioning humans as consumers rather than citizens, and industrial urbanization reduces opportunities to engage with nature, further disconnecting humans from their origins, impoverishing the human spirit.

As the new sciences have revealed so many important principles of the universe and interconnectivity between all of its elements, Smith (2009) claims that a lack of information is no longer the problem. While the knowledge is there for people to understand, a further step is required, to imagine how one might transform current practices and structures of thought. To borrow the words of Rabbi Abraham Heschel: “What we lack is not a will to believe but a will to wonder” (in Smith, p. 658). Not surprisingly, Smith also points to the rise of rationalism, despite

having led to so many wonderful scientific discoveries, as also largely to blame for the rapid industrialization and resultant disconnection from nature.

Smith (2009) briefly points to a few of the great minds that brought thought to this point: Descartes' radical idea that mind and body are mutually exclusive, Bacon's development of an analytical and reductionist scientific method, Newton's determination of the mathematical basis of physical phenomenon, and Kant's philosophy of reason are a few of the ideas condemned by Smith. This centuries-long project represents the dominant worldview that has tied human progress to the exploitation of nature (including humans themselves), and Smith argues that this meta-narrative remains dominant in mainstream schooling, at the expense of a broadened view of the grace of existence.

Enchantment and magic continue to be relegated to the middle ages of irrational thought and a society lost in darkness. Smith argues that nature needs to be re-enchanted and re-sacralized, and education has a critical role to play in this re-positioning. If global society is to move toward a sustainable future, the focus for students cannot simply be literacy and numeracy (important as they continue to be), but must include enchantment, imagination, and re-connection to nature. Competition will not serve a sustainable human future, so schools need to provide spaces to observe and be with nature. The three moments of grace that we are experiencing grant all of humanity an opportunity to link education for sustainability to a sense of eco-spirituality.

Search for Meaning and Truth

Inna Semetsky, from The University of Newcastle in Australia, in her essay entitled "Whence Wisdom? Human Development as a Mythic Search for Meaning" (2009), grounds her writing in the educational philosophy of John Dewey and Nel Noddings. Semetsky presents the

system of Tarot images “as both symbolic language, full of implicit meanings, and as a pedagogical tool” (p. 631) to complement other aids and strategies in an approach to spiritual education. Semetsky presents this particular strategy focused on the pictorial language of the Tarot system that demands skilled communication and interpretation to make meaning from a multiplicity of experiences. A creative element comes into play through the use of the seventy-eight cards, or Arcana, that suggest possible alternative meanings for understanding consciousness.

Semetsky (2009) reminds the reader of Noddings’ aim of education to contribute to continuous learning for both students and teachers, developing a sense of the relational dynamics between self and others. The purpose of using Tarot images is not simply an attempt to “inject” a spiritual dimension into education, but to suggest one strategy for recognizing the link between meaning and identity. Rather than making bold assertions about any particular approach to spirituality, Semetsky follows Noddings in introducing spiritual questions into curriculum, including the very possibility of spiritual progress.

Some ideas of Dewey (1929) are also helpful for Semetsky’s approach here, as she connects with Dewey’s notion of a spiritual person that entailed certain qualities of participation in life. Semetsky (2009) writes, “Soul and spirit are not to be considered as belonging solely to a mythic realm; rather, they are embedded in real human experiences” (p. 635). Experience is not confined to the realm of the mind here, but emerges in interactions between organisms and the environment. The role of the imagination becomes crucial to make sense of these diverse experiences, and to inspire a belief in what is possible; for Semetsky, Tarot represents the realm of vast possibilities amidst interpretation and communication.

“Tarot images embody meaningful life-patterns of thoughts, affects, emotions, feelings, and behaviors, thus constituting the very values implicit in the collective experiences across times, places, language barriers, disparate beliefs, and cultures” (Semetsky, p. 635). Tarot images and subsequent interpretations can bring an awareness of previously unperceived meanings, making sense of the chaotic flux of experiences. Themes gradually emerge through this mode of communication and interpretation, and therapeutic material is collected to provide guidance in solving problems. The learning process here always entails further education, echoing Dewey’s call for continuous learning, experiences which involve these problematic terms, “soul and spirit.” Dewey (1929) writes of these problematic terms:

Spirit quickens; it is not only alive but spirit gives life . . . Soul is form, spirit informs. It is the moving function of that of which soul is the substance. Perhaps the words soul and spirit are so heavily laden with traditional mythology and sophisticated doctrine that they must be surrendered; it may be impossible to recover for them in science and philosophy the realities designated in idiomatic speech. But the realities are there, by whatever names they are called. (p. 294)

Semetsky does not seem ready to surrender these terms, just as Dewey wasn’t ready to surrender them nearly a hundred years ago, but the question still remains as to what type of reality the words represent. If the universe is all of that to which the self is connected, the totality of integrated existence, then education’s imaginative project seems vast. Participation in the world becomes integral to spiritual education, just as Noddings’ theory of caring ethics is rooted in the concrete needs of persons. Tarot serves as one approach to the spiritual dimension of education, encountering meanings and values that Dewey says may be “inaccessible to sense.”

Perhaps most important in Semetsky's essay is the notion that much traditional curricula rarely provide opportunity to discuss what Noddings referred to as "genuinely controversial issues." It is controversial to say whether or not Tarot images allow unseen dimensions to be seen, and that controversy in itself is beneficial to education. Furthermore, one can recognize the imaginative and creative process involved in the making of meaning through interpretation and communication. Beautiful pictures and the language of archetypal images present one possible strategy for approaching the spiritual dimension of life that can inform us in education that demands perpetual growth.

Another essay in the collected edition looks specifically at the responsibility of schools for developing spirituality in the context of the English school system. Jacqueline Watson, a Fellow at the University of East Anglia, argues for a holistic pedagogy of wellbeing that balances spiritual truth claims and practices sensitivity to differences in spiritual life journeys. Watson, in her essay "Responding to Difference" (2009), draws on the principles of interfaith dialogue and the dialogic epistemology of Mikhail Bakhtin. If it is the school's responsibility to encourage a pedagogy that recognizes a range of spiritual truths that people hold or reject, then how is it possible to respect such a wide range of realities and truth claims that can develop the spiritual dimension within holistic learning?

English schools are legally responsible for the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of students, but many educators are perplexed as to how to make sense of the spiritual dimension of learning given such a diverse range of world-views. Watson (2009) asserts that if education is going to promote holistic learning and wellbeing, "disagreement over spiritual truths must be presented honestly to children, but children must also be able to develop their own spirituality in an integrated and positive way" (p. 822). Spirituality, for Watson, needs

to be understood as broadly as possible, having to do with the beliefs, values, and experiences that give meaning to human life. Beginning with an education act in 1944, English schools were mandated to contribute towards the spiritual development of *the community*, and the word “religious” was notably avoided. In 1992, a reform act called for a report on the spiritual development of all pupils, an important shift from “the community” fifty years prior. Of course, the question arose as to what was expected from this spiritual development in schools.

In a state, secular school, if it were to be possible to develop a holistic approach to the spiritual dimension of learning, it would necessarily entail a humanistic position. Watson (2009) asserts that spirituality itself was marginalized in this cross-curricular approach, assuming a Western Rationalist position. Watson, as a self-professed atheist, takes the view that spirituality entails beliefs and values, which may or may not also be religious beliefs and values. In addition to challenging that element of “belief” in spirituality, Watson criticizes some of the other common elements that are found as descriptions of spiritual development, including the notion of wellbeing, self-esteem, and creativity. Most important for Watson is the making of meaning as central to the spiritual dimension.

Of course, to make meaning is itself a broad category, so Watson (2009) looks for alternative spiritual pedagogies to address the diversity of the field and the competing claims to truth accounts. Watson suggests that we begin with the acceptance of the contested nature of “spirituality,” while remaining aware of the danger of relativism in this human search for truth or competing truths. The debate cannot begin with the premise that all truth claims are provisional, as many people cannot accept such a premise. At the same time, the diversity of spiritual truth-claims will sometimes encounter incompatibility between claims and these differences need to be negotiated.

Interfaith dialogue and the idea of dialogic are the models for this response to difference in spiritual development, to allow spiritual pedagogy to move forward. While interfaith dialogue does acknowledge similarities, Watson (2009) also “acknowledges that some spiritual truths are essentially contested and that, in such cases, there is no mechanism for deciding which is privileged or correct” (p. 832). It is necessary to move beyond tolerance, to recognize diversity of truths, in order for this pedagogy to be transformative.

Watson (2009) looks to Mikhail Bakhtin and the idea that the “dialogic” entails a continuing process of dialogue and constant interaction with what others say and think, which ideally allows new meanings to arise from this speaker/listener relationship. “The living utterance, having taken meaning and shape at a particular historical moment in a socially specific environment, cannot fail to brush up against thousands of living dialogic threads, woven by socio-ideological consciousness around the given object of an utterance; it cannot fail to become an active participant in social dialogue” (in Watson, p. 833). Language is constantly reshaped through this dialogic, allowing new meanings to be generated from new ideas, transforming individuals in different ways.

Students are involved in this dialogic, continually making meaning both in school and outside of school. A spiritual pedagogy needs to confront young people with the reality of diverse truths, Watson (2009) argues, so they can learn to negotiate truth-claims. Interfaith dialogue begins with a premise of diversity, without making all claims to be seen as relative, and interfaith dialogue acknowledges the significance of choices that are made by individuals. Combining the two ideas, Watson claims that interfaith dialogic moves further toward transformation, calling for a reflexive engagement with the diversity of spiritual truths.

Spiritual Dimensions of Wholeness and Wellbeing

The final essay to be discussed in this review is written by Marian de Souza, editor of the collected edition of essays in the final section of this present review. In “Promoting Wholeness and Wellbeing in Education” (2009), de Souza explores different aspects of the spiritual dimension as they relate to education. She explores the concept of conscious and non-conscious learning, ultimately arguing for education to nurture both the inner and outer lives of students, promoting social cohesion and wellbeing for individuals and communities. Spirituality, for de Souza, is understood as that which “pertains to the relational dimension of being, which is the connectedness that the individual feels to Self and Other in the world, the cosmos and beyond” (p. 679). Wellbeing is linked to spirituality, nurturing an individual’s sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose, fostering the spirit to promote general wellbeing in oneself and others.

Mass education, in the Australian system of which de Souza (2009) is critical, has been driven by a desire to “turn out highly skilled and knowledgeable citizens for societies which have been media driven and steeped in consumerism” (p. 679). Knowledge is posited as a commodity and particular technical skills are valued, but the notion of wisdom seems to be largely ignored. An emphasis has been placed on achievement, rather than on the development of moral and caring people. A reductionist worldview has “left little room for consciousness grounded in totality” (p. 680), paying scant attention to emotion, intuition, or imagination. Assessment by mass testing results in surface learning, and de Souza worries that busy student schedules leave little time for wonder, silence, and reflection. The positive side of these educational and societal developments, asserts de Souza, is an increase in the number of teachers who are interested in holistic learning and wellbeing as a response to what they experience as educators in these schools.

While not discounting the importance of cognitive learning, de Souza (2009) holds that the non-conscious mind has an important role to play in education. Emotions and intuition have largely been ignored during curriculum development, as the development of these human aspects requires more time than can be allowed in the busy school day. Likewise, argues de Souza, in the spiritual dimension of learning, the inner reflective aspects are seen as too problematic, colliding with religious ideas. In countries like Australia, where religion and education are kept quite separate, de Souza argues, “little attempt has been made to examine contemporary concepts of spirituality as pertaining to relationality which is the aspect of human life that seeks and promotes connectedness and meaning” (p. 683). The spiritual dimension of learning attempts to integrate conscious and non-conscious perceptions, and this unifying process requires time and silence for rumination and cohesion.

While de Souza (2009) argues that non-conscious learning may enhance the spiritual dimension of education, she also warns that it can impede connectedness. “Because it is based on many bits of previously gained non-conscious perceptions and impressions, it is prone to creating stereotypes” (p. 684). Individuals learn through their perceptions, conscious and non-conscious, processing this information in the mind to make meaning; while de Souza asserts that intuition is one means of evaluating information, she realizes it needs to be balanced with rational thinking. A lifetime of perceptions can lead to stereotypes if they are not evaluated for possibly negative aspects that have been learned and accepted as truth. Education needs to promote the intellectual capacity of individuals, but not at the cost of emotional and spiritual capabilities, as these dimensions of learning contribute to the wellbeing of individuals and communities.

Discussion

This section of my literature review has addressed a number of questions and assumptions that surround the spiritual dimension of education, beginning with an attempt internationally to define “spirituality” and to lay open the multiplicity and complexity of possible understandings. This section has looked specifically at essays from a particular publication (*The International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing*, 2009), a collection that attempts to bring together voices from around the globe, from very different perspectives. When some common themes emerge, the next issue that quickly follows is whether the spiritual realm can be discussed in conjunction with the current model of mass schooling. If spirituality is a core dimension of human development, as many of the authors herein assert, then it appears education has a responsibility to assist students in making sense of the spiritual aspect of life, just as education has a duty to help students negotiate the intellectual and emotional realms.

Spirituality, as it has been discussed in a number of the essays from the collected edition, has to do with meaning making and the communication of these meanings through relationships with the self, others, the natural world, the cosmos, and beyond. The interactions that might lead to spiritual knowledge depend upon imagination and creativity to move beyond the rigid confines of purely rationalistic formal modes of learning. Many of the essays noted in this paper call for a more holistic education as a reaction to the reductionist mode of schooling that has reduced learning to basic literacy and numeracy, injecting students with skills in order to prepare them for roles in a technological, materialistic, consumer society. That which seems absent in so much of contemporary education is a sense of wonder and awe, as well as a respect for relationships built on love, compassion, and awareness.

However, while empirical, scientific reductionism may have been the dominant worldview since the Enlightenment, risking the destruction of human awe and wonder, recent

scientific discoveries point to a universal connectedness and interdependence that seems to return to a historical moment of spiritual awakening. The eco-spirituality movement recognizes the deep, intricate bonds that exist between matter and life in the universe, and to become mindful of these connections is to develop one's spirit. The development of mindfulness and awareness requires silence, stillness, and time for meditation and rumination, but a busy school day focused on mass testing does not allow such leisure. However, the secular tradition does not stand in opposition to the spiritual dimension, as both are involved with making sense of the cosmos. While the notion of spirituality within education may be controversial, this is not a reason to abandon the idea; on the contrary, to confront controversy and negotiate different truth claims ought to be central to education, to nurture the growth of human consciousness in this new millennium.

Conclusion of Literature Review

This review has attempted to look at the central question of spirituality in education, whether or not a definition or description of the term can be helpful in further discussion about the spiritual aspects inherent in learning. If spirituality is indeed a core dimension of human development, then education has a responsibility to address these concerns. It may be that no single definition of the term can be agreed upon, but a discussion can proceed nonetheless, and various approaches to spirituality considered.

Human education has to do with interpreting and making meaning, and this includes the process of finding meaning in different relationships with oneself, others, and the exterior world. Spiritual knowledge can work as a thread that connects these different possible meanings, the different constructs of knowledge that encountered in life, and this depends upon the human capacity to move beyond strictly rational modes of learning. Creativity exists alongside reason,

and education can embrace a sense of wonder and awe in the minds of both teachers and students, allowing deeper relationships to develop built on compassion, awareness, and love.

If the spiritual dimension of human existence is recognized as important to both learning and being in the world, then education appears remiss if it fails to address these concerns that allow for further meaning-making and communication of knowledge. The questions of spirituality need to be considered in education, so that students and educators can cultivate deeper relationships with the world, and so be allowed to flourish beyond the confines of strictly rationalistic education. A re-articulation of the term “spirituality” connects the interior to the exterior dimensions of life, expands the possibilities of “truth,” and literally makes humans more “conscious” of their learning experiences.

While no clear universal definition of this term can be located, this need not be the goal of such a discussion; considering the questions of spirituality in education does not come to an end because a common definition cannot be found. Rather, within this problematic position of the term, openness can yield multiple understandings of the spiritual dimension of human life and learning. Different approaches to this aspect of being can be examined and practiced, allowing for contemplation, a sense of relatedness, and awareness of the connectivity of life. If learning is about asking difficult questions and remaining open to new answers, then spirituality seems to be central to education and to deeper understanding of the human self. Ultimately, a synthesis of the scientific and the spiritual leads to a more robust understanding of human existence in the world, situated historically and emotionally in particular times and places. To accept the presence of a spiritual dimension in life, and to acknowledge its centrality to existence, is to recognize the necessity of a broadened discussion of spirituality in education, as to omit this aspect of being and consciousness is to teach and learn incompletely.

CHAPTER 3

MARTIN HEIDEGGER & PAULO FREIRE

An Inquiry into Being, Time, Technology, and Love

In this chapter, I explore the ontological confrontation implicit in a discussion of spirituality in education, but first draw attention to technology and how it frames human interaction with the world and with other human beings. I approach the question of technology by way of Martin Heidegger's work, and I try to weave his phenomenological approach with the pedagogical stance of Paulo Freire, which may appear like an odd coupling at first glance. I hope that by the end of the chapter, it will be clearer why Freire and Heidegger complement each other perfectly. I also establish an ontological context for the discussion of spirituality in this current era of technological mania.

What is the central question surrounding technology and how does it inform being-in-the-world, approaches to knowledge, learning, teaching, and understanding the world and the self? For teachers and students, the question of technology is ultimately a question about who one is and how one is; one exists in such a way that technology has come to be viewed in particular ways or has revealed itself in particular modes of being, and this understanding of technology has a deep impact on how one exists in the world. Martin Heidegger's method of phenomenology takes one back to the things of the world, as integral to Being, but also as essential to the things themselves as they are. These methods require a refusal of metaphysics, and phenomenology comes to be viewed as a mode of questioning, examining, and Being. So, what are these things of the world and how do they relate to my questions and me?

On the table, there is a loaf of bread, a day-old loaf; I look at it, I grasp it, and I know it as a loaf of bread. What does that have to do with technology? Everything, it seems. But more

than just having to do with technology, that loaf of bread, when encountered as a phenomenon of existence, can offer a glimpse into my Being, unveiling a clue as to how I am in the world, how my humanness reveals itself, all of this set within a horizon of Time. As I begin to understand Being, my role as a teacher connects to the most fundamental of human experiences and I find myself increasingly open to learning in broader and deeper ways.

Paulo Freire, an educator who initially may appear as an unusual accompaniment to Heidegger, asserts that it is a human's ontological vocation to be a critically reflective subject who acts upon the world to transform it, and his pedagogical ideas of liberation resonate in interesting ways with Heidegger's explication of Being. Heidegger enables a phenomenological mode of questioning that discloses a capacity towards experience with a transcendental knowledge inherent in my Being, whereas Freire grants me the capacity to become more human through a praxis of reflection and action, *grounded in love*, an idea largely absent from Heidegger's philosophy.

Language, Questions and Dialogue

Heidegger, in "The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays" (1977), draws an important distinction between technology and the essence of technology, in the same way the essence of bread is not the same thing as the loaf of bread on the table in my house. Essence is not simply what something is, but the way in which something reveals itself, as it is, remaining that way through time. Important for my consideration here is Heidegger's method of asking questions; the inquiring mode of phenomenology guides thinking within a "house" of language, allowing a deeper investigation into the essence of technology and a relationship to this essence. Heidegger (1977) demands a recognition of human connection to technology: "Everywhere we remain un-free and chained to technology, whether we passionately affirm or deny it" (p. 4). A

relationship with technology is not simply a dependence on technological contraptions, though many people are tightly bound to cellular phones, computers, and transportation vehicles of all kinds. More important than this technical need, humans are fettered by the language of technology, the philosophy of technology, the essence of technology. Ultimately, the question of technology concerns not just a human relation with technology, but also the relation between humans and Being; Heidegger urges an inquiry into one's "openness," as an idea towards which and in which Being can be known. For Freire (1970), on the other hand, to be human entails a praxis in which one commits to continually exist in a process of becoming more human. More specifically, one can reaffirm Being through the work of liberating humans from systems of oppression. To be a revolutionary human being, most importantly, is to always work both from and toward a place of love.

However, before moving towards this openness of Being, as if such a thing is possible at all, it is necessary to consider some of the language that plays with human thinking. Both Heidegger and Freire choose their words carefully, the former writing in German and the latter in Portuguese, and the translations into English are careful to recognize the power of language in shaping ideas and views of the world. Freire (1970), in his work as an educator for adult literacy, writes of learning the word and learning the world. Living in a world with oppressive systems, human liberation needs to be a collective process with love as a foundation for dialogue, dialogue construed as a uniquely human phenomenon with transformative possibilities. Freire writes, "Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world" (p. 75). Words help to expose the Being of those things people encounter, and language functions as a fundamental dimension in which thinking and Being connect.

“Language is language,” Heidegger (1971) says in what appears as a glib remark. He goes on to explain this idea; “Merely to say the identical thing twice—language is language—how is that supposed to get us anywhere? But we do not want to get anywhere. We would like only, for once, to get to just where we are already” (p. 190). And where are humans? Dwelling in the world, speaking *in response* to language. Furthermore, this response is a *hearing*, so it is necessary to learn to live in the *speaking of language*. Poetry can allow humans to dwell in the world, Heidegger says, echoing Holderlin: “Poetically man dwells.” This dwelling in the world is not just accomplished through language, but rather the act of speaking works as a response *to* language. Heidegger writes, “Poetry does not fly above and surmount the earth in order to escape it and hover over it. Poetry is what first brings [one] onto the earth, making [one] belong to it, and thus brings [one] into dwelling” (p. 218). Language here is not simply a tool for communication, but instead it allows for humans to dwell in the world. In the ongoing act of *dwelling*, humans attain to the world *as* world.

Heidegger develops this idea further, in his Letter on Humanism (1946/1998): “Language is the house of Being. In its home man dwells. Those who think and those who create with words are the guardians of this home.” However appealing such an inhabitation may seem, at the same time one comes upon an abyss in this act of creation. While Heidegger seeks new ground for thinking, in order to avoid pre-conceptualized structures, people continue to live in houses of language that they have inherited. Language, therefore, similar to Being, cannot be a closed system. It, too, must continually reveal itself in new ways, again in a mode of openness, so that everything comes to be through language and through thinking, but ultimately it comes to be as it is.

For Freire (1970), on the other hand, words become the world, and thoughts and actions are thoroughly interdependent; “Subjectivity and objectivity join in a dialectical unity producing knowledge in solidarity with action, and vice versa” (p. 22). Knowledge emerges through invention, inquiry, and action, as educators and students mutually engage in critical thinking as part of a pedagogical struggle for human liberation. As language locates itself centrally to thinking and Being, one can understand more clearly why Heidegger carefully defines the words that he chooses. Repeatedly, a question unveils another question, and words must be understood before putting them to use. The bread is on the table, no doubt, but what is this thing we call “bread,” and what is its essence? More fundamentally, and more phenomenologically, when I say bread is on the table, what do I mean by “is”? Repeatedly, a step back from the thing (any being that is present) enables one to better understand it, paradoxically moving closer to that same thing through a mode of questioning, thinking, and language. As conscious beings, humans exist in numerous dialectical relationships; a person can encounter such inter-dependent tensions between subjectivity and objectivity, oppression and liberation, reflection and action. Freire (1997) suggests that a dialogic relationship with others is “a fundamental practice to human nature” (p. 92). Dialogic relationships among human beings are an ontological necessity, and communion with one another asserts an essential capacity of Being. Whereas Freire sees dialogue as central to being human, Heidegger suggests that the way one asks questions is central to the way one is.

In a later essay, Heidegger (1971) connects language to mortality (another central aspect of Being), saying that mortals *are*, in that there is language. Mortals must make *a turn* in the darkness of this era, by reaching into *an abyss*, and that is the role of the poet; Heidegger points to Holderlin as an example of such a poet. “To be a poet in a destitute time means: to attend,

singing, to the trace of the fugitive gods” (p. 94); the gods have “defaulted” from the world. What is more important (and what makes for a more destitute time), Heidegger says, is that the default of the gods is not even discerned as a default. Even the *trace of the holy* has become unrecognizable. As a result, the object-character of technological dominion spreads across the earth completely. Heidegger further describes and explains this powerful dominion:

Not only does it establish all things as producible in the process of production; it also delivers the products of production by means of the market. In self-assertive production, the humanness of man and the thingness of things dissolve into the calculated market value of a market which not only spans the whole earth as a world market, but also, as the will to will trades in the nature of Being and thus subjects all beings to the trade of a calculation that dominates most tenaciously in those areas where there is no need of numbers. (pp. 114-15)

The result of building the world with such technological character is that the Open is blocked from humans; technological ordering of the world blocks the Open and the truth remains concealed, while the track to the truth (or, “the holy”) becomes effaced. Writes Heidegger, “The world becomes without healing, unholy” (p. 117). The *danger* that exists has to do with human relation to *Being*, and this danger is *the* danger. To *see* danger, for it remains unseen by most, there must be those who reach into the abyss, and that is the role of poets. As an example of such poetry, in “The Sonnets to Orpheus,” Rilke (1984) writes these beautiful lines that speak so powerfully to these ideas of language, poetry, and listening.

A tree ascended there. Oh pure transcendence!
Oh Orpheus sings! O tall tree in the ear!

And all things hushed. Yet even in that silence

A new beginning, beckoning, change appeared.

Creatures of stillness crowded from the bright

Unbound forest, out of their lairs and nests;

And it was not from any dullness, not

From fear, that they were so quiet in themselves,

But from simply listening. Bellow, roar, shriek

Seemed small inside their hearts. And where there had been

Just a makeshift hut to receive the music,

A shelter nailed up out of their darkest longing,

With an entryway that shuddered in the wind—

You built a temple deep inside their hearing. (p. 227)

Being and Time

Having situated my argument in terms of being in the world with language, and before moving further into the question of technology, it seems necessary to look back at Heidegger's earlier thoughts in *Being and Time* (1962), first published in German in 1926. At the very start of the book, Heidegger poses the most fundamental of questions: "Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word 'being'?" Not at all. So it is fitting

that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of Being” (p. 1). If technology involves a relationship between the world and humans, it seems important to first understand the meaning of “Being,” as common-sensical as that may sound. Heidegger aims to question the traditional meaning of Being, and he argues that it is dependent on an interpretation of “time” as a possible horizon for understanding. This horizon provides limits, not expanding infinitely into the distance, and so becomes a space for intellectual activities, or ontological investigation.

Heidegger writes, “The task of ontology is to explain Being itself and to make the Being of entities stand out in full relief” (p. 49). Using phenomenology as a methodological conception, it is possible to pursue questions that look at the “how” of objects, rather than trying to answer “what,” always in order to better understand these things themselves. Let the loaf of bread on the table show itself, from itself, in itself, and as itself. Phenomenology, in simplest terms, means: “to let that which shows itself be seen from itself” (p. 58). The questions that one asks about Being will hopefully allow these things to be seen, to be revealed or to reveal themselves.

Heidegger (1926/1962) claims that his line of questioning is something new, developed as a response to the ancient Greek philosophers who saw the question of being as superfluous, an empty concept to be ignored. There were three presuppositions in such a Greek understanding of the question: Being is universal, indefinable, and self-evident. Heidegger tries to formulate a new question of Being, as the old questions lead into those three presuppositions and any inquiry becomes useless. However, to formulate the question of Being, one needs to understand the fundamental aspect of a question, an inquiry as a seeking. Heidegger says, “Inquiry itself is the behavior of a questioner, and therefore of an entity, and as such has its own character” (p. 24). Inquiry is the process of seeking and is guided by that which is sought; one must have an understanding of what bread is before one can look for it on the table! Though one may only

have a vague understanding of Being as at the outset of inquiry, at least there exists the idea that such a fact exists. To formulate the question of Being, one needs to understand the entity that is this inquirer, the questioner involved in the inquiry. Heidegger explains, “This entity which each of us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term ‘Dasein’” (p. 27).

So, where does this leave the question of technology? To formulate that question, or any question, including the very question of Being, to begin an inquiry, one needs to understand Dasein, the entity that inquires and seeks as a central mode of its Being. An understanding of Being allows one to question its meaning, and even this possibility of understanding belongs in turn to the essential condition of Dasein itself.

So again, what is technology? Heidegger initially offers two definitions for consideration (later to be rejected or challenged), one that views technology as the “means to an end” and the other definition that posits technology as a human activity; the former works as an instrumental understanding, while the latter is an anthropological definition. Heidegger insists that technology is not neutral, and a desire to master it represents a particular danger, not just in the technology itself, but in the way humans try to grasp it. Heidegger (1977) warns of a particular approach to technology: “We will master it. The will to mastery becomes all the more urgent the more technology threatens to slip from human control” (p. 5). This persistent attempt to master technology speaks more to a particular understanding of Being than it does to the power of technology; while the instrumental definition may be correct, Heidegger urges a deeper inquiry into the question of technology, to examine its essence, or its truth; “Only the true brings us into a free relationship with that which concerns us from out of its essence” (p. 6). Of course bread is on the table because someone grew some wheat somewhere, fertilized the field, plowed it, sowed

the seeds, and eventually harvested the wheat, and all along the way technological forces were at work. But still that does not answer the question of Being or the question of technology; what is this “essence” of which Heidegger speaks? And what is this “truth”?

Suddenly this loaf of bread seems especially important to understand, not only as a thing of sustenance, but also as an essentially true being. Through a line of questioning in the house of language, an act of defining has revealed the non-neutral instrumentality of technology, but in doing so has led to the room of truth. Again Heidegger takes a step back, and again this is simultaneously a step forward, moving more deeply inward towards Being at the same time as trying to pull away for greater perspective; next there arises a need to look at the “instrumental” itself.

Heidegger (1977) traces instrumentality back to four causes, a doctrine of causality linked to Aristotle: the material, formal, final, and effectual causes. “The four causes are the ways, all belonging at once to each other, of being responsible for something else” (p. 7). Think again of the bread: the materials include flour, water, a bit of salt, and lactobacillus culture. The form is a loaf that takes shape through kneading and rising and baking, the form that the matter assumes. The final cause of the bread is the way in which it is circumscribed, giving bounds to the thing, as a food, a thing to be eaten and shared among friends. The last cause, the effectual cause, is not simply the baker who bakes the bread, but has to do with how the baker interacts with the three previous causes in allowing the bread to come forth into appearance. Heidegger explains that these four causes, though identified separately, are united in a source that is responsible for something coming to be; “they let it come forth into presencing” (p. 9). That which was not yet present arrives, in an act of occasioning. How does the bread go from

concealment to un-concealment? Heidegger understands this bringing-forth as the Greek “aletheia,” a revealing, or truth.

Truth and Freedom

The question of technology, the definition of instrumentality, the examination of its essence, all of this approaches a revelation of truth. Heidegger (1977) writes, “Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing” (p. 12). Heidegger here is trying to understand Western history and thought, speaking to both the modern and ancient age, as he connects poiesis, physis, and techne. The fundamental Greek experience was one of humans receiving and responding to other beings in their world. Beings came to be present out of the “not-present,” and in this presencing occurs a “bursting-forth,” but not in the thing itself. That is, the fundamental human experience, as understood and grasped through language, was a reality that revealed itself so that one might master it, so that one’s own bursting-forth could occur.

Heidegger (1977) challenges this particular aspect of Western philosophy that fixes upon things in order to grasp them, an act that distances humans from Being, as a philosopher sets out to control things, rather than to remain open to beings and Being. This seeking and grasping of reality, for Heidegger, represents the origin of the technological age, as the essence of technology. The need to seize hold of reality, to order and categorize the world, results in a skewed relationship to Being. As a response, Heidegger recommends openness to truth that reveals itself through things in the world. Through this lens of openness-to-being, one can look again at Freire and his ideas about critical consciousness as inseparable from educative practice. The formation of a human ethic, as an ontological vocation, calls humans to a presence in the world as incomplete, open beings, in the process of becoming. Freire (1998) writes that teacher preparation, based on the creative aspect of a critical consciousness, needs to be connected to

“the ethical formation both of selves and history” (p. 23). It is difficult to find much discussion of ethics in Heidegger, but connecting his line of inquiry into Being with Freire’s notion of critical consciousness can inject an element of love into Heidegger’s work that is obvious for its lack therein. A fundamental human aspect of education involves the capacity to learn and teach critically, and to exist in the world with love, hope, and faith in humanity.

In moving toward what Freire (1970) defines as the ultimate goal of human liberation, educators need to understand the structural conditions in which thought and language are framed. This recognition of the importance of words assists one with phenomenological exercises, as Heidegger (1977) looks at the root of “technology” itself, the Greek *techne*. The meaning of *techne* itself is two-fold, both a mode of physically bringing-forth beings and an aspect of thought manifest in Being. That is, *techne* is the activity of making bread, the skill of the baker in forming material into a final product, but *techne* is also the *poietic* art of bread-making, the bringing forth of bread as bread. Here, *techne* is both physical and mental at the same time, and furthermore Heidegger links it to the understanding of “*episteme*” in pre-Socratic times, related to the act of knowing. Technology seems explained as a mode of revealing, an un-concealment, not just of things or beings in the world, but directly related to Being and truth.

Deeply rooted as it is in Western philosophical thought, technology has grafted into Being, especially since Descartes offered humans the certainty of self, a reality of appearance, as objects of thought, affirming self-existence; Heidegger (1977) sees this moment in history as the beginning of the modern age, but he further connects Descartes to Western antiquity. With Descartes, humans arise as “subjects,” self-conscious beings fixed on shaping reality, grasping at all that appears from beyond the self. Modern humans exist as scientists constantly in this mode, not simply open to receive nature and other beings, not simply allowing things to present

themselves as they are in themselves. Rather, humans seize nature, arrest it, objectify it, imposing order upon it, classifying all and controlling all, and as a result Being itself is manifested in this way, within the essence of technology.

Modern technology is no longer just a bringing-forth in the poietic mode of revealing; now it is a challenging or setting-upon of nature and beings, a demand for everything to be at-hand, on-call, ready for use. Heidegger (1977) explains, “Whatever stands by in the sense of standing-reserve no longer stands over against us as object” (p. 17). The standing-reserve (German: *bestand*) posits everything to be seized for human ends; every being becomes like the loaf of bread on the table, ready for consumption, including the bakers themselves. As humans, there is a commitment to un-concealment, but this revealing is not simply a human activity alone; the challenging of things and ordering them into standing-reserve also catches people into the same mode of ordering and thus people become standing-reserve in an assembly or en-framing (German: *Ge-stell*) of the world. Heidegger (1977) initially explains enframing as “the gathering together of that setting-upon which sets upon humans, i.e., challenges him forth, to reveal the real, in the mode of ordering, as standing-reserve” (p. 20). As all things, perceived as standing-reserve, are objectified and controlled, ready for use in some way to serve an end, human beings are gathered up with other beings (all things) to assume their places in a configuration of uses. As a result, people are stripped of Being as a capacity to become, limited to certain uses as revealed in a sense of standing-reserve. No being (human or otherwise) has significance in itself, as itself, due to such a modern configuration; Being has been degraded into a system of use and value.

The real is revealed as standing-reserve and the essence of modern technology lies in this enframing, but what is this essence as it shows itself? Heidegger (1977) explains, “It is the way

in which the real reveals itself as standing-reserve” (p. 23). The essence of modern technology situates humans on a particular path of thinking, of gathering and ordering the world in a certain way so that the real is revealed as something always ready for human use; Heidegger refers to this element of thought as a “destining” [German: *Geschick*] from which arises the essence of history in which humans are situated.

This destining is not the same as simplified fate, however, as human freedom is realized and made possible within a realm of destining. Heidegger (1977) says, “For humans become truly free only insofar as they belong to the realm of destining and so become ones who listen and hear, and not ones who are simply constrained to obey” (p. 25). As the process of enframing absorbs humans, the connection to Being can be severed, as the essence of technology pervades every aspect of contemporary life. The notion that the beings of the world achieve their Being through human grasping of them is a result of the dichotomy of subject and object. To know the destining to which one belongs, as it also contains the freedom of opening, here lies the unconcealment of truth. “Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way” (p. 25). Now it appears that the essence of technology is not just a negative encounter, but becomes a clearing for truth and freedom, and within this essence, the human being’s Being can experience a revealing. Simultaneously, therein lies a danger, as the unconcealed real may be misinterpreted. To connect with ideas of Freire (1970), destining is both potentially oppressive and liberating.

Danger and Saving Power

The essence of technology, revealed in this enframing, is two-dimensional then, discussed by Heidegger (1977) both as danger and as saving power; the enframing is a revealing of truth, but at the same time it estranges humans from Being. Through language and thought,

the revealing comes to pass, but humans cannot bring it about! To put it another way, that which is concealed, the concealment, is revealed as concealment. Enframing both denies everything to Being, and bestows Being upon it. Being discloses itself and so humans are beheld in their essence, letting human beings and Being “belong together.” The danger is that the real, revealed in the mode of enframing, is unconcealed only as standing-reserve, and then the danger presents itself that people be misinterpreted as objects within the destining and enframing, thus stripping all of essential Being. Heidegger (1977) puts it this way, “Above all, Enframing conceals that revealing which, in the sense of *poiesis*, lets what presences come forth into appearance” (p. 27). Another danger exists in that human beings begin to see the real only as constructs, so that everything is encountered as part of humanity, denying Being to beings, and the relationship to the real is skewed through such enframing. A constant ordering of the real in a particular way also denies and limits other possible revelations, stunting the imaginative, generative capacity of Being itself. More optimistically, technology, or *techne*, also belongs to *poiesis*, when artists bring forth objects as they are and at the same time artists bring forth themselves, a dual revelation of Being, bringing forth truth.

This contradictory aspect of technology presents the opportunity to engage with freedom as human beings; the essence of technology holds danger, not the technology itself (though obviously an atomic bomb is still dangerous in itself), but the essence of technology also reveals truth. To explain the paradoxical nature of this idea, Heidegger (1977) looks to the words of the German poet, Holderlin: “But where danger is, grows the saving power also.” While the process of enframing potentially denies alternative modes of Being, the more original way of revealing leads to truth. The artist and the fine arts are held up as potential saving powers; “Such a realm is art. But certainly only if reflection on art, for its part, does not shut its eyes to the

constellation of truth after which we are questioning” (p. 35). Art, seen in this way, is a realm to explore, a realm for questioning, as it opens up to questions, allowing one to move closer to danger and closer to truth at the same time. It is necessary to question the essence of technology, as an impulse towards one’s own Being. Heidegger writes, “The closer we come to the danger, the more brightly do the ways into the saving power begin to shine and the more questioning we become. For questioning is the piety of thought” (p. 35). Thought, inhabiting the house of language, simultaneously leads towards both danger and safety if the role of *poiesis* is understood. The essence of technology has everything to do with revealing, but not just in the sense of instrumental utilization of beings; instead, a poetic revealing opens one to possible truths, multiple truths, and the mystery of all revealing.

Freire (1974) writes of a different type of danger encountered in the world, as people become critical subjects engaged in re-imagining and re-creating the systems within which they live. As historically situated beings, temporally and spatially located, people encounter generative themes, or particular perspectives of reality that produce a dominant worldview. Freire argues that as conscious beings with the freedom to transform the world, people face imposed “limit-situations” that obscure and obstruct transformative processes, and these limits hold both a danger and a saving power (to borrow Heidegger’s terms). These “limits” are themselves historically and socially constructed, and rather than accepting them as endpoints in human development, Freire encourages viewing them as beginnings. Hope, as a human capability, allows people to overcome challenges that may have been seen as limits (boundaries that cannot be crossed), and as people surpass these challenges, they can accept that new limits will arise, for which new solutions will be found.

Freire (1970) allows for a notion of hope and dreams as constituting ontological needs, also found in the coming-to-presence of technology. The enduring essence of technology cannot be experienced simply as an instrumental aspect of Being, but rather as the destining of revealing. Heidegger (1977) explains, “The essence of technology is in a lofty sense ambiguous. Such ambiguity points to the mystery of all revealing, i.e., of truth” (p. 33). This revealing of truth seems a long way from the challenging and enframing of standing-reserve that captured and ordered nature in a particular way; the beings of the world are not there just for immediate use, gathering together all things to reveal the real. There is an ambiguity that exists within the notion of enframing, both a danger and a saving power. The gathering and ordering of the real conceals the true revealing of truth, but enframing also allows for human beings to be the ones needed for presencing of truth, and so the saving power arises. Heidegger celebrates the ambiguous nature of technological essence as a mysterious constellation of truth. A revealing and a concealing come to pass simultaneously, both forging a relationship with Being and existing without it, and therein lays the truth. While the coming to presence of technology threatens the revealing of truth, due to the constant ordering of beings as standing-reserve, human reflection can bring forth a saving power as well, as a higher essence of Being. Heidegger urges a connection to the second understanding of *techne*, the *poiesis* of the fine arts, as therein lies the divine revealing of truth. Again, one can hear Holderlin for inspiration: “Poetically dwells man upon this earth.”

As Heidegger points to Holderlin to emphasize the human impulse toward the creative act, it is likewise helpful to return to Freire’s assertion that human hope needs to be anchored in practice. Invigorated by dreams, people transform reality, create history, and become more dynamic social beings; people unveil the world through a critical pedagogy and social action as

educators, and in doing so, humans unveil Being. Integral to a relationship with knowledge is what Freire (1994) calls the strategic dream; these dreams are not vague utopian notions, but rather represent a human consciousness endowed with an awareness of freedom and the possibility of a further becoming of individuals and the world. Whereas Heidegger looks at the dangerous implications of en-framing things as standing-reserve, and thus leading him to call for a re-connection to the poietic nature of *techne*, Freire insists that knowing the world involves more than intellectual reasoning. Knowledge involves passions and feelings, body and spirit, as whole beings in the world; Freire (1994) says, “I am a totality, not a dichotomy” (p. 30). Freire knows that he knows and knows that he does not know, and he expects new knowledge. History is that interaction with knowledge that is contextualized and embedded in the world itself, and as such the world itself is in a process of becoming; human beings create the world through critical consciousness and transformative action, and Being flourishes.

Being, Things and Art

Heidegger (1971) looks more closely at the creative act, the creation, and the creator, in his essay entitled “The Origin of the Work of Art,” and his ideas here can help to clarify his earlier conceptions of things and Being. The origin of the work of art, or the artist as origin of the work, and the work as origin of the artist drives Heidegger’s interest in art. Art is origin of both artist and work. The question of the origin of art becomes a question of art’s nature. Heidegger asks: What and how is a work of art? Works of art are as naturally present as things like coal, logs, and potatoes, but there is something else! Heidegger says that within a work of art is a “self-evident thingly element” that manifests something else, so that the work is an allegory, a symbol, and a bringing-together.

First, one must look into this “thingly element” of the work of art, and then one can see if there is something else that adheres to it, a symbolic aspect. But how does one come to know the “thingness” or “thing-being” of a thing? It is crucial to make the initial distinction between “things-in-themselves” and “things-as-they-appear.” Then there is the distinction to make between lifeless things and other things; humans are not things, or at least one hesitates to say so, and animals are not truly things either. Heidegger (1971) writes, “The thing is the *aistheton*, that which is perceptible by sensations in the senses belonging to sensibility” (p. 25). One’s sensations are not removed from the things, as one sees things, hears things, and touches things. So, a mode of thought arises in the consideration of things, conceiving of entities as beings, and then it becomes difficult to leave the thing alone, as a thing-in-itself.

The thing-in-itself means for Kant: the object-in-itself. To Kant, the character of the “in-itself” signifies that the object is an object in itself without reference to the human act of representing it . . . Thing-in-itself, thought in a rigorously Kantian way, means an object that is no object for us, because it is supposed to stand, stay put, without a possible before: for the human representational act that encounters it. (Heidegger, 1971, p. 177)

Heidegger argues that things do not appear as things simply by means of human making, *but* things do not appear as things without human vigilance! An important step to such vigilance involves a step back from thinking, oddly enough, and art can assist in this act.

Heidegger (1971) asserts that the work of art sets up a world and makes spaces for *spaciousness*; “The work holds open the Open of the world” (p. 45). He compares the making of a stone temple to the making of equipment, the latter of which is spoken of in terms of *use*. The temple, on the other hand, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear (as a hammer does, turning wood and iron into a tool for hammering); the temple, in being made of

rock, brings forth into the Open the work's world. "The work moves the earth itself into the Open of a world and keeps it there. *The work lets the earth be an earth*" (p. 46). There is striving and agitation here, as the work both sets up a world and sets forth an earth, two features of the "work-being" of the work.

This battle between world and earth brings one closer to what is "in truth" or what is real, Heidegger (1971) asserts, because in the midst of *all* beings, there is a *clearing*, which is *at the same time* concealment. While that which is, the particular being, stands in Being, the particular being "presents itself as other than it is" (p. 54), and so truth is a denial, as double concealment and in its nature is un-truth. So, how does truth happen? Heidegger says, "Truth happens in the temple's standing where it is" (p. 56). In the "work-being" of a work of art, the work sets up a world *and* sets forth the earth, fighting a battle in which the "unconcealedness of beings" is revealed, and so truth prevails. Then Heidegger raises a question about truth: What is truth that it can (or must) happen as art? Further, how is it that art exists at all?

Art is the origin of the artwork and of the artist. Origin is the source of the nature in which the being of an entity is present. What is art? We seek its nature in the actual work. The actual reality of the work has been defined by that which is at work in the work, by the happening of truth. (p. 57)

The work of art becomes a work in the way of truth happening. To create is to cause something to emerge as a thing that has been brought forth. Here, it is necessary to understand what Heidegger calls "techne," denoting a mode of knowing, to see in the widest sense of seeing, to apprehend what is present, an uncovering of beings. "Techne" is not an action of making, but rather speaks to a bringing-forth into "unconcealedness."

Truth, for Heidegger (1971), occurs as such “in the opposition of clearing and double-concealing” (p. 60), a battle in which a thing reveals itself and conceals itself, and in this battle can be found an openness in the Open. Truth is the opposition of clearing and concealing in this Open, so these two (clearing of openness and establishment in the Open) belong together in a single happening of truth. This happens *historically* in that the establishment of truth in the work is the bringing forth of a being that never was before and will never come to be again. “As a world opens itself, it submits to the decision of an historical humanity the question of victory and defeat, blessing and curse, mastery and slavery” (p. 63). Art is both the becoming and happening of truth.

In the epilogue to his essay, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” Heidegger (1971) admits that his reflections are concerned with the “riddle” of art, but he does not claim to solve the riddle. The task is to *see* the riddle, not necessarily to solve it. Similarly, the questions of spirituality in education are riddles to consider, to wrestle, and confront in dialogue with others. The *answers*, if there are any answers, are not readily available and may not present themselves, but dwelling with the questions promises a revelation. This revelation, occurring in the Open, cannot be predicted and cannot be easily seen. This concealed nature concerning spirituality does not negate its importance for Being, nor does it negate its inclusion in discussions of education.

Being and Consciousness

Being flourishes, so consciousness moves beyond itself in its relation to things in the world, of the world, as part of the world, so that consciousness is not simply about the Self, as *relation* to the world is an essential characteristic. That is, one can be conscious of something and never find consciousness on its own without a relationship to the world. Consciousness does

not exist in a void or a vacuum! For Heidegger, the subject and object are not separate from one another; humans are always connected to the world in a dialectical relationship similar to that suggested by Freire in his pedagogy of liberation. Both Heidegger and Freire, albeit a strange coupling to make, approach the intentional aspect of consciousness as central to existence.

Phenomenology insists on a return to the things themselves, always to inquire of the entities as they are in the world, so that the relationship between beings and Being remains in the foreground. Heidegger (1962) highlights the importance of method in this inquiry into Being: “Because phenomena . . . are never anything but what goes to make up Being . . . we must first bring forward the entities themselves if it is our aim that Being should be laid bare; and we must do this in the right way” (p. 61). For Heidegger, this becomes a matter of asking better questions about Being, and to stay fixed on the things of the world as they are in themselves. For Freire (2000), the intentional component of consciousness allows for an active reflection and participation in creating a world that is structured less oppressively and violently than the one now evidenced. Freire speaks specifically of a personal hope for his homeland Brazil, his ideal vision of possibility, as the realization of a land where “loving is not so difficult and popular classes have a voice” (p. 50). Here Freire roots himself in a particular place, asking for assistance in developing a critical consciousness as human beings, to maintain a dialectic relationship with other beings of the world.

This notion of dialectic relationship is clear in Heidegger when he asks what type of consciousness is inhabited by intentionality; from where does such a thing arise? Freire might argue that intentionality is part of humanity, a capacity towards which people are born, and education has the potential to unlock this type of reflection upon the world. People relate to the world in certain ways, shaped by a spatial location and a temporal situation, but even more

importantly, people relate to this relation. One can reflect upon the loaf of bread on the table, and one can further reflect upon the self who is reflecting on the bread (or the lack of bread). Meaning is made from intentionality and without it, there would be no meaning in the world; a praxis of reflection and action brings forth meaning. Consciousness determines the world, while also belonging to it, and a worldview forms not necessarily based on perceptions of the external world, but from ongoing reflection upon these perceptions. Freire (1994) proposes a critical optimism to face the challenges of his particular place and time, as hope “originates in the very nature of human beings” (p. 44). Hope, as an ontological requirement, conditions historical nature to the possibility of becoming a concrete reality or not, and humanity is founded upon this ethical and political responsibility to participate in re-creating the world. Human liberation is a possibility, but not a certain destiny.

So, what does this human struggle have to do with the questions of Being and technology? Out of love for humanity, one might need humility, tolerance, and perseverance in working toward a peaceful, just, and more equal world, but what does that have to do with how one en-frames the world? I am not simply seeing the loaf of bread on the table, this loaf or that loaf, pumpernickel or rye, but rather I am reflecting upon the loaves as beings in the world, as they are in themselves, and furthermore I am reflecting upon my own perceptions of the bread. Why does that dark pumpernickel appeal to me more than that light rye? Or, to be more pointed, why do I have a choice of breads while some other human beings have no choice at all, no bread to eat? Here, in rhythm with pedagogical consciousness, one can ask questions more directly aimed at human needs, not simply as philosophical inquiries (although Heidegger would likely argue these inquiries are the most important human needs). The loaf of bread remains on the table through perception and reflection, so it no longer exists simply as an object external to

Being, but functions as immanent to reflection. Here, in this line of thought, Heidegger argues that a separation occurs between the real loaf of bread and the objective bread in itself, a paradoxical perception; humans also belong to this world as beings, and are not separate from it. The subject must not disappear into objectivity, nor can one allow the object to disappear into one's own subjectivity; humans exist within a dialectical relationship with the world, as part of that world, and through that relationship people shape humanity and encounter Being. People transform the present by changing the structures that dehumanize us. People stay faithful to a critical utopian vision, finding unity within diversity. This is part of human nature, to be socially and historically situated and constituted, both creating and existing in history.

While the most significant beings involved in the questioning of Being are human beings (here again I speak of Dasein), at the same time people are involved with other beings, encountering other things, and Being can remain hidden or obscured. If one allows other beings to reveal themselves, in their own Being, connected as it is to one's own Being, a revealing (or un-concealment) can occur. Heidegger (1926/1962) argues that humans need "to let that which shows itself be seen from itself in the very way in which it shows itself from itself" (p. 58). Involved in an act of un-concealment, in pursuing truth, one can simply reveal what is there in the world as it is, and in doing so can reveal Being. For Heidegger, Being is thought about here as transcendence based on the importance of being an individual, a radical individuation. To intertwine ideas of Freire with those of Heidegger, through pedagogy of liberation in education and through critical reflection and imagination, people are destined to design their Dasein. All beings are beings in different ways, but all share the capacity to re-imagine the world, and whereas Heidegger asks if the past can reveal who humans are, Freire argues that the future is a history and people reveal humanity through creating it. Just as the world is unfinished in a

project of making it more peaceful and just, people are incomplete as human beings, always active in the process of becoming, in the making conscious of humanity.

Being, for Heidegger, appears to be self-evident and as such seems impossible to define, or at least this is what the ancient Greek philosophers contended. Being is existence itself, understood by all as such. For clues to a deeper understanding of Being, one can look to ordinary experiences and a relationship to the world as discovered in those “phenomena.” The ontological character of human existence makes the human being ideal for examining the question of Being. Heidegger (1926/1962) says, “Understanding of Being is itself a definite characteristic of Dasein’s Being. Dasein is ontically distinctive in that it is ontological” (p. 32). The question of Being has ontological priority whereas the human questioner has ontic priority. Humans exist because they have an understanding of Being as the basis of Being.

Freire (1974) extends this ontological understanding to embrace a reconfiguration of humanity, so that people can liberate themselves from dehumanizing circumstances. If one looks to the everyday understanding of Being, and can recognize human beings as present in the world, then it becomes apparent that oppression of such beings is contradictory to the idea of freedom as essential to Being. Human beings are not just things to be ordered and categorized as standing-reserve, and such a configuration is an affront to Being. People exist in conscious bodies, and an aesthetic curiosity posits people as Beings available for questions; it is people who pose questions, receive them, consider them, reflect upon them, and pursue answers, again further reaffirming Being in a perpetual loop of becoming.

When understanding Being is held as ontological knowledge, a provisional articulation of Being allows one to circumvent the manifest circle of interrogation that seems to make questions pointless, ending at presuppositions of definition (or the indefinable) or a universally understood

self-evidence of Being. Before one can continue any further, it is necessary to ask what purpose the question of Being is supposed to serve. Heidegger (1926/1962) poses the crucial question: “Does it simply remain--or is it at all--a mere matter for soaring speculation about the most general of generalities, or is it rather, of all questions, both the most basic and the most concrete” (p. 29)? The answer to the question seems implicit in the question itself, as this basic question is not speculative philosophy, but about the most essential aspect of human beings, that is Being. Heidegger asserts that ontological inquiry is concerned primarily with Being, whereas an ontical inquiry is concerned with entities, and it is crucial to clarify the meaning of Being before any system of thought can be further developed. “Ontological research itself, when properly understood, gives to the question of Being an ontological priority” (p. 31). Therefore, in order to ask the question of technology, it is crucial to ask the question of Being, and it is necessary to understand the ontological priority of such a question. Dasein is different than other entities (the ontical concern) because Being is an issue for it, in the very constitution of its Being! A human curiosity is part of continual processes of social and historical production, and Freire (1998) argues that it develops alongside ethics. Educators are engaged in an ideological struggle on behalf of humanity, and this requires a critical and imaginative capacity. Freire asserts education is “that specifically human act of intervening in the world” (p. 11), and he calls for progressive reflection within education to help form critical consciousness, as people exist as beings of a particular type, capable of considering their very Being and creating their world.

Inquiry and Action

Human beings are not just things or entities the same as other entities; existence belongs to me, and to understand existence as my belonging allows me to consider the possibilities of life. As an entity known as Dasein, and self-knowing Dasein, I am predisposed to Being-

ontological, and this kind of being is in relationship with existence. Heidegger (1926/1962) writes, “Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence- in terms of a possibility of itself, to be itself or not itself” (p. 34). Freire might argue that these possibilities of existence need to take into account other human beings, or else one’s own Being suffers. While existence might be perceived as an individual concern, Freire (1997) argues that it is communion with other people that reaffirms humanity. For Heidegger, the common possibility of Being is the shared trait of imminent impossibility, which is death. Things present themselves everyday, historically and culturally bounded, but the ontological significance of the world belongs to Dasein, and the human activity of interpretation brings forth things as they are in themselves.

Heidegger (1926/1962) speaks of some of these things that humans encounter as equipment [German: Zeug], such as the very specific equipment needed for particular tasks and jobs. For making bread, I need an oven, a bowl perhaps, maybe a pan, and in the end a table upon which to place the bread, things that I need in order to do something. Heidegger speaks of the totality of equipment as being constituted by various ways of the in-order-to, “such as serviceability, conduciveness, usability, manipulability” (p. 97). Equipment is grasped, as ready-at-hand, for particular work and so Being belongs to a certain readiness and is defined as a distinct type of being. The obvious concern arises that such a conception of equipment as ready-at-hand will shift the understanding of Being with a similar in-order-to aspect and then humans view other beings in terms of their use, so that eventually humans too will be pulled into this mode of Being as use. Each thing, each being, is always in reference to other things; the bread is on the plate on the table in the room, and I sit beside it. All of these beings are beings as they are, including me, and should not simply be seen in terms of use, or standing-reserve. I live in a world of involvement, in which my participation as Dasein is essential, but the world is not

simply background for my experience. In relating to things only as ready-at-hand, or in seeing the bread only as my food to be eaten, I am already related to those other beings, which belong to the public world. As beings involved with work in the world, Heidegger says, “We encounter not only entities ready-to-hand but also entities with Dasein’s kind of Being- entities for which, in their concern, the product becomes ready-to-hand” (p. 100). As beings in the world, we relate to things in such a way that the understanding of Being has become connected to a value of use, this ready-to-hand, and one’s own Being becomes threatened by such a grasping.

However, Dasein’s Being is not merely a thing; I am not the same as a loaf of bread, and so others are not separate from me, as their Being is likewise not a thing. I cannot understand my Being apart from their Being, as Being is always united in the source and essence of Being. So, if humans are not in the world in the same way as other beings, Heidegger asks, in what way are humans here in the world? One might argue that people are here to struggle to change the world, to unite humanity in order to make the world more free and loving. It is an essential human activity to struggle, to communicate, to doubt, to decide, to intervene, to hope, and to feel love for other humans; these are radical acts, but are fundamentally human acts as well. Our destiny to become more complete, both as individuals and as a collective whole, is not fated to happen, but is only one possibility, and it requires continuing reflection and action as critical subjects in the world. Being with other beings is not a secondary aspect of existence; it is inherent in Being. There is no ontological opposition between self and others, as all is Dasein, all is Being. Heidegger (1926/1962) writes of this inherent connection to other humans: “We take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as [other humans] take pleasure; we read, see and judge about literature and art as they see and judge” (p. 164). The collective whole of Dasein is present from the beginning of existence for human beings, and Freire (1994) enjoys being human precisely

because of this communion with one another and this openness with the world, its unfinished aspects; destiny is something to be constructed, something to become, on the level of one and the many.

The world is not a collection of facts and things, but is a world of possibilities. Freire (1970) urges people to seize hold of the opportunity therein to create human history. Education can assist in developing a critical awareness of oneself and awareness of how people are conditioned by the dominant structure of ideas in the world, as the dominant modes of thinking can limit human capabilities. Heidegger (1926/1962) similarly writes of this mode, “Understanding is the existential Being of Dasein’s own potentiality-for-Being; and it is so in such a way that this Being discloses in itself what its Being is capable of” (p. 184). An understanding of Being-in-the-world moves one toward a projection [German: Entwurf], projecting Dasein’s Being into the world in a particular way, thrown into the world. Heidegger (1926/1962) explains, “As projecting, understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it is its possibilities as possibilities” (p. 185). Dasein, as a mode of understanding, projects Being upon possibilities and through a process of interpretation, humans can more pragmatically understand the possibilities of the world.

I cannot understand bread unless I know its meaning, in order to interpret the loaf on the table as an edible thing that will satisfy my hunger, or else the baguette could become a baseball bat or a stick for hitting a rat. The projecting of understanding itself has the possibility of developing, and this is the interpretation in which understanding becomes itself. There is logic involved in my interpreting the world, in giving meaning to beings, and logic here is an assertion that Heidegger (1926/1962) signifies with three meanings; it involves pointing out, predication, and communication. I point out the bread and let it be seen as itself, its possibility predicated on

my pointing it out, and it is communicable as being pointed out. But finally, the truth becomes known when the bread reveals itself as bread to the being there who is open to its revealing; bread is on the table, in truth, when the bread reveals itself as bread on the table in the room with me, as it is in itself. Through this projecting, interpreting, and asserting, I come upon an uncovering of Truth. Heidegger (1926/1962) appropriates the traditional definition of truth, and explains the meaning of truth as uncoveredness, and the understanding of Being-true as Being-uncovering is a way of Being for Dasein. “The most primordial phenomenon of truth is first shown by the existential-ontological foundations of uncovering” (p. 263). The truth here, the Greek “aletheia,” as that which is unconcealed, belongs to the very nature of Dasein, in relation to Being as beings involved in the revelation of truth in the world.

Truth is accessible to Dasein in that Being is grasped as a totality, and Heidegger looks at how an interpretation of anxiety guides the question of Being within the totality of Dasein’s structure; “Being-in-the-world itself is that in the face of which anxiety is anxious” (1962, p.232). In relation to anxiety one feels, Freire (1998) writes of the whole human, a totality of Being that is essential to human capacity as free, loving, creative beings. This totality of Being includes death for Heidegger; “Dying is something that every Dasein itself must take upon itself at the time” (p. 284). To exist means to exist with infinite possibilities, never completed or achieved, so that notions of completion are built on incompleteness, on the possibility of Being. Of course, “the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein” (p. 294) is central to Heidegger’s discussion of Dasein, whereas Freire’s more optimistic view focuses on the possibility of a more just and loving world. Change is not just possible, but rather it is essential for both the subject and for the world, as both are continuously becoming. As death is possible at any moment, there is something that calls to humans, a call which Heidegger refers to as a “call of conscience”

[German: Ruf des Gewissens], an idea similar to that which Freire dubs “critical consciousness” [Portuguese: conscientizacao], something that is to be developed through a process of critical reflection, but something that is innately human in a capacity towards such possibilities. Freire (1974) declares, “To be human is to engage in relationships with others and with the world” (p. 3). A critical consciousness is necessary for mutual liberation from oppressive systems of thought and existence, as knowledge is located historically and culturally, so education becomes the key to this human activity of developing and nurturing a critical optimism. Freire writes, “True education incarnates the permanent search of people together with others for their becoming more fully human in the world in which they exist” (p. 96). For Freire, it seems that a capacity for critical consciousness affirms humanity. Heidegger argues that the call of conscience is not theological, but rather is ontological, central to knowledge of Being. As humans are unsure of existence, that is the possibility of impossibility, then truth can reveal itself, but one must remember that the question of Being is dependent on an interpretation of time as the limiting horizon for any understanding of Being.

Heidegger (1926/1962) draws attention to this perception of time as a central aspect of Being, necessary to understand the questions he is asking, noting an important difference between existential time and calendar time; he writes of public time. “This implies that along with the temporality of Dasein as thrown, abandoned to the world, and giving itself time, something like a ‘clock’ is also discovered- that is, something ready-to-hand which in its regular recurrence has become accessible in one’s making present awaitingly” (p. 466). Dasein’s Being is temporal, but not in the sense of a succession of present moments moving in a straight line. This idea resonates with Freire’s sense of time in terms of history, seen as a potential future, rather than simply past events. History is something to be created, to be unveiled through a

human praxis of reflection and action, as a world is constructed with its foundations in love, language, and thought. Heidegger considers where these temporal terms come from, so that experience of time is scientifically grasped along with other phenomena, making the universe temporal along with Being. Humans use time, but in truth the universe has no time; the temporal constructs serve a function for Dasein, and so humans create them. Dasein is not in the past, present, and future, but rather Being is past, present, future.

Authentic existential time is oriented towards the future, as a place of possibility, not in opposition to inauthentic time, but arising from it. Heidegger (1926/1962) argues that time becomes endless in both directions, formerly understood as past and future, orienting humans “towards a free-floating ‘in-itself’ of a course of ‘nows’ which is present-at-hand” (p. 476). This succession of nows takes humans away from the public world-clock that arranges time in terms of earlier and later. Humans can project themselves ahead, and this projection is not simply an activity of something done, but is what humans are. The future makes possibilities possible. The unity of time is oriented toward the future, and for Freire (1974) this keeps alive the further humanization of the world; men and women are “beings in permanent relation with the world” (p. 120). People are historical beings situated temporally in certain places, self-aware of the processes of knowing that arise through communion, creation, dialogue, hope, and love.

Heidegger (1926/1962) points to temporality as the “meaning of the Being of that entity which we call Dasein . . . in such a way as to be something which understands something like Being” (p. 39). Temporally situated within a horizon of possibility, Dasein as understanding operates within a self-interpreting, self-reflecting, and self-shaping dialectic with the world and Being. “In Dasein itself, and therefore in its own understanding of Being, the way the world is understood is . . . reflected back upon the way in which Dasein itself gets interpreted” (p. 36).

One's everyday relation to Being, as Dasein which are pre-ontologically and ontically oriented toward understanding Being, allows for a provisional understanding to develop a more robust relationship with both the meaning of Being and with Being itself as it is. Heidegger contends that the temporal character of Being is not simply a being existing in time; to grasp Being at all, one needs to understand time itself existentially. "In its factual Being, any Dasein is as it already was, and it is 'what' it already was. It is its past, whether explicitly or not" (p. 41).

In a similar vein, Freire (1974) argues that human future is human history as well, so that humans create history in a praxis rooted in critical reflexivity and political action; this human creation of history is a similar temporal reconfiguration as that portrayed in Heidegger's problematic of time. The past is not simply what was and the future is not simply what will be, but rather there is a need to consider what humans may become, or what may come to be out of the future, and this future past is what is experienced in the present. Now, one can begin to sense the unity of time as being oriented towards the future, changing the flow of existence, and making possible Freire's future human loving history. To understand history ontologically, history must be understood in terms of the future, as history is either forgotten or repeated, but Freire puts forward an active hopeful alternative, a new creation of history, a re-imagining of the future.

Conclusion

Freirian pedagogy, rooted in hope and love, and focused on human liberation, works strangely well in conjunction with Heidegger's phenomenological methods into an inquiry about the related questions of technology and being, and together the two thinkers can assist in ontological pursuits as beings in the world. Heidegger's work discloses Being as rooted in a mode of inquiry, whereas Freire encourages a praxis of reflection and action, always with the

goal of human liberation from systematic oppression, continuously moving both from and toward a place of human love, an idea entirely absent from Heidegger's ideas. Human ontological vocation, when viewed through Heidegger's work, posits Dasein as beings of a particular inquiring type, whereas Freire extends subjectivity into a dialectical relationship with the world in which people are involved in transforming their surroundings to be more just and loving for other people, as a necessary part of humanity. Human relationship with technology needs to be closely examined, as its implications go to the core of Being. Technology is not a neutral instrument in the world, and ultimately a relationship with the essence of technology is not just about how humans interact with technological things; much more fundamentally an understanding of technology speaks to the relationship between humans and Being.

Language is a fundamental dimension within this understanding of Being, and both Freire and Heidegger recognize the importance of choosing their words, of re-defining words when necessary, in order to explain their ideas, but more importantly to challenge the reader to challenge their own understanding of the word and the world. The inquiry of Being, as any inquiry, occurs within a house of language, Heidegger likes to say, and this is a house continually under renovation and increased occupancy; the world is shifting and a dynamic relationship with other beings is never static or atemporal. As historical beings alive in the present, people remain open to language and to an unveiling of the world through language, so that things can reveal themselves as they are in themselves, not simply as one perceives them, otherwise humans would simply encounter themselves everywhere. For Freire, dialogue is central to humanness, whereas Heidegger points to a capacity for questioning as essential to Being, but both thinkers are interested in how language works to influence a relationship with other beings in the world, and ultimately how language affects who humans are as beings.

The dialectical relationship between subject and object produces knowledge through reflexivity, inquiry, and action, and always people are subjects interacting with things of the world, not existing abstractly. People exist in particular places at certain times. Through a phenomenological mode of inquiry, continuously asking further questions, probing deeply into ontological understanding of things, stepping back at the same time as moving closer into these things, truth is revealed. The act of questioning requires a horizon of time crucial for understanding Being, as a notion of time provides limits for an inquiry within a series of nows. Bounding this ontology in such a temporal way paradoxically allows for an openness within the questions so that things reveal themselves as they are within this horizon of time. That which was not present arrives, and in this unconcealment of things, truth is found.

Dasein is this entity capable of inquiry, grounded in the temporal now, but one need not be frustrated by the apparently circular essence of Being as questioning and questioning as Being. For Heidegger, central to Dasein is this connection between inquiry and truth. While the constant seeking and grasping of reality is indicative of the technological age, this way of ordering the world is evidenced in ancient Western philosophy, and a return to openness with inquiry is necessary for truth to reveal itself, for things to be seen as they are in themselves. Freire (1998) writes of existing in communion with the world, loving humans for their essential humanity and living in communion with the world at large, as opposed to challenging it and forcing oneself upon it. Situating all things as standing-reserve negates the Being of beings, and reduces Being to a configuration of uses; stripped of an understanding of Being as related to truth, human becoming is reduced to that of standing-reserve, as beings for use.

As beings capable of self-reflection and transformative action in the world, as inquiring Dasein, the way in which humans encounter the world holds both danger and saving power. In

the same way, as human beings, all are capable of liberating or oppressing others in conditions that dehumanize all. This destining makes possible truth, as things reveal themselves as they are, but also humans can be caught up in this destining so that they become beings for use by other beings. The real is not simply a construct of oneself, and a relationship to the Being of things is central to existence as entities known as Dasein. A secondary understanding of *techne* needs to be maintained and brought to the foreground, as there one can find the saving power in *poiesis*, a poetic revealing of truth, unconcealing the mystery of revelation itself. Poetically dwelling upon the earth as Dasein, humans shape the world as it is in itself, and an intentional aspect of consciousness serves as an impulse toward becoming. Hope is an ontological requirement in this human project of becoming, as one can participate in re-creating the world to be more loving, just, and humane, and this participation is as central to Being as is reflective, critical thought. A destiny of liberation is at stake here, but this destiny is only a possibility; it requires practical action. Whereas the method of phenomenological inquiry focuses on the concrete understanding of Being, pedagogy of consciousness, rooted in critical thought and political action, aims at human needs in particular. As humans, all are involved in self-reflection, as well as reflecting upon things in the world, and as such people can be aware of an unfinished state, continually constructing this world of Being.

In the process of becoming, the making conscious of oneself, the re-imagining and reconstruction of the world, human beings assert themselves as something not at all like beings of standing-reserve to be ordered and categorized. Because all are capable of reflection, inquiry, and action, humans affirm humanity when choosing to partake in the liberation of humans from systems that oppress and limit all in such ways that humanity is obscured or denied its capacity to become, to flourish. The question of technology and the more primary question of Being here

is not just abstract, lofty speculation, but is basic to understanding the world and one's role in this place in this time; consciousness is central to a continued liberation of humanity and the possible unveiling of truth. Freire (1998) contends that ethics develop alongside consciousness, an important distinction between him and Heidegger, who seems to ignore the ethical aspect of Being. Freire offers love as central to the revolutionary act of education, love of humans and love of the world, and for this reason it seems helpful to thread his ideas through Heidegger's work that surrounds the question of Being. Dasein's Being is not the same as a loaf of bread's Being, as humans are capable of reflecting upon Being; further, one might hear Heidegger's call to conscience (which he seemed to have missed during the Fascist rise to power and his complicity in that horror) and one can hear Freire's cry for critical consciousness, as central aspects to being human. The question of technology must be viewed in relation to the question of Being, and the revelation of Being becomes apparent as people assert themselves as reflective, communicative, loving beings who are actively involved in the unveiling of possible truths in the continual transformation of the world.

For my purposes here, Heidegger and Freire draw attention to both ontological and pedagogical inquiries that speak to my conception of the spiritual imperative in education. Heidegger's phenomenological approach returns to primary questions of Being, and his mode of inquiry repeatedly circles back to more original questions. His concern with technological grasping of the world and his question of technology are ultimately related to Being and what it means to be a human engaged in inquiry of this most essential type. The positing of things standing-at-hand for human use, in this technological mode of existence and thought, results in the entire world being seen in this way, until humans themselves are pulled into the frame of existence as things with use-value. This reduces the human experience for all people, as some

are merely tools or instruments for techno-economical gains, rather than encountered as ends in themselves. Freire, coupled with Heidegger, similarly speaks to educators who are involved in the human praxis of reflection and action, constructing a world through engagement with words, and his ultimate source and goal are love, a necessary addition to the phenomenological work of Heidegger.

While humans are continually engaged in constructing and communicating such essential meaning through language, as both Heidegger and Freire assert, I will argue later that silence is equally important in considerations of spirituality. Quiet, slow contemplation can be as equally powerful as the dialogic experience, and through a silent practice, one can arrive into dialogue more fully present, more ready to listen to alternative perspectives, as well as preparing oneself to engage in attempted articulation of those ideas that most elude language. Ultimately, the pairing of Heidegger and Freire enables me to frame the spiritual imperative in terms of ontology and pedagogy; I can consider what it means to ask questions of Being, and also I can consider what it means to be an educator committed to helping form a world that makes it easier to exist and love in this world.

CHAPTER 4

ROUSSEAU'S *EMILE*

An Epistemology and Pedagogy of Ignorance and Omission

“Everything is good as it leaves the hands of the Author of things; everything degenerates in the hands of man;” Rousseau (1762/1979) thus begins his project to lay forth a clear method and path for educating a natural man. *Émile*, both shaped in the hands of the book’s author, and guided by his master and tutor, Jean-Jacques, is cultivated to become a man. He is intended to become a sociable man, an ideal citizen, a good leader, and eventually a man who contemplates and worships the divine Author. *Émile*’s education begins in nature, so that someday he might be ready to join society on his own terms, without fear or anger, without envy or resentment, his passions controlled by reason.

How does this book speak to my own project? The goal of this chapter is to track the trajectory of Rousseau’s combination of pedagogy, epistemology, and theology throughout the canonical *Émile*, to follow the author as he follows the guidance of a larger Author (Nature). The pedagogy seems rooted in omission, as the ever-present tutor chooses to avoid certain topics and terms, while the epistemology is likewise dependent upon the acceptance of ignorance for a certain period of learning. I argue that similar examples of omission and ignorance continue in so much of secular education, as questions of spirituality are too frequently avoided in schools. I want to consider how Rousseau (1762/1979) conceptualized the teaching of a boy, hypothetical though he was, dependent upon shielding the student from certain ideas, because of their ambiguity and contentiousness in society. My intent is not simply to set up Rousseau as a straw-man to knock down and burn in effigy; in fact, many of his ideas are extremely helpful for

contemporary learning and the crux of his argument (which I claim is hidden in Book IV, for good reason, due to its inflammatory nature in the context of Rousseau's era) is revolutionary.

In the first sentence of Rousseau's book on education, the author reveals his belief in a benevolent divinity ("the Author"), and Rousseau (1762/1979) asserts that the natural world is perfectly good. Human beings deform and disfigure the natural world, and worse yet they corrupt one another as individuals and the collective whole of humanity, partly as the result of "unnatural" education. Early on, the reader is made aware of Rousseau's beliefs, but Jean-Jacques' student, Émile, remains ignorant of the divine Author until much later in his learning. In this engagement with Rousseau's book, I hope to point to a number of themes that continue to influence the questions of spirituality in education. The historical context of this book's publication must be clear. Rousseau grounds the learning of Émile in "natural religion," wary as he is of the religious authorities and religious traditions of his time; the tutor deems it wise to avoid all discussion of spiritual matters until much later in life, rather than expose his student to potentially dangerous dogma. I argue that similar evasion of spiritual matters continues to occur in contemporary education settings, for similar reasons, as a decision is made not to expose students to matters without clear definitions, as well as avoiding possibly contentious subjects.

Although Rousseau (1762/1979) begins the book with recognition of a benevolent Author who is responsible for all of nature, the tutor refrains from introducing the notion of such a deity to his student, and this apparent omission raises interesting questions about Rousseau's approach to religion, to knowledge, and to education (an approach that continues to echo through much of contemporary secular learning). While it becomes clear from the outset as to some of Rousseau's own beliefs, he quite obviously avoids any such discussion of religion with Émile, allowing nature to guide him in his path to understanding, to allow his senses to bring forth

reason naturally, and this approach to education makes Rousseau's book a novel proposition. However, a much more radical assertion is put forward later in Rousseau's project, in Book IV, when the Savoyard Vicar argues quite forcefully for natural religion (and a seeming rejection of organized religions), an incendiary proposal in Rousseau's times that would have dire consequences on his life as a result of the book's publication. Well before one discovers the radical profession of the Vicar, Rousseau unveils a pedagogy rooted in nature, removed from society, an education that revolves around Émile's sensations and the cultivation of self-love that allows Émile to become a man on his own terms, uninfluenced by the ideas and opinions of others, especially considering religion. The first three books are essential to prepare for the Vicar's later assertions of natural religion, because the same basic principles exist in the Vicar's understanding of human existence in the world as are evident in Jean-Jacques' pedagogy.

Recent Scholarship

The scholarship surrounding Rousseau's canonical work, *Émile*, is multitudinous and diverse, but a few writers were especially helpful for my reading of Rousseau's work. To begin, John Darling (1985) draws attention to Rousseau's policy to omit any religious education until Émile grows older. Darling suggests that the omission of any religious education, what he sees as an "inadequacy," should prompt reconsideration of understanding in Émile. As Rousseau wants Émile to develop his own ideas based on experience, he is careful to only use words that a child can understand. Otherwise, the tutor Jean-Jacques fears a student may simply parrot his tutors, thus relying on another person's judgment. Darling interprets Rousseau's distinction between different types of reasoning to affect the possibility of making good judgments; "Children can exercise judgment on what is within their own experience . . . but not on what is beyond their experience" (p. 22). As a notion like the Divine Author lies beyond the grasp of

children, beyond direct experience and clear articulation, it is harmful to introduce such ideas or words to the child. Rousseau's own conceptualization of understanding seems to influence his decision to avoid religious education early in a student's life, postponing such lessons. This argument suggests that while much religious thought remains incomprehensible to adults, adults can at least comprehend the concept of something being incomprehensible, whereas such subtle reasoning lies beyond the child's grasp. Therefore, it's better to avoid such difficult lessons.

Darling (1985) questions Rousseau's decision to wait to teach *Émile* religion, because an idea of god may remain inconceivable forever, never be fully understood, and so one can never teach religion. Darling writes, "The implied notion of *degrees of understanding*, however, is foreign to Rousseau's theory of learning" (p. 31), as it seems that Rousseau works within a dichotomy of understanding. One knows or one does not know; this is the basic line of thought. Such an idea ignores basic language acquisition concepts; to learn more words, one needs to hear words that one does not know. Furthermore, partial understanding is part of learning. One gives thought to that which is not understood, to experience different degrees of depth.

Nicholas Dent (1988) is also very helpful, in asserting that Rousseau's basic principle is asserted in that crucial first sentence of *Émile*; man is by nature good, but is corrupted by society. If nature is to be the basis for the whole of wisdom, then it becomes important to understand Rousseau's idea of "natural goodness." Evil comes from the desire to control and subjugate, and this is an unnatural tendency that damages all humans, both those that enslave others and those whom are enslaved. However, nature provides a source of wisdom to assist in handling "passions" that arise and damage humans. Dent follows Rousseau's argument concerning natural goodness to its conclusion; humans come into the world as purely good beings and are damaged by others, but if they were to be totally free from the influence and effects of other

people, they would not learn language to communicate or learn practical skills that are essential for belonging to society. “So we appear either to have to be not yet human, or corrupted humans -- if Rousseau is to be believed” (Dent, p. 140). Dent extends Rousseau’s notion of the *natural life* to mean not just that which is untouched by society, but rather a life lived according to nature, not necessarily isolated from human encounter. Rousseau certainly recognizes that complex human interchange is an essential part of natural life; without social relations, he argues that an individual is incomplete.

Later in *Émile*, Rousseau (1762/1979) identifies the source of “passions” in self-love, arguing that all passions are natural, but can be harmful. Without going into detail here, the basic idea holds that some passions, natural as they may begin, are modified by society and turned against individuals. Dent (1988) notes that these modifications are external, coming from society, and so it becomes crucial for the educator to produce natural modifications; “The central question is not whether any modifications have been produced by some outside influence; it is the question which modifications have been produced” (p. 143). This paradoxical argument must be grasped carefully; though his tutor manipulates *Émile*, to produce certain modifications of the passions, the boy ultimately finds himself in the *natural* order, in freedom and self-preservation. If the tutor can aid the student toward wellbeing, liberation, and preservation, then this is deemed a successful natural education. To succeed in this direction, one need look to natural surroundings and develop a capacity for self-sustenance; however, this same impulse of power can lead to one’s demise if others are pulled into a realm of control. This last thought is an interesting link to Heidegger’s notion of a technological grasping of the world that reduces other beings to the state of thing-ness, available for use as a means to an end.

The third writer invaluable to my study of Rousseau was Richard White (2008), who notes the tension Rousseau creates between altruism and self-love by linking compassion to self-interest. In order to follow nature's rule to manage the passions that one experiences, Rousseau offers a strategy for teaching compassion, while helping Émile avoid other passions such as anger, fear, and pride. Rousseau wants to direct his student's passions altruistically, and through this care for others he endeavors for Émile to develop a sense of social justice. White asks a key question in regards to Rousseau's methods, although he admires the ultimate goal of education toward compassion. White understands Rousseau's desire to help Émile become compassionate, but he questions the way Rousseau goes about it; "Is this teaching or manipulation? What are we to make of this philosophy of education, and can it illuminate contemporary practice" (p. 36)? White's contribution here is the connection of Rousseau's approach to compassion as it can be applied to education today. Here, one can look to Freire's pedagogy of resistance to oppression, dependent on human compassion as one educates toward liberation.

Rousseau (1762/1979) links the development of compassion to self-interest, and this acts as a bridge from life as an individual to participation as a social being with care for others and a sense of justice. White (2008) points to another Rousseau work to better grasp this tension between altruism and self-love; in his preface to "Discourse on the Origins of Inequality," Rousseau (1754/1913) asserts that primitive human ancestors had two things in common with other animals. *Amour de soi*, the first commonality, is understood as the impulse to preserve one's life, while *pitié* is the other shared characteristic, a compassion for the suffering of others. White asserts that "imaginative identification" is essential for compassion to develop, defending the value of literature for its ability to place us in connection with others, to experience their pain and misery. Rousseau (1762/1979) contends that the student can learn, at an appropriate age,

examples from literature and history to cultivate a compassionate sense of humanity, to learn to love all people. However, while love can be seen as a good in itself, as well as a social good, Rousseau sees humans as basically selfish, driven by self-preservation. As a result, deep compassion needs to be cultivated through self-love, because self-preservation will always overpower compassion. As a result, the tutor needs to engage with compassion in such a way that it reaffirms the student's sense of self. Furthermore, White argues that in Rousseau's conception, compassion is viewed as a stepping-stone to justice, a higher human virtue than compassion alone. This is a crucial step in my own framework of the spiritual imperative of education, to move from the self to others, to move from compassion to action.

As an alternative conceptualization and practice of compassion, White (2008) departs from Rousseau's text to look at Buddhist and Christian traditions that call for unconditional compassion. In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, one feels the suffering of others so much that one becomes responsible for all, and helps everyone overcome suffering. The Dalai Lama writes:

When we enhance our sensitivity toward others' suffering through deliberately opening ourselves up to it, it is believed that we can gradually extend our compassion to the point where the individual feels so moved by even the subtlest suffering of others that they come to have an overwhelming sense of responsibility towards those others. This causes the one[s] who [are] compassionate to dedicate themselves entirely to helping others overcome both their suffering and the causes of their suffering. (in White, p. 44)

In the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the individual's compassion is inspired by the pain felt by another being and so one gives oneself over to help others, as one cannot remain indifferent to any suffering in the world. Again this idea connects with a Freirian demand for justice, as

oppression affects all humans; humanity is wounded and diminished as a result of the pain felt by an individual who suffers from oppressive social systems.

White (2008) also looks at the Christian aspect of charity, from which arises compassion, following Thomas Aquinas' idea of charity as an infused theological virtue. *Mercy* impels humans to help others, as they see others' misfortune as their own. White argues that such a notion of compassion seems opposed to Rousseau's development of this human capacity, and White criticizes the tutor's methods: "Émile . . . has only a reduced experience of compassion as a natural sentiment because he is controlled and manipulated by his tutor; it is not clear whether he could cultivate compassion as a virtue" (p. 45). At the same time, White lauds Rousseau's attempt to teach Émile to be more compassionate, and White wonders whether such an idea is a contemporary educational concern and how it might be further developed.

Rousseau (1762/1979) sees compassion as a means to an end as a social good, and this particular passion is cultivated in his student, channeled through self-love. Perhaps it does not matter if compassion arises because of a deep sense of interconnectivity that requires an end to all suffering (a Bodhisattva's life), or if compassion arises from deep self-love (Émile's life). Do the ends justify the means, if the result is a compassionate society? White (2008) argues that in the search for a *truly free man*, freedom appears to be sacrificed; "The problem for Rousseau is that manipulation tends to preclude this kind of autonomy; and in Émile, the tutor manipulates the pupil's natural sentiments, including compassion, for the sake of other ends" (p. 47). Perhaps the omission of certain ideas and words is necessary to arrive at the ultimate good society, and so Rousseau chooses to omit any mention of religion until later in the student's life. Perhaps, also, manipulation or modification of the passions is necessary in a student's development, to manage the natural sentiments that could work either towards or against the individual's freedom and

preservation. If the world becomes good, then the path has been natural, so the argument goes, just as the author and tutor intended it to be.

These three contemporary perspectives of Rousseau's work help to establish my own interaction with this controversial canonical text. Darling (1985) indicts Jean-Jacques' decision to omit particular topics from the education of *Émile*, and he argues that it is a result of a particular conceptualization of *understanding*. If an idea ultimately remains incomprehensible, does this necessarily put such ideas beyond consideration? While one may not fully comprehend an idea such as "spirituality," or if one cannot clearly articulate such an idea, does this call for omitting any consideration of such ideas in secular educational settings? Or is it more helpful to accept the different *degrees* of understanding as central to learning processes? If one accepts the gradual comprehension of ideas, then one can consider how knowledge and experience are linked to other people, dependent on human interaction. Dent (1988) critiques Rousseau's conception of a human as being either corrupted or somewhat incomplete until one is socially connected, while at the same time Rousseau calls for *natural education* that demands self-sufficiency in the natural world, before being introduced to other people. Connected to this paradoxical idea of self-sufficiency and social interaction, White (2008) introduces the tension between self-love and altruism. The development of deeper compassion stands as a central goal for White, and in my own project here, and this compassion connects to a sense of social justice based on one's experience with humanity, inspiring action toward creating a more just world. White looks to two different traditions, Buddhist and Christian, to expand a framework of compassion in education and how it can help move students toward more profound understanding and practice of justice. Assisted by these three writers' responses to Rousseau, I

turn my close attention to *Émile*, to see what can be found there that might help my own project of articulating a spiritual imperative in education.

Books I & II

Through the first two books of *Émile*, there are a few references to a divine Author after the first sentence, but Rousseau (1762/1979) never once mentions the subject of such a being of any kind to his student, which prompts an inquiry into the concept of understanding for Rousseau in his natural education. Central to Rousseau's method of education is the acceptance of "ignorance," so that no understanding at all of a subject is better than a "wrong" understanding. To cultivate *Émile*, Rousseau needs to protect him from this wrong education by society, as man wants "nothing as nature made it," and so Rousseau urges mothers to protect their children in the way he will protect *Émile*: "Form an enclosure around your child's soul at an early date" (p. 37). In the same way that plants are shaped by cultivation, people are influenced by education, and everything they do not have is given them by education; that which is given to them by education becomes of utmost importance. Rousseau argues that these original "dispositions" and "inclinations," toward which humans tend, are rooted in nature, whereas opinions shaped by society can corrupt human understanding. And so, ignorance is put forth as favorable to wrong understanding, in all matters, religious and otherwise.

As a more material example, in a brief discussion on the "vanity of medicine," which may initially seem tangential to his larger argument, Rousseau (1762/1979) notes that some medicine cures while other medicine kills, just as some science is good while some is bad, making it necessary to distinguish between them. Rousseau asserts that it would be better to remain ignorant of medicine altogether; "If we knew how to be ignorant of the truth, we would never be the dupes of lies" (p. 54). While medicine is good for some humans, it is "fatal to

humankind;” knowledge of medicine makes the patient dependent upon the doctor and this dependency upon others weakens the individual. Similarly, a student’s dependence upon other people weakens the individual, and eventually the weakness turns into anger and resentment. Later, Rousseau will apply a similar logic to the realm of religion, urging “absolute ignorance of ideas of that estate which are not within his reach” (p. 178). Without delving prematurely into Book III, it is interesting to note the continuation of this call for ignorance that begins early in the book (in reference to healing arts), an idea that shapes Rousseau’s framework of “understanding.”

The question of understanding has to do with the senses, modes of perception that are uniquely developed in young people; Rousseau (1762/1979) writes, “Childhood has its ways of seeing, thinking, and feeling which are proper to it” (p. 90). Adults must not substitute their ways of sensing the world with those of children; different types of reasoning exist for Rousseau, as children reason only through experience, perceiving directly and then comparing sensations. “Since everything which enters into human understanding comes there through the senses, man’s first reason is a reason of the senses; this sensual reason serves as the basis of intellectual reason” (p. 125). Therefore, children can compare basic sensations that are experienced directly, but to compare basic ideas requires a further complexity of thought. Rousseau is “far from thinking that children have no kind of reasoning” (p. 108), but he claims they have a particular limitation of reasoning. It is thus that Rousseau compares the reason of sense-experience with the reason involving complex-ideas; children are capable of the former, but not the latter, and education needs to reflect this distinction in the capacity of reason.

As Jean-Jacques wants *Émile* to develop his own ideas based on experience, he is careful to use words that a child can understand. Otherwise, Rousseau (1762/1979) fears that students

may simply parrot their tutors, thus relying on another person's judgment. Therefore, if a child cannot understand certain words, then the tutor must avoid these words; again, it is best to develop "the art of being ignorant" (p. 126). As notions of religion and the Author lie beyond the grasp of children, beyond their direct experience and articulation, it is harmful to introduce such ideas or words to the child. Rousseau's notion of understanding influences his decision to avoid religious education early in *Émile's* life, postponing such lessons. While much of religious thought remains incomprehensible to adults, adults can comprehend the concept of something being incomprehensible, whereas such subtle reasoning lies beyond the child's grasp.

The notion of understanding for Rousseau (1762/1979) here seems to be dichotomous in approach. Either one knows or does not know; one can experience it through sensation, or cannot. However, partial understanding is inherent in learning. Humans can give thought to that which is not fully understood, and in this way individuals can experience different degrees of comprehension. While a divine Author perhaps can never be grasped conceptually in totality, such an idea can be considered or contemplated, although never fully understood. However, Rousseau chooses to educate *Émile* entirely for himself at the beginning of his project, keeping him enclosed in ignorance of that which cannot help him to know himself any better.

Rousseau (1762/1979) asks whether boys (and he is concerned mostly with boys here) are raised for themselves or for society, and he says that a choice must be made to form either a "man" or a "citizen"; Rousseau chooses the former in order that *Émile* might truly become the latter by his own choice. Natural man is entirely for himself, Rousseau argues, but social institutions strip man of this absolute existence, so man loses his sense of self in the unity of all. While Rousseau focuses on making *Émile* into a man, before he can become a citizen, he does acknowledge the central question to such an education: "But what will a man raised uniquely for

himself become for others” (p. 41)? Rousseau says that first *Émile* must be a man, and so his education must begin just with him, thus making it clearer why the tutor might avoid ideas of an Author that exists beyond *Émile*.

Just as the concept of religion and an Author of all things connect to Rousseau’s notion of understanding, the question of understanding is linked to why a person is educated at all, for whom one learns. Rousseau (1762/1979) writes that a father, when he engenders children (I avoid discussion of the actual children engendered by Rousseau), owes three things. “He owes to his species men; he owes to society sociable men; he owes to the state citizens” (p. 49). This onerous assertion foreshadows a later discussion about society and the state, and *Émile*’s place there, but at the beginning of his learning *Émile* must first become a man. This aspect of Rousseau’s argument is quite apt with regards to much of the current debate about global citizenship, as a student cannot possibly begin to be responsible to the world before knowing oneself.

Upon assuming charge of *Émile*, Jean-Jacques demands that his student obey only him, as the sole condition upon becoming his tutor. The master demands, “I want to raise him alone or not get involved” (p. 55). The author becomes the master of *Émile*’s life, so that *Émile* may become the master and author of his own life, to learn self-dependence, to become totally autonomous, and to live a pure natural existence. Again, education with such a goal of becoming a self-sustaining man must begin in nature, where all is good, where all originates from the hands of the unknown Author. To return to the beginning, all that comes from the Author is good, all that is natural is good, and thus to turn from nature is to turn to evil, away from the Author. Following this line of logic, nature is posited as the basis of human wisdom, and to live and learn correctly one need only look to natural surroundings, and turn away from society, especially

urban areas: “Cities are the abyss of the human species” (p. 59). Rousseau (1762/1979) repeatedly urges that a child be taught self-sustenance, to depend upon one’s own power, while simultaneously warning that this capacity for power can lead to self-defeat if other humans are pulled into the realm of control, perpetuating domination and servitude that persist through history. Rousseau takes it upon himself to reform education, with the end goal being the same as that of nature, entirely good, just as the Author intended. Rousseau’s basic principle is asserted in the book’s first idea; man is by nature good, but is corrupted by society. If nature is to be the basis for the whole of wisdom, then it becomes important to understand Rousseau’s idea of “natural goodness.” Evil comes from the desire to control and subjugate, and this is an unnatural tendency that damages all humans, both those that enslave others and those whom are enslaved. To think back to an earlier chapter in my own project, this idea sounds much like Freire’s thesis that oppression is a stain upon all humanity. However, for Rousseau, nature provides a source of wisdom to assist in handling “passions” that arise and damage individuals.

All people come into the world as purely good beings and are deformed by the wrong response to these natural passions that arise, but if an individual can be totally removed from the influence and effects of other people, one would not learn language to communicate or learn practical skills that are essential for belonging to society. Humans begin to learn immediately upon entering the world (or earlier) and so every interaction with others has some effect upon the young student. Rousseau (1762/1979) writes, “Education of man begins at his birth” (p. 62), and so education must occur in nature. However, Rousseau’s notion of “natural life” means not just that which is untouched by society, but rather a life lived according to nature, not necessarily isolated entirely from human encounter. Rousseau certainly recognizes that complex human interchange is an essential part of natural life; without social relations, an individual is

incomplete, but Jean-Jacques is adamant that Émile's education must first begin for his own self, rooted in nature.

The epigraph for Rousseau's (1762/1979) book is borrowed from Seneca's *On Anger*: "We are sick with evils that can be cured and nature, having brought us forth sound, itself helps us if we wish to be improved" (p. 31). An education rooted in society leads to anger, and Jean-Jacques wants to extirpate these roots, to protect Émile from the sickness and evil that springs from such soils. The first condition of man is "want and weakness, his first voices are complaint and tears" (p. 65); Rousseau warns that from this want and weakness, an inability to do for himself and satisfy his needs, anger arises. The disposition of children to anger requires "extreme attentiveness" on the part of an educator, as the child's wishes, once satisfied, become the man's orders. Other people are dominated to satisfy the future wants that arise, and thus evil is born from learning.

For Rousseau (1762/1979), a tutor must guide a student along a treacherous path that moves toward a life of social relations, while likewise allowing the individual to maintain autonomy of thought and in possession of natural freedom (while avoiding the domination of others). One begins down this path to a life of social relations by encouraging development of the individual, with very detailed prescriptions for learning and living. Later, Rousseau will locate the source of these passions in self-love, arguing that all passions are natural, but harmful if not modified correctly.

The basic idea holds that some passions, natural as they may begin, are modified by society and turned against the individual. Of course, this paradoxical argument must be grasped carefully. Although the tutor manipulates Émile in order to modify certain passions, he ultimately finds himself in the natural order of freedom and self-preservation. If the tutor can

assist the student toward wellbeing, liberation, and preservation, then this is natural education. To succeed in this direction, one need only look to the natural surroundings and develop a capacity for self-sustenance; however, this same impulse of power can lead to demise if other people are pulled into a larger realm of control. Here I want to again point to my earlier chapter that engages with Heidegger to think about the question of technology and the development of a phenomenological approach to my own questions of spirituality. Heidegger discusses the ontological danger of grasping nature in a mode of categorization that posits things in terms of use-value, ultimately pulling humans into this realm of control, reducing existence to an instrumental value in economic-technological terms. Rousseau (1762/1979) theorized that a student who was educated in the natural world and established a sense of self-sustenance would not experience the tendency to control other people, as nature provides what is needed for life.

Rousseau (1762/1979) writes of the “active principle” that is given to children by the Author of nature, and so Jean-Jacques allows Émile to exercise this active principle, but with care that he does not do harm. “At the same time that the Author of nature gives children this active principle, by allowing them little strength to indulge it, He takes care that it do little harm” (p. 67). This active principle, bestowed upon humans by the Author, is in itself purely natural and good, but can give rise to evil if a child’s education is not attentive to its dangers. Rousseau identifies in children a natural impulse toward destruction, a desire to upset everything, smash it, break it, acting without any moral judgment; the child acts thus “to prove his power to himself.” This impulse is not evil in itself, as it occurs naturally, but can destroy the individual and society if turned to control other human beings. The active principle develops in children, claims Rousseau, whereas it extinguishes in the elderly who want peace. Change is posited as a natural action here, either toward action or stillness. A problematic aspect of the active principle in

children, according to Rousseau, is that children progress from upsetting everything and thus proving their power to themselves; other people come to be seen as instruments in the same way as things, “to be set in motion,” and so a tyrannical spirit of domination develops in children. That active principle, natural and received from the Author of all things, turns towards tyranny because of society, because of the way man learns from the world of men, and not from nature. This sounds like a reversal of the earlier-mentioned image (from Holderlin, by way of Heidegger) that sees a saving grace emerging from danger; for Rousseau, the grace holds the possibility of danger.

Children grow physically and come to possess the necessary power to survive, so strength provides equilibrium for the soul, but the “desire to command” does not diminish. The clear question is, “Why?” If one is physically strong enough to gather that which one needs, why does one remain intent on domination? Fanciful creations overpower the simplicity of need; one can acquire necessary sustenance, but demands more. The active principle thus takes one from the path of nature, and so Jean-Jacques offers four maxims to keep the child on the path of nature. These are an example of Rousseau’s pedagogical assertion for educating children, put forward in simple terms with clear goals in mind.

First, a tutor must let children use all the strength that nature gives them. Do not bind them, physically or mentally. Second, a tutor must help children; whatever they need, give them. Aid and supplement them. Third, a tutor must limit this assistance to what is useful, not just whim or desire. Whim does not come from a source in nature so a tutor ought not induce it in children. Fourth, a tutor must study children’s languages and signs, in order to distinguish in their desires what comes from nature and what comes from opinion. “The spirit of these rules is to accord children more true freedom and less dominion, to let them do more by themselves and

to exact less from others” (p. 68). These four maxims allow the active principle to develop naturally, as the Author intended, and as such will lead only to good. These guiding maxims reveal Rousseau’s dominant pedagogical aims, to attempt to follow nature’s path in educating a child, rather than be bound by societal expectations.

If children are allowed the opportunity to do for themselves all that they can, to satisfy their own needs, then they will not have the desire to demand anything from others. It seems that an educator might harness the energy of the active principle, to allow children to upset that which is necessary to upset (but not just from whim), to recognize their own power so that children use their strength to help themselves, thus not needing to dominate other people in order to achieve their needs. The obvious challenge is how to avoid the development of whim, fanciful creations, that arises after one’s needs are met; imagination is arguably a natural process, just as much as the active principle, but when whim leads to domination of other humans, all remain enslaved, living outside of and against the way of nature, counter to the Author’s creation. Rousseau (1762/1979) struggles with the human tendency to domination, and he tries to develop a way to educate Émile in a way that will not lead to such domination by or upon other people.

The illustration at the start of Book II depicts Chiron teaching Achilles to run and hunt for food, the ultimate natural existence, to catch a rabbit with one’s own hands, to believe oneself self-sufficient, the primary goal for early education. Jean-Jacques posits himself as centaur-tutor here, teaching Émile to be dependent only on nature, as dependence on man leads to anger and domination. Desires grow constantly and with each moment of satisfaction, a man develops more desires. First the child wants your watch, then he wants the bird that flies past, then he wants the stars in the sky. If his desires are not satisfied, anger arises. “How could I conceive

that a child thus dominated by anger . . . might ever be happy” (p. 87)? This anger can be avoided, the reader learns, if the boy is taught to satisfy his own needs in nature.

Jean-Jacques teaches Émile the art of ignorance and teaches the boy to satisfy his own desires, to exercise his mind and body together, so that strength and reason grow together. For Rousseau (1762/1979), Émile becomes a sort of noble savage; “Attached to no place, without prescribed task, obeying no one, with no other law than his will, he is forced to reason in each action of his life” (p. 118). Of course, it could be argued that Émile is attached to the place he lives and must complete tasks given by his tutor, always obeying his master as mandated early in the book, but otherwise his law is his own. The omitted mention of the Author of all things maintains Émile as the author of his own life, although Rousseau (1762/1979) assures the reader at the end of Book II that the Author provides for men. “What is more, the Author of things provides not only for the needs He gives us but also for those we give ourselves” (p. 151). Needs change, desires change, and tastes change, but as long as one follows the path of nature, all can be attained, and it is not important to be aware of the divine Author of nature at this early point in education and life. Ignorance is bliss.

Book III

An illustration at the start of Book III portrays Hermes, a messenger sent from the ancient gods to humans, writing the elements of science on pillars for man to learn. In these elements of science can be found divine truth, the illustration suggests, as the gods sent Hermes to the ancients so they might understand the world better, to receive education from nature, to find the divine there. In Book III, Émile is found to be self-sufficient, educated in nature so that he can fulfill his needs and desires, but also he possesses “strength beyond what he needs” (p. 165). Émile has been educated by no other book than the world, instructed only by the facts that he

finds in nature, not reading from Hermes' writings on the pillars, but finding the knowledge written in nature itself. Only in Book III will Jean-Jacques give his student a book to read other than nature; Robinson Crusoe is fit for the boy educated on his own island amidst all humanity. Here again the reader is witness to Rousseau's pedagogy of omission, as even books were a risk for a young student. Jean-Jacques, the tutor, determines that his ward ought to remain in ignorance of some forms of knowledge (writings on the pillars, words in books), rather than risk being exposed to dangerous doctrine that might confuse him or challenge his self-sufficiency.

Full of enthusiasm, Rousseau (1762/1979) warns that the educator might want to teach a student geography with "globes, cosmic spheres, and maps," representations of reality, when what needs to be done is to walk outside and experience the world with one's senses. However, the child does not perceive and experience the world in the same way as the master; Émile does not experience the sunrise in the same way as Jean-Jacques. "The child perceives the objects, but he cannot perceive the relations linking them; he cannot hear the sweet harmony of their concord" (p. 169). It is not clear what needs to happen for Émile to hear this harmony of nature, but evidently this deeper perception comes with age, and for now he must be content with his limited perception and experience of the world. The necessary sentiments for such relational-perception is acquired later in life, with emotions not yet developed in Émile, with his imagination not yet in control of his mind. While the master may be moved by sensations that arise in experiencing nature, Émile has not yet acquired the necessary sentiments for such feelings. "Finally, how can he be touched by the beauty of nature's spectacle, if he does not know the hand responsible for adorning it" (p. 169)? While Émile remains unaware of the hand of the Author, he can only respond to nature in a limited way, but his inclinations come from nature only, not from opinion, so the master must remain quiet about his own experience of the

divine aspects of nature. Here one can see that a limited experience (“natural”) is the ideal mode of learning for a student, avoiding nebulous notions such as the divine pulse running through the universe.

This notion of perception, understanding, and experience is central to Rousseau’s method of education. No book other than the world! Jean-Jacques resists books, and looks to the image of Hermes engraving the elements of science on pillars for ancient men to understand.

I hate books. They only teach one to talk about what one does not know. It is said that Hermes engraved the elements of the sciences on columns in order to shelter his discoveries from a flood. If he had left a good imprint of them in man’s head, they would have been preserved by tradition. Well-prepared minds are the surest monuments on which to engrave human knowledge. (Rousseau, 1762/1979, p. 184)

It is unclear how tradition would preserve these elements of science, and it seems here that knowledge might be lost to human manipulation and degradation. Better would be for each individual to learn to read the elements of science from nature itself, rather than depend upon a tradition within tainted human society. In Rousseau’s hatred of books, one must include the holy books of the world, though he does not mention them here, but it is clear that *Émile* is not given a sacred text (other than nature) to learn to talk of things that he cannot possibly know. At this point in the book, Jean-Jacques seems to call for the most radically experience-based education for a student, to walk amidst nature without “unnecessary” words to describe his world.

When Jean-Jacques presents *Émile* with a book (*Robinson Crusoe*) to read, it is to remind him to visit the island, and then return to himself. This is what the two have done: “In a word, we have visited the whole island. Now we come back to ourselves” (p. 192). Again this is an interesting echo of my earlier chapter that explored Heidegger’s work, as one returns to the

things themselves and in doing so, returns to one's own Being. Now that master and student return to themselves, Émile has become an active, thinking being. He has moved from sensations to ideas, from feeling to judging. Ideas arise from the comparison of sensations. "Simple ideas are only compared sensations" (p. 203). Yet Jean-Jacques warns of deception: while nature never deceives people, people can deceive themselves. These errors come from judgments, and so one must be careful. "Since the more men know, the more they are deceived, the only means of avoiding error is ignorance" (p. 204). Jean-Jacques urges Émile to be ignorant, more than he teaches him to know. Émile uses his power of reason, and does not depend upon that of another. While his knowledge might not be much, that which he does know is his own, and still he knows nothing of the divine Author of nature. He demands nothing and he owes nothing; he is alone! All relates to himself at the end of Book III, existing as the master of his own island, educated in continual ignorance of that which he cannot comprehend.

Book IV

Émile leaves childhood and approaches adulthood in Book IV, and Jean-Jacques sees this "adolescent fire" as a means to consummate and complete his education. While the tutor has still not told his student of the divine Author at this point, the reader of Émile is subjected to a number of lessons about religion in Book IV, which begins with Émile's second birth. An individual leaves childhood "at the time prescribed by nature" (p. 211), born to life one more time. The first birth is to exist, while the second birth is to live, and so Rousseau (1762/1979) turns to address the "passions" in earnest, as he posits them as the "principal instruments" of our preservation (or destruction, depending on how they are managed). It is impossible to destroy the passions or to control nature, as they are the work of God, and God himself cannot annihilate that which God created, Rousseau explains, or else "He would contradict himself" (p. 212). It is

up to the tutor to teach his student how to control these powerful passions, and if education fails to do so, society suffers along with the individual. “And what God wants a man to do, He does not have told to him by another man. He tells it to him Himself; He writes it in the depth of his heart” (p. 212). Here Rousseau writes of what is expected of an individual to do, not of what an individual needs to learn. A subsequent chapter in my own project here will take up this notion of one’s responsibility and duty to the natural world and humankind within this world, as a connected thread to encountering the beauty of the universe.

Nature is the place to learn of the world, to experience through sensations and to form ideas through comparison of these sensations, but now Rousseau (1762/1979) turns to what God wants for man to do, as he becomes a man. However, for *Émile*, it is not necessary to know of the Author Himself, but only to look into his heart and follow the path of nature, and this will tell him what to do. It is in man’s nature to have passions, and the source is natural, but “countless alien streams” have swollen these passions to a dangerous level. Natural passions preserve people, as instruments of freedom, whereas those which “subject us and destroy us come from elsewhere” (p. 212), and Rousseau warns that although the passions are natural (born of the Author), some are modified and harmful to the primary goal of self-love and godly love.

The source of initial passion is the origin and principle of all other passions, and this is self-love. *Émile* must first love his own self to preserve himself. However, at this point in *Émile*’s life, he is no longer an isolated being, and so looks to humanity for companionship, friendship and sociability, although a “truly happy being is a solitary being. God alone enjoys an absolute happiness” (p. 221). Natural man is naked and poor, subject to the many miseries of life, condemned to death, and so to arrive at a place of love for others, one first needs self-love.

This self-love makes possible interaction with society that will not result in domination. Ideas like “justice” and “goodness” are not merely abstract words for Rousseau (1762/1979), but are “true affections of the soul enlightened by reason” (p. 235). Rousseau argues that no natural law can be established on reason alone, but rather needs to be founded on “a natural need in the human heart.” An expansive soul identifies oneself with another being as part of oneself, so that the suffering of another is equal to one’s own suffering. “Love of men derived from love of self is the principle of human justice” (p. 235). Self-love needs to be the principle for justice and goodness, in conjunction with identifying others as connected to oneself, and so to injure another is to injure oneself, in contradiction of self-love.

All humans begin at the same point, Rousseau (1762/1979) argues, so *Émile* is initially no different than other children, but by adolescence “they are no longer similar in anything” (p. 254). Jean-Jacques urges his readers to consider the idea that other young men at the age of maturity may see themselves as philosophers or theologians, “before *Émile* knows what philosophy is and has even heard of God” (p. 254). Here, one might wonder if the time has come for *Émile* to hear of the Author, but Jean-Jacques waits a while longer, having formed a man in and of nature, with no idea of God. Rousseau explains that the incomprehensible Author who embraces all, gives motion, and forms all “is neither visible to our eyes nor palpable to our hands” (p. 255). How could *Émile* even begin to conceive of such a being beyond his perception and experience? The work of the Author lies there in front of him, but the Author remains hidden. Apparently, it never occurs to *Émile* to ask whence all of nature comes. Even his ignorance here remains unknown to him. This is the key to Rousseau’s pedagogy of omission, as the student has no idea of that which cannot be clearly encountered in nature (trees, stone, streams), although Jean-Jacques himself is aware of the divine Author as the source of these

things. In returning to the things as they present themselves, in ignorance of the unknown divine presence, Émile cannot be confused or misled by abstract theological ideas.

Jean-Jacques has remained silent about God in the presence of Émile, although the reader is subjected to a fair amount of discussion by this point in *Émile*, and so Émile maintains his ignorance, rather than having to face questions that he cannot answer: What is God? Where is God? Why did God create all of this? In fact, Jean-Jacques avoids even the word “spirit,” as it has “no sense for anyone who has not philosophized” (p. 255), which results in a man saying words without understanding them. (Spirit apparently has sense for those who philosophize!) As for Émile, at age fifteen he does not know whether he has a soul, nor does he even know the word exists. “And perhaps at eighteen it is not yet time for him to learn it; for if he learns it sooner than he ought, he runs the risk of never knowing it” (p. 257). Even “the soul” is a risky topic. The obvious question is when might the right time be for Émile to learn of his soul, if Jean-Jacques himself believes in such an idea. Does Émile become a man to learn of his soul, or does he learn of his soul to become a man? Does Émile’s understanding of the world allow for the acceptance of an idea like the soul? Jean-Jacques is not worried that Émile may be perplexed by mystery, for when he hears things he does not comprehend, he does so with indifference. Émile simply accepts not knowing: “This is not within my competence” (p. 259). Again, ignorance is accepted with magnanimity. If one has no notion of a divine soul, how could one bemoan the lack of such discussion? Émile is protected by this enclosure of ignorance.

The Savoyard Vicar

In the middle of Book IV, Rousseau (1762/1979) takes more time to speak of religion to his readers, although still not to speak directly to Émile, putting him in a position to choose the religion toward which reason will lead him. This section of the book contains a fairly radical

proposition, especially for that era, challenging the church and the dominant dogma, and it is this section that finds the author in trouble for his writings. Rousseau knowingly chooses to “walk on fires covered by deceitful cinders,” to follow his motto and dedicate his life to truth, as he recounts the story of a young expatriate who found himself a fugitive in a foreign land and “changed his religion in order to have bread.” The illustration at this point in the book is of Orpheus teaching men the worship of gods, as the men cower on the ground and look to the sky. For Rousseau, he speaks of natural religion, through the creation of an expatriate and a Savoyard Vicar, knowing that men will not cower from his words, but instead will look to strike him down. Similar to Orpheus teaching the ancients about the gods, Rousseau informs the reader (but not *Émile*) of religion, through a paper transcribed by a “young expatriate” who was exposed to new dogmas and morals in an Italian city. This young man “would have been lost” if he had not met an ecclesiastic who was “naturally humane and compassionate [and] felt the sufferings of others by his own” (p. 262). Here we see compassion as a natural inclination, bestowed upon humans by the divine Author, and thus humans are capable of what Rousseau mentioned previously, possessing an expansive soul that feels the suffering of others as one’s own. It is not necessary to know of the Author or one’s soul if one still feels compassion of this type and acts accordingly for the good of one’s fellow human beings.

The ecclesiastic is a poor Savoyard Vicar who instructs, consoles, and teaches the expatriate, and is involved in raising the son of a prince’s minister, a tutor of sorts for both a noble (the son) and an orphan (the expatriate), reminiscent of Jean-Jacques’ role with *Émile*. Rousseau (1762/1979) writes of how the expatriate marvels at the Vicar’s view of religion: “He had seen that religion served only as the mask of interest and sacred worship only as the safeguard of hypocrisy” (p. 263). At this point in the book, the author Rousseau attempts to wear

a mask (the Vicar) to speak the truths about oppressive religious authority during his era. Men have disfigured the original ideas of the divinity, an idea that follows the first assertion by Rousseau in the book, that man deforms and disfigures the Author's work. The Vicar sees that life's degradations (caused by society) have damaged the expatriate's soul, and the Vicar knows it is necessary to awaken his "amour-propre" and self-esteem, following a method like that of Jean-Jacques. However, it is most difficult to destroy the expatriate's misanthropy, even as his self-love grows. His hatred for his fellow men is eventually overwhelmed by the misery that man feels, and he asks the Vicar how happiness is possible in such a world. The Vicar promises to tell him how he can be happy, so they go to nature, on a hill outside the city, where "nature displayed all its magnificence to our eyes in order" (p. 266). There in nature, the Vicar professes his faith to the expatriate, and to the readers of *Émile*, a radical assertion of natural religion. Of course such an event occurs in nature.

The Profession

The Vicar, whether definitely speaking for Rousseau or not, makes a number of powerful assertions about religion, following the earlier propositions of Rousseau (1762/1979) concerning nature, ignorance, understanding, and education. "Nevertheless I know by my experience that conscience persists in following the order of nature against all the laws of men" (p. 267). Conscience, here, is naturally rooted and thus follows the natural order, working against the constructs of society that Rousseau is also resisting. Once more, this echoes my earlier chapter where Heidegger speaks of the ontological aspect of conscience and Freire calls for a critical consciousness as central to human existence, as opposed to a theological conception of the idea. In Rousseau's masked voice, the Vicar writes of his previous "uncertainty and violent doubt" as he meditated on the cause of his being and the principle of his duties; this echoes Rousseau's

teachings, as Émile avoids such considerations in his education, as the “cause” of being lies beyond his grasp, and his duties can only begun to be contemplated as he enters manhood.

The reader learns (but again Émile does not) that the Vicar, after study and contemplation, finally concluded: “We do not know ourselves; we know neither our nature nor our active principle” (p. 268). This language is explicitly that of Rousseau (1762/1979), who focuses on the active principle early in Émile’s education, to harness its power for goodness, rather than risk it being corrupted by man. The Vicar also decided to embrace his “ignorance,” another idea central to Rousseau’s methods. Finally, he decided to consult his inner light, rather than listen to other philosophers’ lies, echoing Rousseau’s disdain for philosophy in a child’s education, though it must have a role in later life, as the author himself is writing philosophy. Likewise, Jean-Jacques would have urged Émile to consult nature’s perceivable light, rather than contemplate such a notion like “inner light,” which would also lie beyond his perception and comprehension. The inner light becomes accessible only to a more mature man, as Jean-Jacques himself seems aware of this divine connection when he speaks of the Author and knowing the natural way to follow. The obvious question arises as to what point an individual is ready to contemplate “inner light.”

The Vicar arrives at his first truth, sharing it with the eager expatriate: “I exist, and I have senses by which I am affected” (Rousseau, 1762/1979, p. 270). These words echo Rousseau’s own teachings earlier in the book, grounding one’s existence in the senses one feels in nature. The Vicar realizes the sensations he feels are not the same as the cause of the sensations, and this is the extended argument beyond the earlier teachings of Jean-Jacques, a consideration of causes that might point to a first-mover that begins all motion. The Vicar acknowledges that others

exist outside of one's own self, if such a cause exists beyond his own senses, distinguishing between matter and bodies (matter joined together), both available for perception and reflection.

By reflecting on sensations, he finds he can compare them with an active force, again echoing Rousseau (1762/1979). The Vicar says, "To perceive is to sense; to compare is to judge," a clear assertion from earlier in the book that points to the arrival of reason. Ideas belong to judgment, not sensation, though judgment depends upon one's initial capacity for perception and sensation. Through attention, meditation, and reflection, the Vicar becomes the master of judging what he senses, making him realize his existence as "an active and intelligent being" (p. 272). The arrival at this realization occurs late in life for the Vicar, through struggle and pain, whereas Jean-Jacques promises the same result for *Émile* through a natural education. Truth is to be found in things, not in the mind that judges them, so one must begin with the things. Once more I point to Heidegger's phenomenological methods from earlier in my project, beginning with the things as a crucial aspect of any inquiry into one's ontological position. Also important is the creative act, as an artist asserts Being through the work that is made in a spontaneous moment in time.

Speaking of spontaneous motion, the Vicar says he knows it because he senses it, and if there were not spontaneity, one could not explain the first cause of all motion. One cannot perceive the first cause of all motion, but can sense that it exists, and so the Vicar articulates his first principle, first dogma, and first article of faith: "A will moves the universe and animates nature" (p. 273). Through Jean-Jacques' education of *Émile*, one can imagine that the student will arrive at this conclusion as well, upon further contemplation in adulthood, but first *Émile* must ground his sensations in nature, make judgments based on these sensations, and thus allow reason to grow in him, so that he can confront the ideas of "will" in his later life.

Just as spontaneous motion proves a will, a “first mover,” then matter moves according to laws (Newton’s laws, for example), which proves to the Vicar there is “an intelligence” at work in nature. The Vicar’s second article of faith arises: “To act, to compare, and to choose are operations of an active and thinking being. Therefore this being exists” (p. 275). He could be speaking of the Supreme Being here or of a human being, as both seem involved in action, comparison, and choice. The order in the world proves a “supreme intelligence” at work everywhere, like a grand watchmaker (Rousseau’s own father, made larger than life), and this natural intelligence is one and the same. Nature established order and established barriers to maintain order, so it could not be disturbed. That is, an individual cannot understand that which, if known, would endanger nature. Once more, ignorance seems to be a key to continued existence, as partial understanding puts nature at risk.

As passive, dead matter cannot produce intelligent beings, the Vicar believes that “the world is governed by a powerful and wise will” (Rousseau, p. 276); all is whole, coming from a supreme intelligence. This intelligent, powerful Being, which wills, moves, and orders the universe is what the Vicar calls “God.” From this point in the Vicar’s profession, God appears more frequently, both within his profession and in *Émile* as a whole, but still is not revealed directly to Jean-Jacques’ student. Rather, the reader is being educated by the profession of the Vicar, and by the author of the book, accepting the premise of ignorance for young *Émile*. The Vicar admits knowing little of God, and the more he thinks of God, the more confused he becomes. He renounces questions that agitate his amour-propre, as they are both useless for conduct and beyond reason, a notion similar to that of Jean-Jacques who has taught *Émile* not to bother considering questions beyond his comprehension. Why consider that which cannot be understood? This is a central line of reasoning for the tutor, in support of pedagogical omission.

The Vicar, although confused and having little knowledge of God, knows that he is subordinated by God, and senses God everywhere, in him and all around him, but when he contemplates God, the divine figure escapes him and his “clouded mind no longer perceives anything” (p. 277). This loss of perception is a loss of senses, almost a loss of being; the Vicar, contemplating God, disappears from existence, becomes one with contemplation, one with God, both knowing and not knowing God in this contemplation beyond perception. It is impossible to reason in regards to the idea of God as such reason can only lead to confusion. Thinking badly about God is worse than not thinking about God, an idea that resonates powerfully with Jean-Jacques’ teaching of *Émile*, avoiding ideas that lead to bad thinking; instead, recognize one’s strength in ignorance. To re-state an early premise from Rousseau, if medicine can be bad, it is better to know nothing of medicine rather than risk dangerous partial knowledge.

The Vicar’s gratitude and homage to the Author of nature does not need to be taught, and even more strongly it cannot be taught; this worship is dictated by nature itself, and allows one to consider evil. The Vicar acknowledges that two principles must exist in human nature, one good and one evil, and the will remains independent of the senses, although will and judgment have the same cause. Rousseau (1762/1979) explains, in choosing that which is good, one judges the true. “It is his intelligent faculty; it is his power of judging: the determining cause is in himself” (p. 280). One is free in one’s actions, animated by an immaterial substance, which is the Vicar’s third article of faith. He tries to resolve the question of freedom and the cause of first impulse; are men free, or is all determined by first motion, the primary will? If all is willed by God, whence comes evil? Freedom gives the choice between good and evil, and so all are “tempted by passions, restrained by conscience” (p. 281), again an idea central to Rousseau’s education for *Émile*, to recognize the passions and activate one’s conscience to resist the negative mutations

that may arise. Man is the creator of evil, deforming the Author's work, and if man is taken away, all is good, just, true, and beautiful. The beauty of a natural order strikes the soul and allows one to enjoy contemplation of the Supreme Being, although the Vicar admits being confused by the brilliance of eternal light and the idea of "eternity." A human mind cannot grasp such an idea (imagine how difficult it might be for the young ignorant *Émile*), but the Vicar knows that God is eternal and the creator of the universe. God, furthermore, is without reason, and exists as pure intuition at a single point in a single moment. The Vicar can only contemplate God, but cannot conceive of God, an important distinction in terms of perception and understanding. The divine Author is beyond perception, and therefore beyond conception, but is available for contemplation. Again one must ask at what point *Émile* will be ready for such divine contemplation.

The Vicar criticizes modern philosophy for only accepting that which it can explain by reason, as the Vicar relies on instinct for the body and conscience for the soul. For Rousseau (1762/1979), rules are written by nature in the Vicar's heart, so all that is sensed to be good is good, and all that is sensed to be bad is bad. "If it is true that the good is good, it must be so in the depths of our hearts as it is in our works, and the primary reward for justice is to sense that one practices it" (p. 287). Morality lies in the judgment of action, and with the rules of truth, beauty, and justice written in human hearts by nature, all hate the wicked and want the innocent protected. In the depths of the soul lies an "innate principle of justice and virtue" (p. 289), by which one can judge action, and this principle is called "conscience." The love of good and the hate of bad are as natural self-love. One need only listen to nature's language, a key lesson of Jean-Jacques' teachings. Evil is man's doing, so one cannot reproach the Author of all things.

The Vicar speaks against prayer as a way of asking God to change the world. One should only contemplate and worship the Author, because prayer suggests asking God to change God's own will, an absurd proposal. In looking at religions, the Vicar finds "nothing in natural religion but the elements of every religion" (p. 296); one book lies open to all, nature! From this great and sublime book, the Vicar learns "to serve and worship the divine Author." Now it is clear that Émile's natural education can lead only to this type of service and worship of the divine Author, as he has carefully and deeply immersed himself in the book of nature, guided by his tutor, as the reader is taught by the author of this book. The Vicar, like Émile, knows how to be ignorant, dares to "acknowledge God among the philosophers" (Émile has yet to do so, but one can see how his education prepares him to do so), speaks the truth and does good deeds.

The profession of the Vicar ends and the reader returns to Jean-Jacques, who explains how Émile can rise from "the study of nature to the quest for its Author" (p. 314). The tutor is no longer his guide, it seems here, as the student alone can choose, but it is clear that his reason will lead him to natural religion. Émile is naturally good due to his love of order, his love of self, and his subsequent love of the Author that will follow with reason and contemplation (despite the lack of direct perception and conception of the Author), and so Émile makes himself a man. The young can only be burdened and confused by meditations on the Author of their being, so the tutor waits until the boy is ready to consider ideas such as religion and God.

The tutor must remember this simple method: "Always remember that you are the minister of nature, and you will never be its enemy" (p. 317). The tutor, as minister of nature, works as a minister of God, as the Author of nature stands as the prime creator and mover of all things, and so the educator must follow the natural path to lead his student to goodness. Until this moment in the book (the end of Book IV), Émile has been contained by ignorance, and now

is confronted by his “enlightenment,” as he learns that perils surround him, when Jean-Jacques discloses all to him, including the “dangerous mysteries” that the reader can assume might have to do with God and religion (or the female form of humanity). His innocence and ignorance are lost. Similar to the Vicar and the expatriate, Jean-Jacques chooses an appropriate time and place in nature to tell Émile of his “duties,” calling upon the Eternal Being to testify to the truth of his speech, a full revelation of what he has done for Émile. With this disclosure of his methods and goals for teaching Émile, they are then ready to find Émile a companion, and so they leave Paris, “seeking love, happiness, innocence.” They search for wisdom, in the embodied form of Sophie.

Book V

In the final act of the drama that is Émile’s education, he has become a man and is promised a companion to join him in the “sacred bond” of marriage. Sophie is to “take her place in the physical and moral order” by becoming Émile’s wife. The law of love and the law of nature apparently have made Sophie to please Émile. Rousseau (1762/1979) says, reflecting the powerful patriarchal attitudes of his time, “Dependence is a condition natural to women, and thus girls feel themselves made to obey” (p. 370). Just as Émile obeyed his master from the beginning of his education, so Sophie will obey Émile from the start of their marriage. The Supreme Being has given man passions, but has given him reason to govern these passions, and likewise the Supreme Being has given woman unlimited desires, but also has given her modesty. The natural origin of passions and desires also gives rise to the condition to resist these potentially harmful manifestations. While it is imperative that boys cultivate a strong sense of self-sustenance and independence, quite the opposite seems necessary for Jean-Jacques’ girls.

As for religion, Rousseau (1762/1979) makes it clear that every girl ought to have her mother’s religion, and every woman ought to adopt her husband’s religion. The reader can

assume that Sophie's mother has been raised in a Christian tradition and married into that same faith, and so Sophie will have been raised with such beliefs. However, upon marrying Émile, Sophie will adopt the natural religion of her husband, and so their children will be raised with those beliefs; as mandated by Jean-Jacques, Émile will raise his children with the methods by which he was educated, and natural religion will eventually replace man's deformed construct of religion. Teaching religion to girls is advisable, Rousseau argues, but not as a gloomy duty of constraint. Returning to his ideas of ignorance, Rousseau suggests short prayers according to the teaching of Jesus Christ (no education in natural religion for Sophie), as it is most important that girls love their religion, rather than know it well. Catechism is not as important as knowing that humans are the children of a God who "prescribes that we all be just, like one another, be beneficent and merciful, and keep our promises to everyone" (p. 381). This dogma is quite different from the education for Émile, from which God was entirely omitted. However, Rousseau then affirms his former teachings, by reminding the reader that for man or woman, "the essential thing is to be what nature made us" (p. 386). While Sophie is religious, her religion is simple, with little dogma, and she devotes her life to doing good, thus serving God. Émile, on the other hand, as a result of natural education and strong self-love, also does good, thus acting in accord with the Author of all things. Both Émile and Sophie arrive at goodness, though it appears the methods for arriving there are quite different, a difference that the reader can only ascribe to gender differences that Jean-Jacques does not bother to explain.

Sophie is also a "pupil of nature," Rousseau (1762/1979) informs the reader, though it's not clear how she is a pupil in the way of Émile. What is clear is that "it is part of the order of nature that the woman obey the man," although Rousseau does not explain how nature reveals this order to man, in his obvious favor. Sophie is like a divine messenger sent by God to Émile;

“She has the appearance and the grace, as well as the gentleness and the goodness of an angel” (p. 441). This graceful, gentle, and good woman has obviously followed the road of nature, just as Émile has, and so they will walk the road of happiness together. Even the fact of death cannot destroy their happiness as they follow the natural path of life, guided by the book of the Author. Sophie obeys Émile as nature wanted, but nature also dictates that she guide him, “bring him back to wisdom when he goes astray” (p. 479). Together, guided by one another, nature, and the Author of all things, the two will carry on the education prescribed by Jean-Jacques as they procreate and teach their children in the methods put forward by the author of this book.

Conclusion

Following Rousseau’s ideas of a divine Author through Émile yields some interesting ideas about natural religion, but also reveals a sense of Rousseau’s understanding of education as it might be approached through an embrace of the “active principle” coupled with ignorance. While Émile is not introduced to the Author, the reader of Émile is educated repeatedly about the dangers of introducing ideas to young learners that do not arise directly from their perceptions and sensations. While Rousseau’s beliefs in a divine Author are clear, the tutor of Émile chooses to keep his student in ignorance, though the reader of this book learns quite a bit about religion and the Supreme Being. Jean-Jacques prefers to protect Émile from knowledge beyond his full conception, preserving his innocence and ignorance, whereas the reader is already deformed by society and thus in need of seeing their weaknesses and faults.

Rousseau’s suggested methods for education are established in the first three books, to help the reader better understand the significance of the eventual profession of faith by the Savoyard Vicar in Book IV. The reader can begin to understand that ignorance of a subject, whether it is about medicine or religion, is better than to be taught to believe lies. To understand

something, for Rousseau, is to be grounded in one's senses, modes of perception that need to be cultivated in nature. Understanding comes through the senses, and judgment arises from the same senses that serve as the basis for intellectual reason. It is important to grasp Rousseau's ideas about the connection between sensations and reason, as his avoidance of religious ideas are related to this method of teaching (or not teaching), as one must avoid words and ideas that a child cannot understand. It can be argued that Rousseau's ideas continue in many schools today, with the grounding of knowledge in one's perceptions and the avoidance of spiritual matters. However, the profusion of textbooks and learning in a space closed off from nature would be inconceivable for the tutor or his student.

While one might argue that knowledge happens in stages, partial at first and slowly accumulating, whether the subject be religion or physics, Rousseau (1762/1979) repeatedly tells the reader that ignorance is preferable to badly conceived ideas. Most important for the young learner is that he be a man, standing on his own feet, before he considers a divine Author or other people in society. Eventually, *Émile* must learn to be a sociable man and a citizen, but first he must be a man for himself, and this can only come about through a natural education, for in nature all is good, created as it is by the divine Author. Nature is the basis for *Émile*'s learning, and so only goodness can arise from such an education, whereas evil arises from a desire to control and subjugate other people when education follows society's rules.

To live a natural life, and to be educated naturally, does not necessarily mean to live and learn in total isolation from other people, as Jean-Jacques does allow *Émile* to interact with others, but the natural path needs to be followed apart from society, although it may be moving toward a life of social relations. The desire to control and subjugate others arises from the natural "passions" if they are not modified within the natural order, following Rousseau's

method of natural education removed from society. The passions, rooted in self-love, foster freedom and self-preservation; the “active principle” is cultivated to control one’s own life, but is not applied to others. The active principle is natural and good, but can lead to tyranny if not addressed by a natural education. Rousseau (1762/1979) offers four simple maxims to cultivate the active principle so that it develop as intended by the Author, leading to goodness and beauty.

The Divine Author is known to the reader of *Émile* as the provider of all the things one needs, but the young *Émile* knows nothing of this Supreme Being, and so he sees himself as the author of his own life. Jean-Jacques, as the centaur-tutor, literally and metaphorically teaches his student to run and hunt, and *Émile* learns to satisfy his own desires, as well as learning to accept ignorance of that which he cannot understand. The ideal education comes through experiencing the world with one’s senses, and then comparing these sensations to arrive at ideas, to move from feeling to judging. The Incomprehensible Being is still unknown to *Émile* at the age of fifteen, as Jean-Jacques has kept him ignorant of any religious ideas, because they do not arise from experiencing the world with one’s senses, but this ignorance eventually will lead him to a natural religion and worship of the Supreme Being, or at least this is what his tutor hopes.

The Savoyard Vicar professes his ideas of natural religion quite explicitly, in a way that Rousseau could not claim as his own ideas for fear of reprisals from the society that had become deformed and disfigured as it strayed from the natural path. The Vicar echoes many of Rousseau’s notions of education, perception, and understanding, existing through his senses, comparing his sensations in order to judge. The Vicar struggled to arrive at his conclusions late in his life, after much violent doubt and struggle (similar to the expatriate in the story), whereas *Émile* has already arrived at such a place of knowledge and self-love at the age of fifteen. *Émile* can come to know the divine Author later in life, because he has grounded his own judgments in

sensations based in nature, as intended by the Author without Émile's awareness of God's goodness or existence. The Vicar admits to having little knowledge of God, but feels him everywhere, and is confused when he tries to conceive of God. Ultimately he points to the one book that is open to all people, the book of nature, a book required for the proper education of people, and he urges all to contemplate and worship the eternal Author of the universe. Such contemplation and worship is available to Émile as he enters manhood, and he comes to natural religion without the confusion and corruption of others' opinions that lead to the degeneration of nature which originates as entirely good in the hands of the Author, an argument put forward by another author, Rousseau (1762/1979).

Throughout the five books of *Émile*, it is clear that ignorance operates at the heart of Jean-Jacques' pedagogy, as he advocates an ignorance of the ideas of other, preferring that his student learn from the book of nature. The natural world, originating from the hands of the divine Author (a Supreme Being that should remain unknown to the young learner), provides the source of wisdom to control the passions that arise naturally in life. A natural education teaches the student to control these passions, so that anger and evil does not arise from one's wants and needs. The path of nature cannot lead to domination and servitude, which is the present state of society, Rousseau (1762/1979) teaches, and an education in nature focuses on the sensations and perceptions that lead to judgment and reason. Understanding needs to arise from experience in the natural world for it to lead to reason and eventual love of others. At the core is self-love, from which love of others can arise naturally and rationally, and finally love for the Author of all things. A solid knowledge base can only arise if the early pedagogy focuses on the book of nature, and if an epistemology of ignorance is embraced. Love of the good and hate of the bad is

as natural as self-love, and *Émile*'s reason will necessarily lead him to natural religion, and so the reader of *Émile* presumably must follow in that direction.

Rousseau (1762/1979) puts forth a number of radical assertions in *Émile*, and his ideas still speak to educators today. First, nature is put forward as the prime teacher and textbook for learning about oneself and the world, and self-sustenance seems necessary if one is to avoid eventual resentment and anger because of one's dependence on others. This individualized notion of existence obviously a problematic assertion, atomizing humans into single components outside of duty and responsibility to others. Second, Rousseau argues for the omission of particular ideas, such as any notion of the divine, as concepts that cannot be grasped and therefore are not worth contemplation. For my own argument with regards to a spiritual imperative in education, I cannot accept this omission of the ambiguous aspects of existence. As part of these omissions, there also entails an acceptance of ignorance, that one need not consider things that cannot be fully understood in clearly sense-perceptive terms. However, at the heart of Rousseau's argument, hidden behind the mask of the Vicar, is a call for a return to the natural world as a place for learning about oneself and the divine breath that moves through the universe. Furthermore, to ignore Rousseau's contribution to education is to be ignorant of the tensions that persist in secular education, as questions of spirituality are often avoided for their dangerous potential, the misunderstandings, the religious implications, and the spoiling of the "natural" mind. I ask how Rousseau's call for a natural education could be conceptualized in today's technologically driven society, and how educators might confront the silent acceptance of ignorance concerning the spiritual imperative. One must plunge into the natural world to experience for oneself the divine transcendental realm, not as an escape from the world and from

the human predicament, but to know it more fully. From Rousseau's theoretical student, it is not far to wander to Thoreau's bold experiment in deliberately living on the shores of Walden Pond.

CHAPTER 5

READING THOREAU FOR BEAUTY & DUTY

Plumbing the Depths of Walden

Next I move from Jean-Jacques Rousseau's imagined student, Émile, to philosopher Henry David Thoreau and a very real pond. In *Walden*, Thoreau (1854/1992) stands as a self-proclaimed hero who toes the line on "the meeting of two eternities, the past and the future, which is precisely the present moment" (p. 14), planting his feet firmly in the natural world in order to recognize reality as both practical and spiritual, without a clear distinction between the two. The mundane is not separate from the sacred for Thoreau; to hoe beans is to cultivate his soul, to dig into the earth is to delve into mystery, to swim in Walden Pond is to bathe in eternity, but Thoreau does so firmly fixed in the present moment. Thoreau writes a simple book in some ways, as he documents trivial, daily tasks and thoughts of living in the woods of Concord, but at the same time he writes a sacred text and a philosophical treatise that can serve to guide educators in a contemporary approach to teaching environmentalism and natural aesthetics. Most importantly, for my purposes here, Thoreau offers a grounded approach to spirituality that keeps one's hands in the tangible world, immersing oneself in cold water, feeling the hard stones, hearing the many sounds of nature, exploring one's reactions and responses to the mysteries of existence. Thoreau stands as a prophet at the edge of nature, on the shores of Walden, by the boundary of the woods, at the brim of the sky, on the brink of time, reaching back into the past for all the world's wisdom, and reaching forward into the future to offer a helping hand. All the while Thoreau stands firmly in the present, calling out "as lustily as chanticleer." Listen, and hear his appeal to his fellow beings, to live more deliberately, more beautifully, more dutifully, more naturally. To consider the many questions of spirituality in education involves rooting

oneself in the natural world as a part of the cosmos, and not distinct from it. Questions of spirituality here begin to intersect with ideas of duties and responsibilities to the world in which humans live.

The chanticleer's call from nineteenth-century Concord still echoes in the contemporary environmentalist movement that embraces both aesthetics and empirical science to enrich and embolden the call to advance the human perspective of nature from simple beauty to include duty. Carlson and Lintott (2008) look partly to Thoreau to understand the historical foundations of the current environmental movement, to understand how environmental matters have an aesthetic component that needs to be acknowledged and further developed, and the authors argue that environmental aesthetics need to extend beyond the simple "beauty" of nature if individuals are to understand the "duty" to nature. In "Walking," Thoreau (2008) speaks "a word for Nature, for absolute freedom and wildness" (p. 54), and he posits humans as "part and parcel of Nature," rather than seeing humans as outside of nature in society. By the simple act of walking in nature, not just for exercise or transportation, humans can experience a divine light that shines into their lives and illuminates the truth of all existence. Nature, for Thoreau, is not just an aesthetic experience or a scientific discovery, although both of these aspects exist there for him. Nature offers myriad meanings, both aesthetic and scientific, and (crucially, for me and my project here) offers spiritual opportunities for losing the world and finding oneself, while simultaneously losing oneself and finding the world.

Carlson and Lintott (2008) applaud Thoreau's contribution to modern environmental consciousness, although they don't necessarily embrace his transcendentalist notions, and the authors attempt to strengthen the relationship between aesthetics and environmentalism. Conservation and environmental policy management have been at least partly driven by

aesthetics, as people protect that which appears “beautiful,” and Carlson and Lintott identify three modes of aesthetic experience in nature that have been historically activated. First, the traditional idea of beauty was located in the garden, the cultivation of nature by human hands, neatly ordered and carefully maintained for aesthetic results. Second, the sublime aspect of nature came to be seen in the mountains and the wilderness, at the same time that cities began to arise with their crowded streets, foul odors, and dirty air. Nature, in contrast to the city, was grand and wild, beyond the human realm. Third, nature was recognized as being picturesque, like a painting or a sculpture that allowed for an aesthetic understanding of it in terms similar to viewing works of art (Carlson & Lintott, 2008).

The relationship between art, nature, and aesthetics was approached quite differently in Europe versus the United States in the nineteenth-century. For Hegel, art was among the highest expressions of “Absolute Spirit,” and it became the focus of aesthetics for him, rather than nature. In North America, the Transcendentalist movement located Spirit in Nature, echoing Hegel’s countryman and contemporary, F.W.J. Schelling, who arrived at a similar perspective, stating, “Nature is visible Spirit, Spirit is invisible Nature.” Later along in this line of thought, Thoreau’s ideas led the way to Muir (1872/2008) and Burroughs (1908/2008) who held all of nature as beautiful, seeing ugliness only where nature had been spoiled by humans (echoing Rousseau, coincidentally); this theoretical position came to be known as “positive aesthetics.” The approach to American environmentalism, in the early twentieth-century, was rooted in notions of the sublime and picturesque, but the approach gained strength with Leopold (1949/2008) who connected three different elements: environmentalism, aesthetic appreciation of nature, and an ecological understanding of the environment. Only in the last third of the twentieth-century, contend Carlson and Lintott (2008), was there real interest in a philosophical

investigation of natural aesthetics, requiring a new multi-sensory mode of perception (beyond only the concepts of art) to perceive nature's indeterminate, varying character. In truth, Thoreau (1854/1992) had already suggested such a mode of perception in *Walden* during the nineteenth-century, as he hearkened back much further in history to the four senses found in the verses of Kabir: "illusion, spirit, intellect, and the exoteric doctrine of the Vedas" (p. 268). These four senses run through his own book, inspired by his experimental experiences on the shores of Walden Pond.

Thoreau (1854/1992) does not speak directly to a modern concept of environmental duty, and in *Walden* he is involved in the continuous activity of simultaneously placing himself both in the world and outside of the world. "Not till we are lost, in other words not till we have lost the world, do we begin to find ourselves, and realize where we are and the infinite extent of our relations" (p. 141). Thoreau grounds himself in the natural world, descends into the waters of *Walden*, to find the rocky bottom, solid everywhere, and then he digs some more to find a surer footing, to clarify his understanding of the deep, pure pond. The journey from beauty to duty, for Thoreau, carries deep philosophical, ontological, and theological significance, as his writings are as much about membership in society as they are about living alone in the woods; his book is as much a treatise on the beauty of nature as it is scripture by which one can live a simple life. "Man flows at once to God when the channel of purity is open" (p. 183). This theological aspect is not obviously present in Carlson and Lintott's collection of essays, but Thoreau's inclusion of a spiritual experience in nature can be threaded through many of the essays, breathing vigor into the foundational ideas for a contemporary approach to environmentalism and natural aesthetics. I argue that environmental education and aesthetics education would both be enhanced by a turn

to the spiritual imperative, which can be done by a deliberate turn to nature as advocated by Thoreau.

Central to the contemporary environmental movement is the love for nature and a concern for its wellbeing, as nature and the human condition are increasingly viewed as being interconnected. That is, the health and beauty of nature signify the health and beauty of human nature, and with nature's demise comes the threat of human demise. Hargrove (2008) writes of the need to combat the assumption that mere matter has no value, a perspective that leads to a lack of reverence in respect to natural or artistic beauty. Such an assumption, Hargrove contends, results in two evils previously pointed out by Whitehead in 1925: "one, the ignorance of the true relation of each organism to its environment; and the other, the habit of ignoring the intrinsic worth of the environment which must be allowed its weight in any consideration of final ends" (in Hargrove, p. 45). The goal for Whitehead was to enhance experience with consciousness and rationality, which requires recognizing the aesthetic value for its own sake. Hargrove writes of the need to understand the relationship among organisms in nature, humans included, and to acknowledge the intrinsic worth of the environment, and one crucial aspect in overcoming such ignorance is an aesthetic appreciation of nature. To return to "Walking," Thoreau (2008) lamented the ignorance and lack of aesthetic engagement during the nineteenth century: "How little appreciation of the beauty of the landscape there is among us" (p. 62)! He encourages the simple act of entering the forest to enlarge one's soul, but warns that walking is in fact not so straightforward, for to walk correctly is to saunter toward the divine, to understand the art of walking.

Similar to this art of walking, Burroughs (1908/2008) encourages learning the art of seeing things, through practice or inspiration. While the science of anything can be taught and

acquired by study, the art of something requires further involvement of the self; it requires love. Burroughs writes, “What we love to do, that we do well. To know is not all; it is only half. To love is the other half” (p. 76). Knowledge is seen as incomplete here when only scientific in approach and acquisition; love completes one’s learning. One must be both a scientist and a poet, capable of both investigation and contemplation, able to classify and absorb what the natural world offers for perception. Humans can cultivate their perceptions and strengthen their powers of observation and appreciation. Such an education is an initiation of sorts, Burroughs tells us. “We must be initiated; it is an order the secrets of which are well guarded” (p. 85). Nature must be welcomed into our hearts, as well as our minds. Thoreau initiates himself into this secret world, baptizes himself in the waters of Walden Pond, and becomes a part of Nature, and thus he “imbibes delight through every pore.” One must not forget delight!

Along these same lines of investigative-contemplative perception, Leopold (1949/2008) argues for “conservation education” that would foster the growth of human perception to coincide with technological advancements, and he advocates a human harmony with the land that reflects an evolutionary-ecological aesthetic. “Scientists have an epigram: ontogeny repeats phylogeny. What they mean is that the development of each individual repeats the evolutionary history of the race” (p. 96). Education of the individual is necessary to accomplish a more general human harmony with the land. Leopold makes a distinction between “land” and “country” in his writings, seeing land as the place where corn, gullies, and mortgages grow, whereas country is the personality of the land, the “collective harmony.” In a similar way, Thoreau writes about the sounds that surround Walden Pond, especially the railroad that runs just one hundred rods from his dwelling, “sounding like the scream of a hawk” (p. 95). The train screams about commerce across the land, shrieks of technological advancement like the

telegram, informs the country's citizens of their enterprise, material necessities, and desires.

When the iron-horse falls silent, then Thoreau can hear the sounds of the woods and his meditations can turn to his own place there, to hear the cockerel crow. He learns about the land *and* the country. "To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth . . . think of it" (p. 105)! To hear the cockerel is to be attentive to Thoreau's call when he asks his fellow human beings to awake more fully to the world in which they exist.

Callicott (2008) expands upon Leopold's land aesthetic and his notion of the harmony of nature: "a vast pulsing harmony-- its score inscribed on a thousand hills, its notes the lives and deaths of plants and animals, its rhythms spanning the seconds and centuries" (p. 114). He warns that the danger of the popular natural aesthetic is that the environment is framed as a picture, and nature ends up being shown in galleries called "parks," rather than allowing nature its full range of existence, to allow nature to exist as nature (here one might recall Heidegger's ideas about allowing the thing to be the thing, to allow Being to be revealed). Callicott argues that no matter where an individual lives, the environment holds potential for natural aesthetic experience, not just in parks where one goes to experience nature in its picturesque state.

Thoreau (1854/1992) did not retreat into the wilderness in search of "virgin" nature, or need to climb mountains to achieve transcendence; he simply built a cabin in the woods outside the town of Concord where he tried to live deliberately. In this humble abode, unfinished and rough, both place and time were changed for Thoreau. He discovered that his house "actually had its site in such a withdrawn, but forever new and unprofaned, part of the universe" (p. 73). His cabin, the woods, and the pond invited him to explore simplicity and innocence, enabled him to appreciate nature's beauty for itself.

The fact that nature is not a human creation obviously does not mean that one can have no knowledge of it, and Carlson (2008a) looks to science as an important part of a natural aesthetics. Carlson's natural environment model is an alternative to both the object model and the landscape model of aesthetic appreciation in nature. The natural environment is so rich, indeterminate, and diverse, "that it must be composed in order to be appreciated" (p. 128). To find the environment beautiful requires both common sense and scientific knowledge. Carlson's model not only allows for aesthetic appreciation of nature in terms of what may be subjective beauty, but also allows for nature to be understood in he says is its "true nature," as perceived through scientific objective knowledge. For Thoreau, it is not just nature that must be "composed," in the way that Carlson suggests, but in fact one's life must be constructed anew. Every morning this task must be undertaken, upon awakening from one's dreams. "After a partial cessation of his sensuous life, the soul of man, or its organs rather, are reinvigorated each day, and his Genius tries again what noble life it can make" (p. 74). To awaken to nature is to become more alive, physically, intellectually, poetically, and spiritually. The dawn brings the daily divine, and the human task is to live deeply and suck "the marrow" out of life. Thoreau here is making a much stronger call than Carlson; while not ignoring the necessity of scientific, objective knowledge for a deepened aesthetic experience in nature, Thoreau turns the examining eye back upon the beholder. On a daily basis, one must look both without and within, to breathe new life into existence, to celebrate an awakening into the eternal divine moment.

While environmentalism and natural aesthetics can be more grounded in scientific understanding, as Carlson suggests, Godlovitch (2008a) worries that science is directed toward a certain kind of intelligibility. To speak in Thoreau's terms, scientific exploration engages with only one of the senses, the intellect, and disregards other modes of perception and cognition.

Godlovitch argues that “acentric environmentalism” takes nature as a whole into account, in a non-anthropocentric way, giving a broader universality to the environment, beyond what he calls “scientific cognitivism.” What does it mean to possess an acentric aesthetic appreciation of nature, beyond scientifically grasping it or simply being filled with wonder and awe? “The notion of mystery required must serve on the side of the Subject and the Object: the aesthetic attitude that properly fits the aesthetic object” (p. 147). This idea leaves room for a sense of mystery, mysteries without solution, which requires that one acknowledge “aloofness” within nature, putting neither subject nor object at the center of aesthetics. Beauty is about more than just Thoreau or Walden Pond, distanced from the cultural domain, approaching the universal understanding of nature and human nature, rooted in an aloofness of mystery. Godlovitch explains further, “And we are enabled to apprehend at all what is sublime and noble only by the perpetual instilling and drenching of the reality that surrounds us” (p. 80). Here, the subject and the object are not separate, but are instilled with one another, drenched in the being of the other, and so the sublime is approached with “aloofness.” Ironically, one needs to cultivate such an aloof attitude, and Thoreau’s *Walden* is one text that encourages both discipline and openness to the natural world as a possible aloof approach to the sublime.

Alternatively, Saito (2008) strives to appreciate nature on its own terms, just as an object of art is appreciated by relevant sensory experiences of the object and by putting it in a cultural and historical context. “Listening to nature as nature . . . must involve recognizing its own reality apart from us” (p. 155). Saito posits moral criteria for natural aesthetic appreciation, as nature has its unique non-human history. While scientific knowledge is required to understand nature, as maintained by Carlson (2008b), Saito holds that the moral dimension must also be examined. A non-anthropocentric approach to nature moves beyond “scientific cognitivism” and

cultivating a sense of mystery (without rejecting either of these aspects), and so Saito looks to Zen Buddhism to overcome the self in order to know nature as nature, to become one with the object. To explain, Saito borrows the words of Merleau-Ponty: “To return to things themselves is to return to that world which precedes knowledge” (p. 159). These words echo Thoreau’s attempt to descend into the rocky depths of the pond or to hoe his beans to go beyond the world to know it better. This concurrent descent-ascent applies also to knowing oneself.

As a warning about the dominant modes of exploring nature, Carroll (2008) writes of a concern that Carlson’s natural environment model might exclude other responses that are less intellectual or less visceral. An individual needs to be moved emotionally, and nature-appreciation thus requires multiple modes of perception and response. “We may appreciate nature by opening ourselves to its stimulus, and to being put in a certain emotional state by attending to its aspects” (p. 170). Carroll makes room for emotive responses, adding to Carlson’s model of aesthetic appreciation with the simple notion of letting oneself be moved. Again Thoreau (2008) is helpful here, as he remembers the glory of walking in the warm air of a serene meadow, and reflects that “this was not a solitary phenomenon, never to happen again, but that it would happen forever and ever, an infinite number of evenings, and cheer and reassure the latest child that walked there, it was more glorious still” (p. 63). The emotional experience of nature is not strictly subjective, but is a continual human experience. While the emotive response is not enough for deep natural experience, it cannot be negated entirely.

Although the emotional response is important to aesthetic appreciation, scientific knowledge likewise remains essential for understanding environmentalism and aesthetic value of nature. Although deep scientific knowledge is not necessarily required for initial aesthetic appreciation, it does enhance the judgments that one can make about a natural object or its place

in nature. Matthews (2008) argues, “Empirical knowledge does not tell us what is aesthetically valuable about an object, but by allowing us to perceive normal states of objects, empirical knowledge helps to reveal aesthetic properties and aesthetic value” (p. 190). While “positive aesthetics” posits all of nature as inherently beautiful, made ugly only by human degradation, Matthews asserts that everything in nature is not of equal aesthetic value, and that scientific categories can provide us with norms to direct the way we see. One is reminded of Thoreau (1854/1992) measuring the depths of the pond that was said by many people to be bottomless, without ever taking the trouble to measure it. Though one cannot know all the laws of nature, the laws one does know can yield results with careful observations and calculation, but ultimately those laws must not be limitations. Thoreau makes clear this idea:

Our notions of law and harmony are commonly confined to those instances which we detect; but the harmony which results from a far greater number of seemingly conflicting, but really concurring laws, which we have not detected, is still more wonderful. (p. 240)

Scientific knowledge can certainly add to our wonder of the natural world, but one must not be content with only this one sense of nature. My own argument for a spiritual imperative in education is closely connected to the cultivation of perception and senses that are not limited by objective scientific frameworks, but at the same time are not in opposition to these modes of perception. Thoreau points to laws of nature that are not yet clearly articulated in scientific language, but can be intuited or “sensed” through other modes of perception; these experiences are not to be discarded or discounted simply because they do not meet certain criteria.

If scientific knowledge yields a greater appreciation of nature, and all of nature (not only “virgin, pristine nature”) is beautiful, then human ignorance risks disorder, confusion, and ugliness. On the other hand, greater knowledge yields order, harmony, and beauty. Nature is not

an artifact, not a work of art, not an intentional object shaped by human hands, but this does not mean it lies beyond human understanding. Nature is understood differently than art and other human objects. Carlson (2008b) explains the difference between the two; “Art is created, while nature is discovered” (p. 230). Science makes the natural world more intelligible over time, more comprehensible and accessible for an enriched aesthetic appreciation of particular qualities in nature. “Thus, when we experience [these qualities] in the natural world or experience the natural world in terms of them, we find it aesthetically good” (p. 230). The more that we learn of the woods around the pond, the water, and the stones at the pond’s bottom, the more we know it to be good. Thoreau (1854/1992) put it this way; “We are acquainted with a mere pellicle of the globe on which we live. Most have not delved six feet beneath the surface, nor leaped as many above it. We know not where we are” (p. 274). Science looks beneath the surface to locate more accurately humans within the world, and developing natural aesthetics can help one cherish what is found there. Questions of spirituality in education are often directed to this idea of one’s place in the world. It is necessary to dig more deeply and to ascend into the stars, to explore the infinite unfolding of the cosmos and the infinite unfolding of one’s own being.

Nature cannot be viewed as simply “picturesque,” because the surface conceals hidden riches, and so Saito (2008) argues for developing aesthetic appreciation of un-scenic nature. There is a moral consideration to be added to Carlson’s cognitive aesthetics, to approach nature on its own terms. Saito looks at nature in the way Dewey wrote of the moral function of art: “to remove prejudice, do away with the scales that keep the eye from seeing, tear away the veils due to wont and custom, [and] perfect the power to perceive” (in Saito, p. 240). Humans need to overcome the perception of nature as a visual resource for their enjoyment, to get beyond the “show pieces” of nature and to see the “cogs and wheels,” to borrow Leopold’s words. Saito

suggests that we come back to the objects at hand, to see and feel the drama of the life cycle. Aesthetic appreciation needs to begin and end with the sensuous engagement, rather than just cognitive distance. Saito takes exception to the notion that everything in nature is aesthetically appreciable. “Some phenomena in nature overwhelm us with their endangering aspects, making it very difficult, if not impossible, for us to have enough distance, physical and/or conceptual, to listen to and aesthetically appreciate their story” (p. 249). To watch one animal in nature hunt, kill, and eat another animal is not necessarily a glorious experience, as it might instill a sense of fear and dread in the observer. Thoreau might embrace these phenomena, not for their aesthetic value perhaps, but for their place in the natural cycles of life and death. He writes excitedly of Nature’s appetite and health that may disgust and dishearten us; “I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another; that tender organizations can be so serenely squashed out of existence like pulp . . . and that sometimes it has rained flesh and blood” (p. 262)! However, a contemporary environmental perspective might argue that myriad species of plants and animals cannot be sacrificed without sacrificing part of humanity and endangering its survival. The destruction of much of the natural world at the hands of humans cannot simply be observed as another act of nature, in the simple argument of placing humans as part of nature; instead, the wanton, reckless devastation of nature needs to be connected to a cruel obliteration of humanity and oneself as part of the cosmic fabric.

Beauty, whether perceived in art or nature, does not have merely an instrumental value for the purpose of pleasing humans. Beauty is an “intrinsic good,” Thompson (2008) asserts, and it must be respected for its own sake; as a result, there is an ethical duty to promote it. The loss of beauty, in nature and art, is a loss of goodness so all aspects of beauty must be preserved. However, one must then decide which beauty has value and thus deserves to be preserved.

Thompson writes, “If beauty in nature or in art is merely in the eyes of the beholder, then no general moral obligation arises out of aesthetic judgments, except the weaker obligation to preserve, if possible, what some individuals happen to value” (p. 255). How is it possible to make judgments about value in nature? The way to do this, says Thompson, is quite simply to make judgments about particular environments or objects. For example, one might argue that the Grand Canyon has more aesthetic value than a bluff on the Mississippi River. Furthermore, the judgments need to be connected to a place and history, both in human time and in geological time. It is necessary to discriminate and justify claims, and ethical judgments require love and respect, which is tied to how the world is perceived. Thompson shows that objective grounds are available for regarding nature as intrinsically valuable, and she argues that an aesthetics of nature “must appeal to what human beings, situated as they are, can find significant, enhancing, a joy for the senses, or a spur to the imagination and intellect, and the ethical obligations that follow from this appreciation are thus tied to human ways of perceiving and judging” (p. 266). In these aesthetic and environmental judgments, one is historically located and ethically involved, and one must acknowledge the moral obligations that are required in such judgments.

Godlovitch (2008b) writes similarly about the value of nature, dividing it into two irreducible and exclusive categories, “rankable” or “non-rankable,” offering a substitute view of value. “Nature is both text-free and sign-free because in itself it is entirely devoid of meaning and hence not subject *qua* natural to interpretation” (p. 269). Nature *qua* nature is valueless in the same way that color *qua* color is odorless; nature is that which cannot be “evaluated.” The aesthetic value of nature, following the path of positive aesthetics, holds that all things are non-comparable or non-gradable. Nature stands beyond either beauty or ugliness. Nature cannot be judged in the same way that one might judge artistic objects. To borrow Thoreau’s (1854/1992)

words, “The impression made on a wise man is that of universal innocence” (p. 262). Nature cannot be stereotyped in the same ways that art can be, so that the process of judging natural aesthetics requires something “new.” Budd (2008) offers one possible approach to such a process of aesthetic valuing of nature:

Perhaps the only viable conception of the aesthetic value of a natural item qua the natural item it represents this value as being a function of the totality of positive and negative aesthetic qualities possessed by the item as an instance of its kind. (p. 299)

One cannot compare a blooming flower to the rotten maggot-filled carcass of an elk. One must take the dead elk as a dead elk, and consider its aesthetic qualities within the context of its current natural state. Or, consider Walden Pond in its present manifestation as a park for visitors who feel nostalgia for a time they never knew, neglecting the great swamp down the road which is not ranked with the same aesthetic quality as the pond, despite its vital ecological role.

Ultimately Carlson and Lintott (2008) are trying to locate the deep, practical connections between aesthetics of nature and environmentalism, to move from beauty to duty, as the title of their book suggests. If one concludes that humans have a duty to protect and preserve the beauty of nature, is this in itself a subjective, anthropocentric perspective? If so, is this problematic? Rolston (2008) confronts this dilemma and begins with a fairly simple proposition: “Prima facie, one ought not to destroy anything of value, including aesthetic value” (p. 325). Rather than attempting an environmental ethics, Rolston celebrates the beauty of nature, and posits an aesthetic-ethics model as tied to human interests. Nature is beautiful in an appropriate context, with background knowledge. A deep aesthetic approach includes engagement, emotional arousal, and the natural environment model that requires scientific knowledge. Thoreau (1854/1992) states, “Our whole life is startlingly moral” (p. 182). Life is a continual struggle

between virtue and vice, between an animal nature and a higher nature that sometimes slumbers. Again, the cockerel Thoreau tries to awaken the reader to one's "generative energy" that can invigorate and inspire all to live as divine beings in nature. He asks his readers to consider life: "Why do you stay here and live this mean moiling life, when a glorious existence is possible for you" (p. 185)? Contemplation of such a question can deepen one's natural aesthetic appreciation and these types of questions are indicative of spiritual considerations in education; awaken to fuller life.

Thoreau's conception of divine nature is beautiful in the same way it is mathematical, and so nature embodies these qualities that can be understood scientifically. Rolston (2008) argues that humans can be drawn out of themselves in nature, stepping into autonomous nature, commanding respect and responsibility, in the face of struggle and danger. "Life persists with beauty in the midst of its perpetual perishing, and the struggle is integral to the beauty" (p. 333). The struggle is to both engage and detach! Lose the world to find one's self, Thoreau suggests. Inhabit nature and transcend it, to become "spirit in place." Within "ethics" in Greek is *ethos*, an accustomed mode of habitation, with which Thoreau was most concerned when he entered the woods to live simply, so as not to slice his "spiritual bread" that much the thinner by neglecting natural beauty. In a mode similar to Thoreau, Rolston moves conceptually from aesthetics to ethics and environmentalism, from beauty to duty, echoing Thoreau's call to live "as deliberately as Nature," to concentrate one's best faculties on living, to consider the true and sublime. Rolston asserts that the aesthetic dimension is vital for human existence. "Life without it is anaesthetized" (p. 337). Life is diminished, without sensation or feeling, without beauty. Education is thus dulled and deadened when the spiritual imperative is ignored, when beauty and duty are not encountered in confluent terms. Encounters with the natural world can stimulate

learning so that existence is not reduced to simple material terms, and individuals can posit themselves as part of a much larger cosmic whole, situated within particular communities.

Communities determine aesthetic value, argues Eaton (2008), rather than individuals or humanity as a whole; the environment needs protection because it is aesthetically beautiful and ecologically healthy within particular communities. Aesthetic experience is marked by perception and reflection upon intrinsic qualities that a community considers worthy of attention. Eaton introduces a dual meaning of “sustainability” here, asking whether the environment can be sustained and whether it can sustain a community. “Knowledge redirects attention, which motivates a desire for more knowledge, which redirects attention, which motivates a desire for more knowledge, which redirects attention, and so on and so on and so on,” (p. 342) and thus attention is sustained. Aesthetic relevance draws attention to a particular feature of an object or an event, and then one looks more closely. Health and beauty happen together if nature is attentively perceived with scientific cognitive skills, pleasure, imagination, and even attention to mysteriousness; what the community values and chooses to protect depends on these different modes of attention. Thoreau challenged many of the things that his community chose to value, trying to wake them up and draw their attention to a richer existence. He famously wrote these words: “The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation” (p. 7). Hope can be found in nature, in a commitment to beauty, in pursuit of goodness, awakening to the divine, as a member of a community on Earth.

An emphasis on what is valuable to the community is important in order to construct a sense of “cultural necessity,” which can underpin a greater ecological health across the landscape. Nassauer (2008) argues that people are attracted to beautiful places, and have a cultural understanding of these “attractive” places. Both a scenic aesthetic and an aesthetic of

care resist change, being culturally constructed, conceptually developed, and deeply ingrained in sense of place. Cultural expectations possess a strong persuasive power, just as public ownership can create a sense of “civic inheritance,” as people take care of what they own or what they sense they own. “In short, the health of the landscape requires that humans enjoy and take care of it” (p. 365). For new paradigms to arise concerning the appearance of landscapes, a new aesthetic language needs to be available. Ecological health can be built upon cultural necessity, upon the belief that a landscape should look a particular way, which reflects its health. A community needs to consider something worthy of attention for it to receive attention, and this worth is determined by perception of and reflection upon certain aesthetic properties. To transform current aesthetic paradigms, what is required? Thoreau (1854/1992) might say “we must learn to reawaken and keep ourselves awake” (p. 74). It becomes a task of life to notice the details of nature, to contemplate nature, and to learn what it has to teach. For Nassauer, the pleasure of aesthetic experience, coupled with an aesthetic of care, can build new expectations that rest upon ecological health.

Beliefs and biases shape human attention, so the “beautiful” is often protected while the “ugly” is neglected or destroyed, and it becomes vital to understand how these beliefs and biases are formed. Lintott (2008) contemplates the sublime and its relationship to ecological health, as contemplation can foster a deeper respect for one’s own mind, respect for other humans, and respect for the natural world. To borrow Kant’s words: “For while taste for the beautiful presupposes and sustains the mind in restful contemplation, the feeling of the sublime carries with it, as its character, a mental agitation connected with our judging of the object” (in Lintott, p. 386). The sublime is not necessarily pleasant in its entirety, but instead it contains an aspect of fear or agitation. A revolution in aesthetics cannot be expected to occur without time and

further education, and acceptance of the fact that nature does sometimes pose a threat to humans. In addition to scientific education, people need aesthetic education, to help enrich feelings of “love, respect, and admiration” for the land where they live. Thoreau (1854/1992) stated the challenge quite simply in the nineteenth-century, “We know not where we are. Beside, we are sound asleep nearly half our time. Yet we esteem ourselves wise, and have an established order on the surface” (p. 274). To awaken to deeper consciousness requires an examination of the accepted order of things, including one’s assumptions and accepted truths. To swim beneath the surface of the pond, one must plunge into the unknown, holding one’s breath, and when the bottom is found, still one cannot stop. The stones must be upturned, to see what lies hidden beneath them.

To add to this deeper consciousness through exploring the natural environment, Brady (2008) suggests conceiving of environments as having aesthetic narratives, and to develop greater sensitivity to natural change through enhanced perception, emotion, and imagination. “Aesthetic integrity” is the guiding principle in such a view, to be sensitive to the dynamic aspects of aesthetic character and how individual environments unfold over time. It is necessary to acknowledge aesthetic character in attempts at environmental conservation. Brady argues that maintaining integrity means being true to what something is, “true to the sort of thing it is, its particular qualities and character, its origins and genesis” (p. 407). Sensitivity to environmental character, within particular situations and context, does not depend upon the “scenic” aspect of nature, but captures the “dynamic forces” of nature and human culture. Thoreau (1854/1992) writes of how sunshine that follows the rain brightens the colors of life, brings an influx of good thoughts, and allows one to see neighbors in a different light:

You may have known your neighbor yesterday for a thief, a drunkard, or a sensualist, and merely pitied or despised him, and despaired of the world; but the sun shines bright and warm this first spring morning, re-creating the world, and you meet him at some serene work, and see how his exhausted and debauched veins expand with still joy and bless the new day, feel the spring influence with the innocence of infancy, and all his faults are forgotten. (p. 259)

A notion of aesthetic integrity allows nature to exist as it does, rather than in human terms, and simultaneously recognizes the human context of dynamic existence within a natural world, so that aesthetic character connects to environmental conservation and to human relations.

Environmental destruction involves aesthetic degradation and human decay, but environmental protection cannot be based on beauty alone (jobs are sometimes lost because of environmental laws, and human lives are ruined). Hettinger (2008) believes that aesthetic considerations can help justify environmental protectionism, a defense that he calls “aesthetic protectionism.” Environmental aesthetics, he proposes, needs to fall between the extremes of objectivity and subjectivity, to recognize the multiplicity of possible aesthetic responses to the environment. Hettinger says, “Some aesthetic judgments of nature are indeed true or false, correct or incorrect, appropriate or not, but many aesthetic responses to nature are better or worse than others on very different grounds” (p. 418). A critical pluralism recognizes that there are many responses, but not all are equal. Scientific objectivity is essential for aesthetic environmentalism, but emotive responses also matter, as does the imagination. With education, it is possible to develop better responses across the spectrum of human life, and not separate aesthetics from the rest of life. “Aesthetics is part of life, which means that aesthetics, ethics,

and cognition cannot be strictly separated” (Hettinger, p. 427). Knowledge-based environmental aesthetics are important, but are not the only possible aesthetic available for human response.

In considering human perception of the world, Thoreau (1854/1992) wrote, “The universe is wider than our views of it” (p. 264). People don’t go around the world just to count cats, or to learn all the languages of the world, or to find the source of every river. A single understanding of nature is a foolish approach. “As if Nature could support but one order of understandings, could not sustain birds as well as quadrupeds, flying as well as creeping things” (Thoreau, p. 267). The collection of essays by Carlson and Lintott (2008) offer an array of approaches to an environmental aesthetics, to move from beauty to duty, to better understand possible human roles in relation to the natural world. Threading Thoreau through these essays deepens the senses of nature and expands the possible responses to aesthetic perception and scientific cognition. Most importantly, for my project here, a deepened sense of nature connects to questions of spirituality in education, as people are asked to awaken anew to existence, to one another, to nature.

Thoreau activated his intellect to discover nature accurately and more completely, allowing his emotions to be saturated and affected by the wonder and beauty of nature, and he ultimately discovered a space within nature that allowed for transcendence of the world through deep experience of the world. Walking through the woods around the pond, Thoreau opened his senses to the infinite, and so he descended into the deep waters of the pond, found solid ground there upon which he might stand more securely, but instead he chose to dig down into the stones, searching for a more original ground, to understand the natural world that much more intensely. Such an unending understanding of nature allows for a richer relationship to evolve between humans and the environment in which they live, and a natural aesthetic works as a crucial stone

in the foundation upon which one might build a sense of beauty and duty to the natural world. Thoreau the chanticleer calls to humanity from more than a century ago, when he stood on the meeting of two eternities, and helps locate humans in the present moment, to awaken to a new day. The questions of spirituality in education are as real as the stones at the bottom of Walden Pond, but the depth of the pond cannot be simply sounded with a string and stick. Spirituality here is the cold, dark water, that can be never fully known, but it also stands as a symbol for duty and beauty. Educators and students can learn to live deliberately with Thoreau, to confront the mystery of existence, to celebrate the beauty of the natural world, and to assume a role of duty in approaching this world that sustains humanity as part of a bountiful natural cosmos. From this place of relationship to the natural world, in community with fellow human beings, in my next chapter I move more deliberately toward an assertion for human rights education, rooted in a spiritual imperative that posits the individual in a cosmic context, as advocated by a more ancient set of traditions. Thoreau, I think, sets up such a move quite well, as his divine transcendence is just as much grounded in daily reality; his relationship to nature begins in the things themselves, the water and the stones, and expands to include the totality of existence, with humans as a beautiful thread in the larger fabric, so that one knows oneself more fully as one encounters the natural world in its glorious complexity.

CHAPTER 6

SPIRITUAL EXERCISES & HUMAN RIGHTS

In chapter six, I depart from Thoreau's *Walden* and the cultivation of perception in terms of environmental-aesthetic education, to discuss the necessity of human rights education, by exploring the notion of "spiritual exercises." These exercises have to do with the conduct of life, transforming one's vision of the world, and metamorphosis of individuals. For my project, in calling attention to the spiritual imperative in education, the pursuit of education for a deepened understanding of human rights may be elucidated by a return to antiquity and recognition of the philosophical act as something more than simply cognitive exercise. Philosophy, or the love of wisdom, is about *being* more fully human. I build this chapter around the work of Pierre Hadot (1995), who argues that philosophy "raises the individual from an inauthentic condition of life, darkened by unconsciousness and harassed by worry, to an authentic state of life, in which he attains self-consciousness, an exact vision of the world, inner peace, and freedom" (p. 83). In confronting this assertion, I ask whether schools are prepared to address the inauthenticity that results from a failure to encourage such spiritual exercises? How might teachers begin to approach the question of transforming students' modes of seeing and being, to help them move towards inner peace and a deeper awareness of consciousness? Then, with such awareness, these spiritual exercises, offer one way to engage with one's humanity in a more comprehensive way, and education is thus laid open for one possible approach to understanding and strengthening human rights.

Hadot

Arnold Davidson (1990) has been credited with introducing Pierre Hadot to much of the English-speaking public in his 1990 article in *Critical Inquiry*, where he discusses the spiritual

exercises envisioned by the Ancients and elucidated by Hadot, seen not just as moral exercises, but imbued with existential value. Philosophy is seen as a mode of life, a way of being in the world, intended to transform people's thought and conduct. At the same time, Davidson also notes it is important to understand that the spiritual exercises suggested by the Ancients, "cannot be reduced to a code of good conduct" (p. 481). These spiritual exercises are "dialogical" in the mode of Socratic practice, Davidson contends, as one engages in dialogue with oneself and others, intending to *form*, rather than just *inform*. These dialogical practices are not just about finding solutions to problems, but rather the practice also involves paying attention to the *path traversed* in seeking solutions. Davidson points to the importance of Hadot's contribution in interpreting the ancient texts, in helping contemporary readers to understand the crucial difference between philosophy and philosophical discourse.

These exercises aim to strengthen one's wisdom as a philosophical way of life, argues Davidson (1990), but the exercises became "almost eclipsed by a conception of philosophy as an abstract, theoretical activity" (p. 482). For the Stoic and Epicurean schools, the principal cause of human suffering is the result of "passions," a combination of desires and fears, and philosophy is in the first place a therapeutic for the passions of humanity. To help understand this therapeutic, Davidson summarizes three particular aspects of a philosophical way of life articulated by Hadot: tranquility of the soul, self-sufficiency, and cosmic consciousness. These ideas are not just intended for abstract speculation and theory, but are exhibited in one's mode of being. One *lives* logic, physics, and ethics, in order to think and speak clearly, act virtuously and justly, and contemplate oneself in relation to the whole of existence. In addition to this therapeutic aspect, Davidson argues that at least since the times of Plato, philosophy has

involved training for death, as one posits oneself in relation to the totality of existence, to liberate oneself from the illusion of individuality.

Hadot (1995) looks at the history of the ancient philosophical tradition to locate the moment when philosophy shifted from a practice of “spiritual exercises” to being focused more on cognitive practices; to follow Hadot’s line of argument in relation to “spiritual exercise” yields some helpful ideas for fostering human rights education. What does it mean to “do” philosophy, to love wisdom? What can the practices of antiquity teach about human rights? Throughout the Middle Ages, instruction in Scholastic thought consisted largely of textual commentary, whether one was reading the Bible or Aristotle; philosophy came to be a practice of exegesis, and the search for the “truth” was confounded with the search for the meaning of “authentic” texts, that is, authoritative texts. The truth was supposedly contained within these texts, and philosophical problems were expressed in exegetical, textual terms.

For each school of thought, the master’s texts held the answers. Hadot (1995) points to Plotinus’ investigation of the problem of evil, where he urges students “to find out in what sense Plato says that evil shall not pass away, and that their existence is necessary” (p. 73). From the 19th century onwards, philosophy became increasingly aware of historical and linguistic conditioning of thought, until the 20th century saw philosophical discourse turn to the object of philosophical discourse itself. With the postmodern turn, Hadot argues, philosophy has once again become more exegetical, “and, sad to say, it often interprets its texts with the same violence used by ancient practitioners of allegory” (p. 76). Perhaps this violence occurs in the deconstruction of the text, but just as likely the violence happens more subtly, with the abandonment of daily practices. Hadot embraces philosophy as the practice of spiritual exercises, not just as the rigor of discourse and textual exegesis; that is, one must practice the

theoretical conceptions for true transformation to occur. Similarly, it is not enough to theorize about human rights; education has the opportunity to engage with the rights discourse in a practical way, to bring about actual changes. Human rights need to be understood and enacted, just as ancient texts need to be comprehended and practiced.

Hadot (1995) points to the work of Paul Rabbow as having shown how Ignatius of Loyola developed methods of meditation that were based on spiritual exercises of ancient philosophy, exercises intended to “influence oneself” with the hope of achieving determinate moral effects. Rabbow argued that with the rise of Christianity, these moral exercises became spiritual, resembling the former exercises in “essence and structure . . . raised to their classical rigor and perfection in the *Exercitia Spiritualia* of Ignatius of Loyola” (in Hadot, p. 127). Hadot (1995) takes Rabbow’s argument further, asserting that these spiritual exercises of Antiquity were not merely moral, but also existential, intended to radically transform one’s vision of the world. Spiritual exercises were about *a way of being*, not just moral conduct, by engaging with the totality of *spirit*. Just the very existence of “being” itself is what gives human rights its moral force, but it is critical to consider further the ways of being that lend themselves to a deeper engagement with human rights education, both theoretically and practically.

Hadot (1995) explains the notion of spiritual exercises by looking at the Greek word, *askesis*, not to be understood in the modern sense of asceticism meaning abstinence or restriction, as it has been employed in Christian usage. Rather, in ancient philosophy, *askesis* has to do with “inner activities of the thought and the will” (p. 128). The Christian tradition increasingly portrayed religion as a philosophy, or *the* philosophy according to Apologists, while Greek philosophy was seen as containing *parts* of the truth. Christianity claimed Logos itself, manifested in Christ, as the complete truth and a whole philosophy. I suggest that human rights

education is better served by accepting the notion of partial truths (as opposed to trying to locate *the* truth), and central to these inner thoughtful activities needs to be a positing of human beings, humans in the act of being, engaged in the identification of universal qualities that arise out of particular existences.

Awareness & Death

Hadot (1995) progresses from the historical development of spiritual exercises to look at the principles within the exercises, pointing to a fundamental Stoic attitude, *prosoche*, or attention to oneself and vigilance at every instant. For Stoics, to be *awake* is to be conscious of what one *does*, and not so much what about one *is*. Here one sees the emphasis on action, rather than just the simple fact of “being.” Furthermore, to be aware of one’s place in the universe requires self-consciousness in moral consciousness, to purify oneself, to practice good actions. “Such self-consciousness is not, however, merely a moral conscience; it is also cosmic consciousness” (p. 130). That is, one needs to consider what is right and wrong, but one must also posit existence in relation to the cosmos. Attention to oneself in this way, the Stoics contend, brings peace of mind, *amerimnia*. This attention to one’s inner self became a fundamental attitude of Christian monks, who looked not to the body or things. Furthermore, important for my discussion of human rights education here, this awakening and awareness has the potential to connect an individual more intimately to existence on a cosmic scale, in terms of what one does, and likewise to better comprehend the universal quality of human existence. Human rights discourse and practice requires a deepened awareness that cultivates the sense of duty to strangers, by simultaneously turning inward to one’s individual being and behaviour in the context of the whole physical universe and the eternal mystery of existence.

The notion of self-attention and vigilance to the present moment also carries a sense of one's mortality, as attention to the present cosmic order includes death. Epictetus said: "Let death be before your eyes every day, and you will never have any abject thought nor excessive desire" (Hadot, p. 131). A similar thought is found in Athanasius' "Life of Antony," from the 4th century; "Live as though you were dying every day, paying heed to yourselves and remembering what you heard from my preaching" (Hadot, p. 131). In addition to being attentive to the present and recognizing death's imminent approach, the Stoics practiced acceptance of divine will alongside controlling one's thoughts and purifying one's intentions to others. The Stoic philosopher, Marcus Aurelius, writes in his "Meditations":

Everywhere, and at all times, it is up to you to rejoice piously at what is occurring *at the present moment*, to conduct yourself with justice towards the people who are *present here and now* . . . so that nothing slips in that is not objective. (in Hadot, p. 132)

By cultivating attention to the present moment and to conduct oneself with justice toward others, education can be envisioned as a response to humanity's mortal condition, set in cosmic terms, but also in worldly mortal terms, with these two not set in opposition. In a contemporary discussion about the education and existential consideration, Blacker (1997) agrees with Heidegger in acknowledging the transient nature of existence, echoing a much earlier philosophical lesson from the Stoic and Epicurean schools of thought and action.

When Heidegger states that we are ontically distinctive in that we are ontological, he means that one of the observable characteristics of human beings – and our most unique feature – is that our very existence is always at issue for us. Not that we are always conscious that it is; this awareness of our own contingency, our own mortality, is not typically explicit. But it is nonetheless there, somewhere, at some level. (Blacker, p. 28)

Anxiety, for Blacker (1997), can be a *gateway toward authenticity*, so that one might ground education in acknowledgement of ontological truths, to guide beings concerned with the idea of nothingness, or mortality. Blacker asserts that it is possible and necessary “to re-inscribe into the way we think about education that ‘unthinkable’” (p. 27). The “unthinkable” for Blacker seems to be the idea of non-existence, one’s death, but for my own project the possibility of the unthinkable is also related to other questions of spirituality. One needs to consider how it is possible to think about the unthinkable (to speak the unspeakable, to see the un-seeable, etc.); while making a commitment to such considerations might seem a distraction from more important matters, I suggest that such inquiries can be central to one’s existence, especially in relation to other beings with the same capacity for thinking and questioning, collectively grounded in a shared mortality.

The shared mortality of human beings might seem an odd foundation for education, but Arcilla (1997) supports Blacker’s attempts to *humanize* teaching, to encourage teachers to address shared humanity in terms of finiteness. However, Arcilla points to an apparent paradox in Blacker’s larger argument that education of this sort, rooted in existential inquiry and recognition of shared mortality, occurs outside of time; Blacker concludes that “in teaching and learning one is immortal” (p. 83). Blacker suggests that teachers become like the mythological Mentor to Telemachus, so they rise to god-like status beyond the temporal constraints of this world. (Here one might also remember Rousseau’s tutor Jean-Jacques who became a centaur-tutor for Emile, preparing his student for society with an education outside of society.) Arcilla questions Blacker’s suggestion of *immortality* after he previously looked to a shared *mortality* between teachers and students as grounding for education. This paradoxical encounter, for my project, is an opportunity for educators, rather than a problem, as teachers and students struggle

with such existential relationships. One begins with the fact of mortal existence in order to consider such unthinkable ideas as death and immortality. One digs down into the stones of the pond and simultaneously transcends the world of Walden. One turns to examine one's quiet inner life, while at the same time setting oneself in the dialogical context of other beings in the world. The paradoxical situation is not necessarily contradictory, offering questions for consideration, without the promise of clear answers. Arcilla ultimately joins with Blacker in calling for educators to approach learning by giving up the self to mortality, "to see the expanse beyond the self, from which we came and to which we will return, as beyond loss" (p. 451).

To extend this contemporary discussion of death and immortal education, Dhillon (1997) offers a further response to Blacker's ideas, by following Mahayana Buddhist thought to show that awareness of the ordinary can lead to a realization of the sacred. For Dhillon, education rooted in awareness of one's mortality would entail *a discipline of exquisite attention* to what one does in the world. Such exquisite attention, Dhillon argues, "is settled into habit through educational discipline and practice . . . shaped through a pervasive awareness of death" (p. 453). This attention to death, as a philosophical practice and as an educational foundation, connects to Ancient schools of thought, particularly to a set of spiritual exercises offered by the Stoic and Epicurean schools.

In addition to continued attention to one's mortality, the Stoic notion of attention to the self, *prosoche*, also implies self-mastery, or control of one's thoughts, resulting in the triumph of reason over the passions. Repetitious actions help to modify and transform the self, a practice that involves keeping dogmatic principles of life "at-hand," consisting of short sentences to memorize and upon which one might meditate. These techniques of introspection help one detach the body from the soul, following Plato's line, "those who go about philosophizing

correctly are in training for death” (Hadot, p. 138). Here, one might argue that detachment of the body from the soul seems an odd approach to holistic education, but the aspect of mortality does lend weight to a consideration of one’s life in cosmic terms. Again, in keeping such principles of life (and imminent death) at-hand, one can be more present in the here and now, and can better engage with one of the central premises of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the inherent dignity of all human beings. By coming to terms with mortality, one can confront the ephemeral quality of human life and the preciousness of living each day with deeper respect for the same inherent aspects in other beings.

Important Figures

Hadot examines a number of philosophical figures to better understand how they influenced the Western tradition in relation to these spiritual exercises; Hadot is careful to emphasize that the “figure” of philosophy is not necessarily the same as the historical personage. He begins with Socrates, as depicted in Plato’s “Symposium,” as a sage or as a lover of wisdom. Socrates serves as the figurative mediator between the transcendent ideal of wisdom and the concrete human reality, striving for harmony between the divine and the earthly. Socrates’ oral exercise consisted of asking questions and claiming ignorance, wearing a mask that is later taken up by Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, two figures who Hadot sees as great Socratics. Socrates became this supposedly ignorant figure in Plato’s writings, representing a particular practice. “Socrates is interrogation, questioning, and stepping back to take a look at oneself; in a word, he is consciousness” (Hadot, p. 154). One can look at the case of Socrates as a human rights violation (is he not simply enjoying freedom of speech?), in the story that details this figure’s death (whether or not it stands as an historical account), as this great teacher is involved in the

dialogical educative practices that challenge his fellow citizens to consider things more carefully, to consider what it means to be human.

Socrates famously announces his ignorance, in Plato's "Apology," with a simple line: "I only know one thing: that is, that I don't know anything" (Hadot, p. 154). In claiming to not know anything, Socrates brings forth his students' answers into clarity, to challenge their views. Socratic inquiry works in such a way that the master-disciple relationship is turned around, so to be a teacher is to be a learner, to put oneself in the place of the learners to understand as they understand. Individuals, when exposed to Socrates' maieutics, are forced to question the most fundamental bases of their action, to question the values they have accepted. In Plato's "Apology," Socrates claims that he himself does not care about those things others care about, but he instead chooses a different path, to persuade others to concern themselves about what they *are*, not what they *have*, and to be good and reasonable. In this consideration of what one *is*, an individual (and multiple individuals in dialogue) can better grasp their being-human, and such an understanding aids one in coming to develop a reality that respects human rights. One can imagine that Socrates would have been a teacher of human rights, had the notion existed in ancient Greece.

There is an obvious tension at work in this chapter, as well as in preceding chapters, around the idea of *being* in terms of what one *is* or what one *does*, a tension that does not need to find resolution here, as the questions surrounding spirituality do not necessarily arrive at a place of certainty with relation to such terms. Being human is clearly about what one is *and* what one does, just as being human entails theoretical conceptions as well as practical applications, with regards to critical human rights. My argument for the spiritual imperative of education does not shrink from contentious terms, but rather I seek to explore the tension to see what can be found

there which might help with a more genuine and authentic awareness of human consciousness, as is suggested by Hadot in his exploring the Ancient schools.

To enroll in the school of Socrates, argues Hadot (1995), is to study in “the school of the consciousness of not-knowing” (p. 159). In addition to this admission of ignorance, Plato also introduces the dimension of love into the philosophical life, through the myth of Socrates and the primordial Greek god Eros, representing desire and the irrational. Dialogue, for Socrates, involves the will to clarify a problem together, as a kind of love. While language has its limits, the dialogue is a moral and existential experience that occurs between two humans, and awakens consciousness. Hadot argues that Eros, like Socrates, is ignorant; “He, too, is maieutic: he helps souls to engender themselves” (p. 163). Genuine consciousness requires reciprocal love, captured later in the words of Nietzsche: “The deepest insights spring from love alone” (Hadot, p. 164). The figure of Socrates represents this loving sage engaged in dialogical practice to unveil consciousness. This practice of dialogue also speaks directly to the issue of human rights education, as one sees that problems cannot be solved without communication (and love!), allowing one to develop a deeper relationship with consciousness itself, in communing with others, and thus to connect more intimately with the cosmos.

Another figure that Hadot (1995) considers is Marcus Aurelius, specifically as he can be seen through his “Meditations,” a collection written as spiritual exercises in the mode of Stoic philosophical practice, notes written on a daily basis for the author’s personal use. The words of Marcus Aurelius, therefore, speak to his own understanding of Stoic philosophy as taught by Epictetus, who never wrote anything, choosing instead to teach his students orally. Crucial to understanding the Stoic tradition is to recognize the important difference between *discourse*

about philosophy and the *practice of* philosophy. These words of Marcus Aurelius point to his conceptualization of time and space as an active process:

Think of the whole of being, in which you participate to only a tiny degree; think of the whole of eternity, of which a brief, tiny portion has been assigned to you; think about fate, of which you are such an insignificant part . . . How puny a portion of infinite, gaping eternity has been assigned to each man; it vanishes with all speed into the Unending. How puny a portion of the substance of the All; how puny a portion of the soul of the All. Of the whole of the earth, how puny is the lump you are crawling on!
(in Hadot, p. 183)

Marcus Aurelius urges himself to consider the totality of things, employing his imagination to imagine the infinite and the all. Hadot (1995) explains that this voluntary exercise of the imagination presupposes a belief in the classical Stoic cosmological scheme: “the universe is situated within an infinite void, and its duration is comprised within an infinite time, in which periodic rebirths of the cosmos are infinitely repeated” (p. 184). One must posit oneself within such a framework of time and space, not simply engaging with a discourse about it. In recognizing one’s life as puny, the point is not to reduce one’s life to being worthless, but rather to see the connection to all existence, the inherent value of humanity in its intricate relationship to the universe. My intent here is not to argue for belief in the Stoic cosmological imagination, although it does have its attractions, but rather I want to argue more broadly for the importance of contextualizing human life in cosmic terms. While this may initially sound like a broad, general idea, what is required is actually attention to the details of one’s life that seem within one’s control, as Hadot explains of the Stoics.

Hadot (1995) argues that theoretical discourse and philosophy itself were intertwined as an exercise of Stoic wisdom, based on the idea that one needs to consider those things within one's control, and accept those things beyond one's control. Philosophy was lived and experienced in such a way, with continuous exercises of meditation and constant vigilance, "in order to keep alive in one's mind the principles taught by theoretical discourse" (p. 192). Marcus Aurelius wrote his thoughts so they might be "at hand" for him, to read and re-read, to consider, and to discuss with others. Three basic themes arise in these "Meditations" of Marcus Aurelius; 1) discipline of desire; 2) discipline of inclinations; 3) discipline of judgment. Hadot argues that when Marcus wrote his thoughts, he was "exhorting himself to practice one of the disciplines: either that of desire, of action, or of assent" (p. 201). The last of these disciplines, judgment, can especially be taken up on behalf of engaging with and better understanding human rights, to lead to right action towards others. It is through the discipline of judgment that one can look at one's own actions and those of others, in terms of what is right in *universal* terms, that is by accepting and honoring a shared humanity that is a vital thread in the fabric of the universe, pulsing with sacredness that deserves reverence.

Similar to the three disciplines of Marcus Aurelius, three exercises were central to the Stoic tradition, each of them connected to reason; 1) to judge objectively, in accordance with inner reason; 2) to act in accordance with human reason; 3) to accept destiny imposed by cosmic reason. Hadot (1995) emphasizes the fact that philosophy came to be about theoretical discourse, as religion took over the techniques of spiritual exercises from antiquity. However, the philosophical practices of the Stoics were not simply about "the self," but were about belonging to a whole, both the whole human community and the cosmic whole. As Seneca said, it was about "plunging oneself into the totality of the world" (p. 208); this cosmic perspective

radically transforms the feeling one has of oneself. Joy is found not in the “self,” but in a conscience turned towards the good, towards just actions. The goal of Stoic exercises is to go beyond the self, and act in unison with universal reason. In this turning to the good and the just, acting in unison with reasonable judgment, one comes to the conclusion that human rights must be enunciated, protected, and further developed, as part of becoming more fully human, both individually and collectively.

The Ancient Schools

Two ancient schools, the Stoics and Epicureans, sought to liberate themselves from worries about the future and the burden of the past, so as to better concentrate on the present (Hadot, 1995). The practice of writing was to liberate oneself from individuality, not to assert the “self,” in order to rise up to the realm of universality. Epicureans admitted that certain things were necessary other than the self; for example, bodily nourishment, the pleasures of love, a physical theory of the universe, company of others and mutual affection, and, as Hadot says, “imaginative contemplation of an infinite number of universes in the infinite void, in order to experience what Lucretius calls *divina voluptas et horror*” (p. 208). Similar to the Stoics, the Epicurean tradition requires that one posit one’s existence within the infinite void, not simply as theoretical discourse, but as a daily practice. If one posits oneself in such a way, through contemplation, one *rises up* to the realm of universality, and therein finds the compassion and empathy for all beings. Human rights education needs to be connected to such a daily practice, not only theoretical discourse. This is not to argue that one must follow Epicurean practices specifically, of course, but I maintain that human rights education would be strengthened by a practice of contemplation that connects individuals more intimately with their own being. This self-reflective practice needs to be augmented with a concomitant building of relationships with

other humans and with the natural world at large, so as not to risk becoming simply an act of self-absorption.

In a recent response to Hadot's emphasis on the daily practice of philosophy, as opposed to purely textual encounter and interpretation, Force (2011) points to a paradoxical tension at play in Hadot's work, with regards to the claim that ancient philosophy was a life choice and not overly dependent on textual exegesis. Ironically, Hadot was able to arrive at this conclusion thanks to his capacity for reading Greek and Latin, coupled with his objective reconstruction of the context of ancient philosophical texts, giving contemporary access to ancient philosophy as a way of life. Hadot acknowledged the difficulty of understanding the Ancient teachings outside of the context of Ancient life; "the meaning intended by the ancient author is never current (*actuel*). It is ancient, and that is all there is to it" (in Force, p. 38). Force notes the importance of philologists like Hadot who make spiritual nourishment available through the texts in a contemporary interpretation. Force asserts that Hadot embraces the apparent contradiction inherent in simultaneous acceptance of *absolute strangeness and absolute familiarity*, as Hadot admits that the texts matter less for what they *say* and more for what they *do*, but this conclusion is a result of his elucidation of texts. Force adds to Hadot's work of interpretation by suggesting a contemplative practice in conjunction with textual encounter. Force explains this union, "Interpretation yields to silent meditation or contemplation" (p. 39), an experience that Force identifies as a mystical dimension of Hadot's later work. While the textual exegesis is necessary to learn from the Ancient schools, one must move into a space of silence to live with the ideas and exercise the spiritual possibilities in such wisdom.

Importantly, the mystical experience is not to be confused with mystification, as Hadot (1993) warns in his work that focuses on Plotinus. Through spiritual exercises, different levels of experience become levels of one's inner life, levels of the self. Hadot writes:

Here we come upon Plotinus' central intuition: the human self is *not* irrevocably separated from its eternal model, as the latter exists within divine Thought During certain privileged experiences, which raise the level of our inner tension, we can identify ourselves with it. We then become this eternal self; we are moved by its unutterable beauty, and when we identify ourselves with this self, we identify ourselves with divine Thought itself, within which it is contained. Such privileged experiences make us realize that we never cease, and have never ceased, to be in contact with our true selves. (p. 27)

Mystification in this mode is not a means of *escaping* life, but being absolutely present to it.

Further, while the mystical experience might elude expression, it is a *lived plenitude*.

To help understand the mystical experience and spiritual exercises, Hadot (1993) discusses the distinction between reflection and contemplation, as the latter requires understanding through silence, by closing one's eyes to visible perception and turning the gaze inward. Hadot suggests that the *simplicity of life* escapes the realm of reflection, as reflection requires successive objects for perception and consideration. As a result, consciousness splits into two (subject and object), and tries to piece together reality as means to an end. But life is an end in itself, Hadot asserts, without a need to search, instead being immediate and simple. Life cannot be grasped by reflection. "In order to reach it, just as in order to reach our pure self, we shall have to abandon reflection for contemplation" (p. 41). Through contemplation, furthermore, it is possible to achieve a vision of Beauty, where contemplation is immediate. Hadot advises his readers not to be fooled by the language of the mystics, as they had their own

rhetoric. Authentic experience gives language a certain weight and tone, he says, but the invitation to mystical experience involves forgetting everything, ceasing activity, becoming quiet and passive, and awaiting *divine invasion*.

So, how does one live after such divine experience through contemplation? Hadot (1993) argues, in following Plotinus, that one prepares for further contemplation, to ready oneself again for divine unity. This is the task of virtue: purify, simplify, unify. Plotinus writes: “The soul loves the Good because, since the beginning, it has incited her to love it” (in Hadot, p. 54). It is necessary to connect the spiritual ecstasy to ethics of this world. Virtue, born of divine union, becomes *substantial wisdom*. Contemplation must have effect on concrete life, or it remains meaningless. This involves genuine practice of virtue born of contemplation, always returning to further contemplation. Again Plotinus says, “When one falls from contemplation, he must reawaken the virtue within him” (in Hadot, p. 67). Through a virtuous practice of contemplation, one can rise up again to the Intellect, to a purely spiritual life, tasting the joy of divine union. If mythical experience takes one beyond the world, then why does one return? Plotinus teaches: “Because we have not yet completely left this place” (in Hadot, p. 71). Present in the world, aware of one’s existential import, one can turn more fully to ensure the utmost dignity is protected for all human beings.

The ultimate goal for these two ancient Greek schools was similar: to become one’s own master, to possess oneself, to find happiness in freedom and inner dependence, and to rise above the reasonable self to universal reason, as part of nature, to practice “physics” as spiritual exercises. The goal was not to live as a sage, considered impossible by the ancients, but to practice “the ever-fragile *exercise of wisdom*” (Hadot, p. 211). The same goals and exercises can be justified by diverse philosophical discourses, in trying to practice objective judgment, live

according to justice, and be aware of one's place in the universe, to discover the "mystery and splendour of existence" (p. 212). Rooted in reason, happiness, freedom and disciplined judgment, pursuing the good and the just, one can situate human rights as central to human existence, connected to the mysterious and splendid universe.

The Present Moment

Hadot (1995) contends that the philosophies of the Epicureans and Stoics were intended as therapies to provide remedy for anguish and despair, to bring control and self-mastery, and to be free from the heavy past and uncertain dread of the future. This theme of finding happiness by living "life in the present moment" traces through to Goethe's literature many centuries later; Goethe writes in *Faust*, "Only the present is our happiness . . . don't think about your destiny. Existence is a duty" (in Hadot, p. 217). Hadot argues that Goethe's ideas are reminiscent of the ancient philosophical assertions of existence, as they survived in different discourses. In Goethe, one finds this idea of "duty" as being rooted in existence, which can be directly applied to the development of human rights education. One has a duty to live in the present, for the sake of happiness, and likewise one has a duty to create suitable conditions in the world so that all people can fulfill their own duty to existence, to live wholly.

Both the Stoics and the Epicureans privileged the present moment, to transform lives, to relax and suppress worries; Hadot (1995) explains the ancient wisdom as a therapy for anguish, a philosophy to "procure peace of mind" (p. 222). Pleasure is discovered wholly in the present moment, so the happy mind must look to the present instant. It is not important to draw distinctions between finite time and infinite time, in order to arrive at this happiness in time. Hadot offers an Epicurean saying: "Finite time and infinite time bring us the same pleasure, if we measure its limits by reason" (p. 224). Each instant in time appears as a gift for which one feels

gratitude for the opportunity to practice one's spiritual exercises, so that Horace's "*carpe diem*" is an invitation to conversion, not just for theoretical consideration. Hadot looks to the poetry of Horace to capture the notion of present-happiness: "Believe that each new day that dawns will be the last for you:/ Then each unexpected hour shall come to you as a delightful gift" (p. 225). To be content with the present is to *have* everything. To be delighted by the present moment enriches existence, so one can clearly see that to develop a deeper sense of human rights and to act according to one's understanding is itself a spiritual practice, an expression of one's humanity and a celebration of all humans.

Again, Hadot (1995) emphasizes that these ideas with regards to time were not simply theoretical assertions, but were meant to be spiritual exercises. "What is needed is the immediate transformation of our way of thinking, of acting, and of accepting events" (p. 229). We will not be happy if we do not begin to be happy *now*. Marcus Aurelius spoke to this emphasis on transforming oneself immediately; "How easy it is to find oneself, right away, in a state of perfect peace of mind" (p. 229). The distinction between the Epicurean and Stoic perspectives on the present moment has to do with enjoyment and necessity, an interesting tension to explore. For the Stoics, moral good has a cosmic dimension, as human reason harmonizes with universal reason, so one's human consciousness coincides with a cosmic consciousness. Marcus Aurelius writes: "He who sees the present moment sees all that has happened from all eternity, and all that will happen throughout infinite time" (p. 229). The moral good, as grasped and practiced in the present moment, is a reflection of a more universal good that moves timelessly. Epicureans *enjoy* the present moment as a great pleasure, whereas the Stoics *will* the present moment as a duty. One does not need to choose between these two ideas, as pleasure can be found in the duty of moral good rooted in the present moment and connected to eternal divinity. Hadot notes that

Goethe captures both of these themes with his words in “Faust”: “Only the present is our happiness. Existence is a duty.” From the perspective of an educator today, Goethe’s combination of enjoyment and duty seems helpful; one must find pleasure in existence of the present moment, and one also must acknowledge this attentiveness as a duty, attentive to oneself and to others. I argue that situating human rights education within the discourse and practices of these traditions (Stoic and Epicurean) is not just about advocating for a particular theoretical stance or abstract conceptualization; one clearly comes to face the duty inherent in being human, to uphold one’s dignity and the dignity of all beings.

View from Above

Hadot (1995) continues with the work of Goethe as being a further representation of the ancient philosophical conception of thought and the divine nature of the soul. Poetry, according to Goethe, can raise humans above earthly things and allow people to observe things from the perspective of the gods; “it can free us from the mundane burdens which weigh upon us” (p. 239). Hadot looks at this theme of perspective in ancient philosophy, providing a bird’s-eye view and flight of the soul; he writes of “the power of thought and divine nature of the soul, which is able to raise itself above the categories of space and time” (p. 239). Philosophy comes to be seen as a means of the soul’s ascent into celestial heights, as well as a means of achieving spiritual death; Hadot points out that this notion is not found just in Plato, but also exists in the traditions of the Epicureans and Stoics. The soul is provided with wings by nature, in Plato’s “Phaedrus,” and such a lofty perspective allows one to regard society and other individuals from a *universal* point of view, a view from above to consider human rights as well.

However, this view from above is not to suggest a transcendental withdrawal from earthly existence, but rather presents an opportunity to behold humanity as a whole, with each

human as an essential component in the totality of existence. It is not enough to ascend into celestial perspective; one also needs moral and existential exercises, as well as philosophical theories of nature. Hadot (1995) argues that Platonists, Epicureans, and Stoics all discovered a practical physics, in addition to a theoretical physics, “conceived of as an exercise in which the imagination speeds through the infinite vastness of the universe” (p. 242). In the Stoic tradition, Philo of Alexandria ultimately sees the goal of a philosophical life as to seek peace and serenity, to contemplate nature, and to explore the natural world. Hadot points to the words of Philo when he speaks of those who follow this philosophical form of life:

In thought, they accompany the moon, the sun, and the rotations of the other stars, whether fixed or wandering. Their bodies remain on earth, but they give wings to their souls, so that, rising into the ether, they may observe the powers that dwell there, as is fitting for those who have truly become citizens of the world. (p. 244)

For Philo, here, one remains a citizen of the world even as one’s soul may accompany the celestial bodies; the idea is to locate one’s existence as an aspect of the infinite whole of nature. This seems to be an ideal location for considering the implications of human rights education, as one existing on earth and in the heavens. One might be reminded of Thoreau here, on the edge of two eternities, living deliberately in nature so that he might explore the world more carefully, to awaken his own senses and those of his neighbours.

Within these ancient philosophical traditions, the goal of physics as spiritual exercise, writes Hadot, is to relocate human existence within “the infinity of time and space, and the perspective of the great laws of nature” (p. 244). Marcus Aurelius writes of following the course of stars as if one were running alongside them, “for these imaginations wash away the foulness of life on the earth” (p. 244). This ability to look from above needs to be cultivated, to consider

the whole of human reality and human existence set within the cosmic whole. The physics of antiquity is like the poetry of Goethe, fostering greatness of soul, inner peace, and a firm connection to the cosmic consciousness. This connection, it is crucial to assert, must be attentive to all humanity, protecting the rights accorded to all beings based simply on the fact of their existence. If even one person is not accorded basic human rights and dignity, then all humanity suffers as a result and cosmic consciousness is dimmed and diminished.

This cosmic consciousness is one goal of the sage who sees oneself as part of the world and connected to the totality of the cosmos. Hadot (1995) speaks of the “world of science” and the “world of perception,” arguing that scientists view the world differently than the daily perceptual experience of a human. Hadot follows phenomenologists who assert that one must become more *aware* of lived perceptions, pointing to the words of Merleau-Ponty:

The entire world of science is constructed on the basis of the world as we experience it, and if we want rigorously to think through science itself, in order precisely to appreciate its range and its meaning, we must first of all reawaken this experience of the world, of which science is the secondary expression. (in Hadot, p. 253)

Aesthetic and philosophical perceptions of the world are possible, Hadot asserts, only through *transforming* one’s relationship to the world, by perceiving it for *itself*, no longer just for oneself. To perceive the ocean as sublime, as Kant says, one must come to see the ocean all by itself, “just as the poets do, exclusively *according to what it displays to the eye*” (in Hadot, p. 255). Such a practice of perception leads to a merging of the world and consciousness itself, and one approaches the sage-consciousness. “In the final analysis, both the world as perceived in the consciousness of the sage, and the sage’s consciousness itself, plunged in the totality of the world, are revealed to the lover of wisdom in one single, unique movement” (Hadot, p. 261). In

the transformation of one's relationship to the universe, one transforms the understanding of what it means to be human (plunged into the totality!) and there in that movement one can consider the necessity of human rights education. The world perceived in one's consciousness merges with one's consciousness itself, plunging into totality as if one is plunging into Thoreau's Walden Pond, and so existence is revealed in its whole tragic beauty. If human rights and dignity are not assured for all humans, the totality disintegrates and one's consciousness is threatened with a fractured sense of the cosmos.

Language & Spiritual Exercises

Laugier (2011) looks at Hadot as a reader of Wittgenstein, and points to how spiritual exercise is transformed by Hadot, as "an exercise in *language*, a habitual and repeated practice and use of language" (p. 325), manifested through forms of speech, reading, and writing. This exercise involves the privileged space of ethical relationship to language. Laugier writes of Hadot in relation to Wittgenstein, noting that Hadot admitted to finding the *Tractatus* a puzzling end, wondering why one must be silent. Laugier accepts the limits of language as those of the world and life: "to recognize my form of life in language is to recognize my finitude. Spiritual exercises would consist, then, in understanding my situation in language" (p. 327). Laugier contends that Hadot links language and praxis, positing philosophy as a practical activity (and evidenced by people like Thoreau), *to transform reality*.

To read well, Laugier (2011) contends, is to give meaning to the words that one reads and the meaning one extends *to life*. Laugier points to Thoreau as a good example of such a reader: "To read *Walden* (as to write *Walden* at Walden) consists in opening our eyes, finding again the meaning of what we see every day, and regaining a lost intimacy with our ordinary existence" (p. 331). Both Thoreau and Hadot demand much from their readers, to be attentive to the text and to

one's life simultaneously. Philosophy is fundamentally practical for both these philosophers, but at the same time they remain “strangers to the ordinary,” says Laugier. Hadot explains why Socrates was called “atopos,” or unclassifiable, in the Platonic dialogues, as a philosopher, a lover of wisdom: “It is the love of this wisdom foreign to the world that makes the philosopher himself foreign to the world” (in Laugier, p. 333).

To follow Hadot’s reading methods to a logical conclusion, Laugier (2011) argues, is to understand philosophy as being involved in making a space *for life*, in becoming *ordinary*, so as not to leave daily life unattended. However, Thoreau knows that his book will only inspire and revolutionize those who *wish* to hear what he says, so that they might react to the demands of conformity. This critique of conformism works in relation to all those who *could speak* in an ideal democratic society (recognizing that structural inequalities make that impossible), but even in such a society there may be a confrontation with the inadequacy of language to say what one wishes to say. Laugier explains, “It is in this inadequacy and this disagreement that the political subject is defined: not in a new founding of the subject through words, but in the smothering of and the demand for her own voice” (p. 333). The ideal political and social configuration would allow words and ideas to circulate freely, in such a way that no one is voiceless, so that all can attend to life with full rigor and awareness.

Ultimately, Laugier (2011) says that these writers (Thoreau, Wittgenstein, & Hadot) share something in common in their coming to read a text and in coming to write a text. They all desire “to reinvent a status for language, to see language as both clear and obscure, public and private, ordinary and departing from the ordinary: signs are dead if they are not integrated in our (form) of life” (p. 336). In encountering philosophy, one must learn to read in this way, to

integrate the words into one's life. One's life is then transformed, and so one's world is revolutionized; language becomes a spiritual exercise in union with others.

Hadot (1995) specifically considers the spiritual exercises suggested by the Stoics: first, they recommend attention, meditation, and remembrance of good things; then, they offer more intellectually focused activities, such as reading, listening, research, and investigation; finally, the Stoics propose self-mastery, accomplishment of duties, and indifference to indifferent things. None of these exercises seem like they would be contentious suggestions for a school curriculum, coupled with attention toward human rights education. The exercises involve contemplation, textual investigation, careful attention to goodness, awareness of one's duties, and acceptance of those things that are beyond one's control. Schools that want to make a deeper commitment to human rights education, in short, can easily adopt these exercises.

To keep a few fundamental principles always "at-hand" (*procheiron*) allows one to practice the rules of life the same as one practices grammar or mathematics. Similarly, one must keep life's events "before one's eyes," in light of the fundamental rules. For example, "concentrate on the present moment;" this fundamental (and some might say simple) principle needs to be kept at hand, before one's eyes, always. To consider this rule more deeply, listen to the words of Marcus Aurelius:

Everywhere and at all times, it is up to you to rejoice piously at what is occurring *at the present moment*, to conduct yourself with justice towards the people who are *present here and now*, and to apply rules of discernment to your *present* representations, so that nothing slips in that is not objective. (Hadot, p. 84)

This present moment, joyous as it can be, does not limit one to a selfish perspective, but it instead helps one turn toward other people and notions of justice. Here again Aurelius clearly

speaks (from many centuries ago) to a contemporary notion of human rights, to move beyond the selfish perspective of one separate from others, and to engage actively with that which one believes to be just and good, to conduct oneself in concert with others.

Related to the idea of justice for all in the present moment, the importance of dialogue cannot be overstated in these ancient traditions. After practicing dialogue with oneself, then one is ready to engage with others. As one enters into Platonic dialogue, the dialectical aspect arises, requiring accord between the questioner and the respondent. Plato writes:

When two friends, like you and I, feel like talking, we have to go about it in a gentler and more dialectical way. ‘More dialectical,’ it seems to me, means that we must not merely give true responses, but that we must base our replies only on that which our interlocutor admits that he himself knows. (Hadot, p. 91)

Hadot stresses that the same dialectical engagement happens in every spiritual exercise; “we must *let* ourselves be changed, in our point of view, attitudes, and convictions. This means that we must dialogue with ourselves, and hence we must do battle with ourselves” (p. 91). For human rights education to be effective, one must be ready to dialogue with oneself and with others, to remain open to new ways of *seeing* the world and *being* in the world. Here, dialogue begins with oneself as one challenges one’s assumptions and view points, and then one must open oneself to other people, to speak in a way one can be understood and to listen with the capacity for changing one’s opinions, to be susceptible to transformation.

Philosophy for Hadot (1995) is a concrete act that can change one’s perception of the world and alter one’s experience of life; philosophy is not just the construction of a theoretical system and the study of a discourse. Hadot thinks the ideas of the Stoics and Epicureans can “nourish the spiritual life of men and women of our times” (p. 280). Philosophy is a form of life

that works as a therapeutic, as well as an encounter with wisdom. Philosophical discourse is not the same thing as philosophy, though philosophy does ultimately require discourse. An Epicurean saying asserts: “The discourse of philosophers is in vain, unless it heals some passion of the soul” (p. 282). These spiritual exercises are intended to lead one toward inner transformation and a changed way of seeing, to restore one as an integral and as an integrated part of the cosmos. One must both act in the service of the human community and consent to the general movement of the universe; this is not a contradiction. Even if the universe seems irrational, humans must remain rational. When acting in accord with reason and objective judgment, in communion with one’s existence in the universe, one can begin to understand the complexity of human rights more deeply. For some people, this understanding may involve an acceptance of the mysterious and mystical aspect of life, an embrace of the cosmos and a rational connection to a cosmic consciousness. For others, the experience of such a transformation may manifest itself in changed relationships to people and the natural world. Ultimately I want to argue here that spiritual exercises, such as those suggested by the Stoic and Epicurean schools, can nourish one’s understanding of the universe and enrich one’s connectivity to humanity, thus strengthening the duty one feels toward the world and fellow human beings. Human rights education, as a result of such spiritual exercises, is not simply about learning about the legal rights every individual possesses; exercises such as there can help to situate these rights in the context of shared humanity as experienced directly through contemplation, rigorous attention to the present, and awareness of one’s existence in the cosmos. While the spiritual imperative of education is hard to articulate and rife with contentious terms that can confuse an attempt at dialogue, these simple spiritual exercises offer a glimpse at how educators might begin to foster a

love for the beauty of the universe and to connect this self-realization to a duty toward one's fellow human beings.

In his last class at College de France in 1991, in speaking of Plotinus, Hadot (1995) said: “In the final analysis, we can scarcely talk about what is most important” (p. 285). For Plotinus, this important aspect was not his teaching, but his union with the One—teaching could only allude to this experience, not lead to it. Only asceticism and a moral life could lead to it. That which is “technical” can be communicated by teaching, but the existential—that which is most important for humans—is not directly communicable. This lack of a language to communicate the ineffable may argue against any attempt to approach the divine in common schooling, but spiritual exercises, as advocated by the ancient schools and revived by Pierre Hadot, offer a practical approach to deeper love of wisdom and a goal for human transformation; one might consider the totality of existence and place oneself within the cosmos in such a way as to engage with the cosmic consciousness, one possible approach to human rights education. I return to Hadot's assertion that spiritual exercises have a place in the philosophical tradition and thus have a role in education as it fosters the love of wisdom and the positing of oneself in the cosmos, raising individuals to a more authentic state of being, with clearer vision of the world, attention to inner peace, and growing awareness of shared freedoms and responsibilities. This approach to living more authentically as a human, offered by Hadot's synthesis of Stoic and Epicurean teachings, offers an excellent framework for considering human rights education, to envision a world where humans treat one another with the dignity they deserve, as beings emerged in and emerging from the totality of the cosmos. In his post-face to *Plotinus*, Hadot (1993) concluded simply and clearly:

Might it not be the case that the greatest lesson which the philosophers of Antiquity—and above all Plotinus—have to teach us is that philosophy is not the complicated, pretentious, and artificial construction of a learned system of discourse, but the transformation of perception and of life, which lends inexhaustible meaning to the formula—seemingly so banal—of the love of the Good?

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Inspired by students and teachers in classrooms where I have taught and learned, I have chosen to grapple with enigmatic issues so that I might better communicate with others more clearly and more intimately. I join with others to learn in the natural world, to appreciate its beauty and intricacy, as well as to better comprehend the human impact upon the planet's resources. Together with a growing number of educators, I want to engage with language so as to better articulate the questions surrounding a spiritual imperative in education, in trying to come to grips with basic ontological positions, epistemological stances, and pedagogical considerations. While incessant questions have not lessened as a result of my research, I am convinced the topic of a spiritual imperative in education is worthy of further thought and discussion. The shape this conversation assumes appears to be amorphous and in constant flux, following the current rhythms of rapid change, as different voices join the song and alternative perspectives shift the view of the unstable ground, both theoretically and practically. To theorize is to behold the world, and in this beholding there are practicalities always at hand, so that to engage with theory is to delve more immediately into the practical world, exercising language, dialogue, and action.

From the outset of this project, I have struggled to grasp how an individual or a group of individuals might come to perceive nebulous concepts like "spirituality." I think about teaching such abstract notions, by examining the assumptions in my formation of these questions. In my inquiries, I move forward, backward, or sideways, to better situate myself for such interrogation, open to learn from often surprising sources. I did not want to begin with a definition or to claim certain territory as mine in this realm of questions, but rather I strove to better hear the current

conversation, to better locate various agents involved, and to consider how educators might progress in these precarious times, when technological-economic solutions are proffered as the answers for all questions. In this project, I have not declared a place of pure clarity or certainty in my attempt to confront the dilemma of spirituality in education, but rather I have tried to both articulate my wonder and admit my frustration with the nebulous nature of my research.

I began with the assumption that existence can be discussed in terms of “spiritual” aspects, in an infinite variety of forms and corresponding communicative acts, including often intangible and frequently inexpressible manifestations. Given the possibility of spiritual understanding, it seemed that education was remiss to neglect a consideration of what seems an essential facet of existence. In the same way one considers the physical body, the intellectual mind, and the emotional person, one can consider spiritual threads that weave throughout the universe. It may be problematic in itself, the disintegration of the cosmos into notions like physical bodies, intellectual minds, and emotional beings, as a study of the questions of spirituality might unveil a greater awareness of connectivity therein, awakening one to a broader and more inclusive totality.

My project has been impelled by a desire to live in a world where it is easier to love, borrowing from the ideas of Paulo Freire. I demand a reconfiguration of life on Earth, so that human beings do not starve for lack of food, do not die for dearth of clean water, do not suffer from the air they breathe. I strive to be involved in co-imagining and co-creating a world where humans are not treated as means to an end, but are treated as ends in themselves, worthy of dignity, equality, and respect. I insist on a world where humans are free to pursue their greatest capabilities, to quest for beauty, to find joy in a sense of duty, to feel the embrace of their place in the natural fabric of this planet, to join in the universal song that celebrates the magnificence

of existence. My academic studies, my pedagogical orientations, and my existential inquiries all swim in the same stream, helping me to bathe in the splendor of the cosmos and to articulate my wonder, my awe (and my uncertainty and confusion) alongside other beings who are likewise committed to experiencing life more deeply, from and toward a loving perspective.

My insistence on reverence and love as integral to education and equality, based on a common existence in a shared world, does not entail a form of oneness equivalent to sameness. Instead, I encourage direct, respectful confrontation with difference, where one openly commits to negotiating unknown conceptual terrain and previously unfelt emotional waters, to better perceive the practices and perspectives of other people, as one simultaneously examines one's own views and traditions. In approaching contextualized education, set in historical terms and cultural frameworks, one might encounter hidden constraints as well as privileges taken for granted, but through this examination one can develop more complex relationships with other people also living complex lives in this world. While a call for a spiritual imperative in education might also require encounters with the unknown (and possibly unknowable), there is much that can be learned in dialogue with others in regards to the social and economic institutions that shape the human life-world. My appeal here is in response to the dominant orientation of education systems, and other social systems, that increasingly look to technological innovation and market inclination toward human learning goals that are too often reduced to acquiescent participation in a global economy, as opposed to ecstatic involvement in a cosmic dance.

I am not suggesting that technological inventions do not offer many life-enhancing opportunities, nor am I implying that the global market is entirely inhuman. However, too often it seems that human problems are viewed as technical engineering puzzles, rather than as part of

human existential journeys. This technological orientation of complex human situations can result in particular practices that dominate institutions of learning. As a result of instrumental framing of problems and corresponding technical solutions, questions of education are too frequently stripped of historical context, but even more worrisome is the trend toward a future that depends upon a techno-economic model for all aspects of the global life-world, limiting the scope of thought and practice, confining the potential of learning, imprisoning the social imaginative powers of people, and diminishing the spiritual potential of humanity.

Questions of spirituality, as I have tried to sculpt them in this project, entail a confrontation with existence in its infinite manifestations, and this engagement involves nurturing ever-deepening relationships with oneself, with other people, with the natural world, and with a more intangible, trans-rational aspect of being in the world that often eludes clear articulation, but nonetheless demands attention. It is this last aspect of spirituality, this nebulous unknown quality of life, that most challenges contemporary secular education to grapple with its current pedagogical aims and its epistemological orientation, as questions of spirituality appear to suggest religious issues, a treacherous zone for secular schools. I wish to move beyond the religious-secular bifurcation, by offering my articulation of a spiritual imperative that does not depend upon choosing particular texts and practices, but at the same time I do not shy away from the inclusion of texts and practices. I suggest an integration of ideas on a global scale, while also remaining conscious of local contexts, opening up a discussion that brings together diverse traditions and sources of knowledge to help educators and students frame ontological inquiries in authentic ways that do not necessarily yield clear identifiable answers, but do bring forth more pertinent questions. Here is a call for more holistic learning, as an alternative to an instrumental mode of schooling that injects students with marketable skills in order to prepare them for roles

in a technological, materialistic, consumer society. Too often contemporary education seems devoid of a sense of wonder and awe, so that both educators and students are unwilling to confront questions that do not necessarily have concrete answers. A spiritual imperative in education will require collective courage to challenge engrained assumptions about learning and teaching, and it will require fostering relationships built on love, compassion, and awareness.

Spirituality here is envisioned as an invisible thread, or of vibrating golden light if one so wishes, that weaves through existence and yet evades clear communication of its vast intricacy, as spiritual experience can often transcend language or other forms of human expression. Nonetheless, as a result of encountering what might be called “a spiritual experience,” so many people try to express the love, wonder, and awe inherent therein. Obscure language and elevated states of awareness are not essential to spiritual understanding, but the ambiguity of certain terms can in fact be helpful in navigating these waters. While the issues can be contentious, this need not be a negative element of such discussion in education, as one learns to negotiate stark differences in perception and articulation of ideas. Disruption is key to the process here, as both the natural world and human beings are confronted in dynamic fashion, beyond a comfortable state of contentedness. A single understanding of spirituality is not required or desired here, or even thought to be possible, and agreement is not necessary for discussion to occur and for spiritual exercises to be practiced.

While the approaches to questions of spirituality in education appear infinitely diverse, at the core of many suggestions lies the practice of contemplation, which entails a special time and space for silence to explore one’s inner world. Silence does not stand in opposition to language, but is strengthened in conjunction with a commitment to dialogue and communication of one’s inner experience, despite the challenge to clearly articulate the most profound moments of clarity

and connectivity. Contemplation is a theme that is unlikely to be challenged in most educational settings, but the underlying question is about where one moves from the place of silence and stillness. What comes next? In the creative act, in bringing forth something into the world (a thought, a spoken phrase, an art work, a song, etc.), one imagines and makes meaning of the universe and locates the human experience therein, expanding ever anew the possibilities of existence. Inner meditations can lead to external manifestations, in ceaseless and surprising ways.

I am not suggesting here that one necessarily *teaches spirituality*, an odd thought, but rather I contend that spiritual aspects are inherent in teaching and learning (in living), and can be nurtured through contemplative, creative, and communicative acts. Spiritual initiatives run throughout education, whether educators attend to these ideas or not. By cultivating awareness of these existential explorations, teachers can help open students and themselves to a more integrated presence in the classroom and the world. Different approaches to spiritual questions allow for infinite depth and breadth in terms of possible texts and practices, allowing for a widened sense of relatedness to the cosmos, as well as cultivating an expanded awareness of shared connectivity in life. Ultimately, accepting a spiritual dimension as part of existence is an individual realization, but one that can be nourished by a collective commitment to more courageous inquiry in classrooms. This exploration might entail sailing across uncharted waters for both educators and students alike, but the discoveries promise to be enlightening and mysteriously profound.

The risk of a “globalized spirituality” is a serious consideration here, and one to be continually confronted, as educational policy could be influenced to further the goals of entrenched dominant interests, so that contemplation becomes a form of mindfulness and

attention for the sake of market demands. Furthermore, dominant notions of any spiritual discourse and practice risk becoming a form of oppression, thrust upon students and teachers who could find themselves silenced or marginalized because of their own beliefs and practices. On the other hand, a pluralistic approach to understanding the questions of spirituality also raises the possibility of an expanded discussion and alternative practices that can expand educational potential.

I have been attempting to put forward one possible approach to discussing the spiritual imperative in education, by combining the ideas of a few different thinkers from various traditions, and considering how these ideas resonate with one another when put in conversation with questions of spirituality. I have chosen these different writers as a result of having encountered them on my own path to making sense of the questions that have arisen for me as a teacher and as a writer, but the list is long of other traditions and writers from whom I might borrow or to whom I could respond with equal importance and further insight. This current project is just the start of my much longer journey as a human being passionate about learning and teaching, as a member of a larger human community on a beautiful planet that nurtures and supports me, and I see countless paths to walk as I go forward from this attempt at articulating the importance of including spiritual concerns in education.

After a review of recent literature concerning spirituality in education, I turned to the ontological and pedagogical implications implicit in my discussion. To posit this dialogue in a context of contemporary times, I looked at how technology frames human interaction with the world and how it affects human beings in terms of understanding and communicating the most fundamental questions of being. A phenomenological approach that followed Martin Heidegger was very helpful here, to frame these questions more clearly, but I chose to put his work

alongside that of Paulo Freire, to ground these ontological ideas more directly in pedagogical terms that are committed to a more just and equal world for human beings. I tried to argue, with Heidegger's help, that the question of technology is ultimately an inquiry into *who* one and is *how* one is in the world. Real people exist in real conditions, and with Freire I point to recurrent systems of oppression that diminish humanity; humans are caught up in technological modes of thinking and being, so that the understanding of technology has significant implications for the ways people interact with each other and with the world, especially important in the realm of teaching and learning.

The phenomenological method here requires a return to the *things* of the world, as integral to one's own existence, but also essential to understand as things *in themselves*. These things exist in horizons of time, unveiling clues as to how I exist in the world at this moment alongside of things and other beings, all in relation to one another. As a teacher engaged in this fundamental inquiry into existence, I ground myself in a praxis of thought and action that remains open to learning in a number of expanding and expansive roles that respond to current historical conditions. Freire helps me to situate myself as a learner and a teacher, as a member of a larger liberating tradition composed of reflexive subjects who act upon the world to transform it in ways that make it less oppressive. Crucially, this pedagogical stance helps direct a phenomenological inquiry through dialogical language in the direction of human-oriented goals grounded in and directed at human dignity, propelled both by and toward love.

Language is posited here not just as a tool for communication, but as a mode through which humans *dwell* in the world. In the act of dwelling, humans can perceive the world *as* world, in the same way that things can be accepted as things in themselves. Language, therefore, cannot be a closed system, so it must be allowed to reveal itself in new modes of openness,

making way for new worlds to be created, but as a world coming to be *as it is*. Words and the world are interdependent in this dialogic relationship. A construct of knowledge emerges through invention, inquiry, and action, as humans struggle for further human liberation. These dialogic relationships are both ontological necessity and pedagogical requirement, as communion with others asserts an essential capacity of being a human who is actively engaged in creating the world.

Pedagogy rooted in hope and love, focused on human liberation, complements in strangely helpful ways a phenomenological inquiry into questions of technology and being. Heidegger's work discloses Being as rooted in a mode of inquiry, whereas Freire encourages a praxis of reflection and action, always with the goal of human liberation from systematic oppression, continuously moving both from and toward a place of human love, an idea largely absent from Heidegger's ideas. Human relationship with technology needs to be closely examined, as its implications go to the core of Being. Technology is not a neutral instrument in the world, and ultimately a relationship with the essence of technology is not just about how humans interact with technological things; much more fundamentally an understanding of technology speaks to the relationship between humans and their existence in the world.

An ontological inquiry, as with any inquiry, occurs within a house of language, Heidegger likes to say, and this is a house continually under renovation and increased occupancy. I argue that the house of language risks becoming a prison, when words become constraints upon experiences that evade clear articulation. If words cannot be found to express one's life-world, this does not mean that life-world does not exist. Human experience in the world is continually shifting along a horizon of time, and a dynamic relationship with other beings is never static or atemporal, and the language capacity of each human is likewise in flux.

As historical beings alive in the present, people remain open to language and an unveiling of the world through language, so that things can reveal themselves as they are in themselves, not simply as one perceives them, otherwise humans would simply encounter themselves everywhere. The dialectical relationship between subject and object produces knowledge through reflexivity, inquiry, and action, and people are subjects interacting with things of the world in a horizon of time, situated in real places, not existing abstractly. Through a phenomenological mode of inquiry, continuously asking further questions, probing deeply into an ontological understanding of things, stepping back at the same time as moving closer into these things, truths can be revealed in this world.

For Heidegger, central to existence is this connection between inquiry and truth. While the constant seeking and grasping of reality is indicative of the technological age, a return to openness of inquiry is necessary for truth to reveal itself, for things to be seen as they are in themselves. Situating all things as standing-reserve negates the Being of beings, and reduces Being to a configuration of uses. Stripped of an understanding of Being as related to truth, humans are reduced to standing-reserve, as beings for use. On the other hand, as beings capable of self-reflection and transformative action in the world, the way in which humans encounter the world holds both danger and saving power. All human beings are capable of oppressing other humans in conditions that dehumanize all, just as all people are capable of liberating other people from such conditions. There is a sense of destining here, as possible worlds emerge, dependent on human action. This act of destining creates possible truths, as things reveal themselves as they are, but humans can be caught up in this destining so that they become beings for use by other beings. Poetically dwelling upon the earth, humans come to express the world as it is in itself, and an intentional aspect of consciousness serves as an impulse toward becoming.

Hope is an ontological requirement in this human project of becoming, as one can participate in re-creating the world to be more loving, just, and humane, and participation is as central to existence as is reflective, critical thought. A destiny of liberation is at stake here, but this destiny is only a possibility; it requires practical action. Whereas the method of phenomenological inquiry focuses on the concrete understanding of Being, pedagogy of consciousness, rooted in critical thought and political action, aims at human needs in particular. As humans, all are involved in self-reflection, as well as reflecting upon things in the world, and as such people can be aware of an unfinished state, continually constructing this shared world.

Human beings assert themselves as something not at all like standing-reserve to be ordered and categorized, when they make themselves conscious, as they re-imagine and re-construct the world. Through continual reflection, inquiry, and action, humans affirm humanity when choosing to partake in the liberation of humans from oppressive systems that limit humanity. The question of technology and the more primary question of existence here is not abstract, lofty speculation, but is basic to understanding the world and the human role in this place and time; expanded consciousness is central to continued liberation of humanity and the possible unveiling of truths. The question of technology must be viewed in relation to the question of Being, and the revelation of Being becomes apparent as people assert themselves as reflective, communicative, loving beings who are actively involved in the unveiling of possible truths in the continual transformation of the world.

For my present effort, Heidegger and Freire draw attention to both the ontological and pedagogical inquiries that speak to my conception of a spiritual imperative in education. A phenomenological approach returns to primary questions of Being, and this mode of inquiry repeatedly circles back to more original questions. As a human capable of such inquiry,

grounded in the temporal now, I am not frustrated by the apparently circular essence of Being-as-questioning and questioning-as-Being. I find strength and clarity in the inquiring mode. My concern with dominant modes of technologically grasping things of the world and my interest in the question of technology are ultimately related to what it means to be a human engaged in inquiry of this type. The positing of things standing-at-hand for human use, in this technological mode of existence and thought, results in the entire world being grasped in this way, until humans themselves are pulled into the frame of existence as things with use-value. This reduces the human experience for all people, as some become seen as means for techno-economic gains, rather than seen as ends in themselves, as sacred beings with infinite possibilities.

While humans are engaged in continual inquiry that involves constructing and communicating meaning through language, I also argue that silence is equally important in considerations of spirituality. Quiet, slow contemplation can be as powerful as the dialogic experience, and through a silent practice, one can arrive into dialogue more fully present, ready to listen to alternative perspectives, as well as prepared to engage in an attempted articulation of those ideas that most elude language. One might consider what it means to ask questions of Being, and also consider what it means to be an educator committed to making a world where it's easier to exist and love more fully.

After situating my project in ontological terms, rooted in existential inquiry alongside clear pedagogical direction, I undertook an effort to posit my work in a more historical context of education that includes the canonical text of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*. By tracing Rousseau's ideas through *Emile*, I perceived his conceptualization of education as it might be approached through an embrace of the "active principle" coupled with ignorance. While Emile is not introduced to any notion like a "Divine Author," the reader of *Emile* is edified repeatedly

as to the dangers of introducing ideas to young learners that do not arise directly from their own perceptions and sensations. The protective tutor, Jean-Jacques, prefers to guide Emile away from knowledge beyond his full conception, preserving innocence and ignorance. This tradition continues today, in many ways, when the many questions of spirituality are viewed as too contentious for consideration in secular school settings.

To understand something, for Rousseau, is to be grounded in one's senses, modes of perception that need to be cultivated in nature. Understanding comes through the senses, and judgment arises from the same senses that serve as a basis for intellectual reason. It is important to grasp Rousseau's ideas linking sensations and reason, as his avoidance of religious ideas are related to this method of teaching (or not teaching), as one avoids words and ideas that a child cannot understand. I argue that Rousseau's methods continue in many schools today, with the grounding of knowledge in certain levels of perception, as well as the general avoidance of spiritual matters.

I try to bring out the tensions that are active throughout Rousseau's text, and to connect these tensions to contemporary practices in education. The notion of a Divine Author is introduced early to the reader of Emile, but the young Emile knows nothing of this Supreme Being, and so he sees himself as the author of his own life. Jean-Jacques, as centaur-tutor, literally and metaphorically teaches his student to run and hunt, and Emile learns to satisfy his own desires, as well as learning to accept ignorance of that which he cannot understand. The ideal education, for Rousseau, is about experiencing the world with one's senses, and then comparing these sensations to arrive at ideas, to move from feeling to judging. The "Incomprehensible Being" is still unknown (being incomprehensible, naturally) to Emile at the age of fifteen, as Jean-Jacques has kept him ignorant of any such ideas, because they do not arise

from experiencing the world with one's senses, but the tutor assures the reader that ignorance eventually will lead the student to natural religion and worship of a supreme being.

Emile can come to know the Divine Author later in life, because he has grounded his own judgments in sensations based in nature, as intended by the Author without Emile's awareness of this supreme being's goodness or existence. Ultimately Rousseau (through the authorial construct of the Vicar) points to the one book that is open to all people, the book of nature, a book required for the proper education of people, and he urges all to contemplate and worship the eternal Author of the universe, with the book of nature as holy text. Such contemplation and worship is available to Emile as he enters manhood, and he comes to natural religion without the confusion and corruption of others' opinions that lead to the degeneration of nature that originates as entirely good.

Ignorance operates at the heart of Jean-Jacques' pedagogy, throughout the five books of Emile, as he advocates total ignorance of certain ideas, preferring his student to learn from the book of nature. The natural world, originating from the hands of the divine Author (a Supreme Being that should remain unknown to the young learner), provides the source of wisdom to control the passions that arise naturally in life. The hypothetical tutor offers a natural education that teaches the student to control these passions, so that anger and evil does not arise from one's wants and needs. The path of nature will not lead to domination and servitude which is the present state of society, Rousseau teaches, but rather an education in nature focuses on sensations and perceptions that lead to judgment and reason. Human understanding needs to arise from experience in the natural world for it to lead to reason and eventual love of others. At the core is self-love, from which love of others can arise naturally and rationally, and finally love for the Author of all things. A solid knowledge base can only arise if pedagogy focuses on the book of

nature, and if an epistemology of ignorance is embraced. Emile's reason will necessarily lead him to natural religion, and so the reader of *Emile* presumably must follow in that direction along with Rousseau.

A number of radical assertions can be found in *Emile*, and these ideas still offer helpful lessons for my own project. First, nature is put forward as the prime teacher and textbook for learning about oneself and the world, and self-sustenance seems necessary if one is to avoid eventual resentment and anger because of one's dependence on others. This individualized conceptualization of existence is clearly a problematic assertion, atomizing humans into single components outside of duty and responsibility to others, ignorant of life's interdependence. Second, Rousseau argues for the omission of particular ideas, such as any notion of the divine, as concepts that cannot be grasped and therefore are not worth contemplation. For my own argument with regards to a spiritual imperative in education, I cannot accept this omission of the ambiguous aspects of existence. As part of these omissions, there also entails an acceptance of ignorance, that one need not consider things that cannot be fully understood in clearly sense-perceptive terms. However, at the heart of Rousseau's argument, hidden behind the mask of the Vicar, is a call for a return to the natural world as a place for learning about oneself and the divine thread that moves through the universe.

Further, to ignore Rousseau's contribution to education is to be ignorant of the tensions that persist in secular education, as questions of spirituality are often avoided due to their dangerous potential, the misunderstandings, the religious implications, and the spoiling of a "natural" mind. I ask how Rousseau's ideas for a natural education might be re-conceptualized in today's technologically driven society, and how educators might confront the silent acceptance of ignorance concerning the spiritual imperative. As a beginning, one might plunge

into the natural world to experience for oneself the spiritual realm, not as an escape from the world and from the human predicament, but to know it more robustly. This exploration need not be experienced from a place of ignorance, and educators ought not feel constrained by mandated omission of spiritual ideas.

After walking the countryside with Rousseau's hypothetical student, I descended into real waters with philosopher Henry David Thoreau, grounding myself in the present moment in time, planting my feet firmly in the natural world in order to confront reality as both practical and spiritual, without any clear delineation between the two. The profane is not separate from the sacred here; to plant a garden is to cultivate one's soul, to dig in dirt is to delve into mystery, to swim in the sea is to bathe in eternity, always in the present moment. Thoreau documents trivial, daily tasks and thoughts of living in the woods of Concord, but at the same time he writes both a sacred text and a philosophical treatise that has guided me in an approach to thinking about environmental education and natural aesthetics. Most importantly, for my purposes here, Thoreau offers a grounded approach to spirituality that keeps one's hands feeling for the tangible world, immersing oneself in cold waters, feeling for the bottom, hearing the songs of nature, exploring one's responses to the mysteries of existence. Thoreau stands as a seer on the edge of time, reaching back into the past for the world's wisdom, reaching forward into the future to offer a helping hand. I listen and hear his appeal to humanity, to live more deliberately, more beautifully, more dutifully, more naturally, and I echo his call. To consider the many questions of spirituality in education involves connecting with the natural world as part of the cosmos, not distinct from it, as spiritual concerns intersect with natural beauty, human duty, and committed responsibility to the world in which humans live.

The call from Concord's chanticleer resonates in contemporary environmentalist movements that embrace both aesthetics and empirical science to enrich and embolden an appeal to advance the human perspective of nature from simple beauty, to include duty. Thoreau helps in understanding the historical foundations of current movements, to see how environmental matters have an aesthetic component that needs to be acknowledged and further developed, so that environmental aesthetics extend beyond the "beauty" of nature if individuals are to understand the "duty" required toward nature. Nature does not involve just aesthetic experience or scientific discovery, although both of these aspects are present in natural experience. An education in harmony with the natural world offers myriad meanings, both aesthetic and scientific, and it also offers opportunities for losing the world and finding oneself, while simultaneously losing oneself and finding the world. This subtle dynamic involves both grounding oneself in and transcending reality, just as environmental and aesthetic education demand attention to intricate scientific detail *and* awareness of mysterious natural grace.

In considering human interaction with the world, Thoreau reminds humans that the vast universe expands beyond a personal view of it, and one needs to posit oneself in relation to this perspective. A single understanding of nature is a foolish approach, so Thoreau demands that people actively pursue more experiences in the sacred natural world. Similarly, there is an array of approaches to an environmental aesthetic, to move from beauty to duty, to better understand possible human roles in relation to the natural world. By walking with Thoreau in my consideration of contemporary approaches to education, I hope to deepen education's commitment to nature and to expand possible responses to aesthetic education. Most importantly, for my current project, I want to encourage an awakened sense of nature that connects to questions of spirituality in education, so that educators and students might awaken

anew to existence, to one another, to nature. This does not entail a transcendental evasion of the real world at all, but instead requires that one participate actively in the wonder of one's surroundings.

When one takes time to discover nature accurately and more completely, by engaging with scientific investigation *and* by allowing one's emotions to be saturated and affected by the splendor and beauty of nature, one can ultimately discover a space within nature that allows for transcendence of the world through deep experience of the world. Exploring the woods and the pond, Thoreau opened his senses to the infinite, descended into the deep waters of the pond, and found solid ground there upon which he might stand securely. Rather than being content with solidity of stone, literally and metaphorically, he chose to dig down into the stones, searching for more original ground, to understand the natural world that much more intensely. Ever deepening interactions with nature allow for richer relationships to evolve between humans and the environment in which they live, and a natural aesthetic works as a crucial stone in the foundation upon which one might build a sense of beauty and duty to the natural world. I echo Concord's chanticler in a call to humanity, to help locate humans in the present moment, to awaken to a new world where one can know and live more profoundly. The spiritual imperative in education is as real as the stones at the bottom of Walden Pond, but the depth of the pond cannot be simply sounded with a string and stick. Spirituality here is the cold, dark water that can be never fully known, but it also stands as a symbol for duty and beauty. Educators and students can learn to live deliberately with Thoreau, to confront mysteries of existence, to celebrate the natural world, and to assume a role of duty in approaching this world that sustains humanity as part of a bountiful cosmos.

From this place of close relationship with the natural world, in community with fellow human beings, I move more deliberately toward an assertion for human rights education, rooted in a spiritual imperative that posits the individual in a cosmic context, as advocated by a more ancient set of traditions. Thoreau, I think, set up such a move quite effectively, as his divine transcendence is just as much grounded in daily reality. A relationship to nature begins in the things themselves, hearkening back to Heidegger, with the water and the stones, and expands to include the totality of existence, to involve humans in a larger cosmic fabric, so that one knows oneself more fully as one encounters existence in its sublime complexity.

From Walden Pond and the woods of Concord, I return to town and people there, to discuss the necessity of human rights education, by exploring the notion of “spiritual exercises.” These exercises have to do with conduct of life, to transform one’s vision of the world, and a metamorphosis of individuals. For my project, in calling attention to the spiritual imperative in education, I find the pursuit of education for a deepened understanding of human rights may be strengthened by a turn to antiquity, to see the philosophical act as something more than exegetical exercise. Following the work of Pierre Hadot, I hold that philosophy is about *being* more fully human, raising the individual from an inauthentic condition of life to a state in which one attains more self-consciousness, a clearer vision of the world and inner peace. In putting forward this assertion, I look at how schools might address the inauthenticity that results from a failure to encourage such spiritual exercises. I urge educators to join in a transformation of seeing and being, for both their students and themselves, to help them move towards peace and deep awareness of consciousness. Then, with such awareness, spiritual exercises can help encounter one’s humanity in a more comprehensive way, and education is thus laid open for one possible approach to better understand and strengthen human rights. Quite simply, by

experiencing humanity in more profound and tangible modes of existence, one comes to respect the rights of other humans based on a shared sense of being. Hadot is helpful in this regard, to look at the history of philosophical traditions in order to locate the time when some philosophy shifted from a practice of spiritual exercises to become focused more on cognitive exegetical practices. A tracing of philosophy and a return to such exercises is invaluable for fostering human rights education, grounding theory in daily committed practices.

Philosophy involves the practice of spiritual exercises, not just rigorous critical analysis and textual exegesis; that is, one must engage theoretical conceptions for true transformation to occur. Similarly, it is not enough to theorize about human rights; one must live the language. Education has an opportunity to engage with the human rights discourse in a practical way, to bring about actual changes (echoing the pedagogy suggested by Paulo Freire), coming back to the human condition in particular places. Human rights need to be understood and enacted, just as many ancient texts need to be comprehended and practiced, and innumerable traditions can assist educators move toward such transformation, one possible path for my future research. Reconfiguring one's relationship to the universe, one transforms the understanding of what it means to be human, and there in that deepened awareness, one can more fully understand the necessity of human rights education. The world perceived in one's consciousness merges with one's consciousness itself, plunging one into totality as if one is plunging into a cold pond, and so existence is revealed in more of its complex totality. If human rights and dignity are not assured for all humans, the beautiful totality disintegrates and consciousness is threatened with a fractured sense of self in relation to the cosmos.

To speak concretely, as an example of the spiritual exercises suggested by an ancient tradition, the Stoics recommended careful attention, quiet meditation, and continued

remembrance of good things; they also offered activities such as reading, listening, research, and investigation; finally, they proposed dedicated self-mastery, commitment to duty, and indifference to indifferent things. None of these exercises seem like they would be contentious suggestions for a school curriculum, nor would it seem problematic when coupled with attention toward human rights education. The suggested exercises involve contemplation, textual investigation, attention to goodness, awareness of human duties, and acceptance of those things beyond human control. Schools that want to make a deeper commitment to human rights education, in short, can easily adopt these exercises. Attention to life in the present moment, joyous as it can be, does not limit one to a selfish perspective, but instead helps one turn toward other people and notions of justice founded on deeper human experience. Here I look to move beyond the selfish perspective of one separate from others, and to engage actively with that which one believes to be just and good, to conduct oneself in concert with others. Related to the idea of justice, the importance of dialogue cannot be overstated in these ancient schools, just as quiet contemplation plays a key role. After practicing dialogue with oneself, one is ready to engage with others, and entering into dialogue, the dialectical aspect arises, requiring accord between participants, to speak truly and to listen openly, to allow the possibility of transformation in thought and practice. For human rights education to be effective, one must be ready to dialogue with oneself and with others, to remain open to new ways of *seeing* the world and *being* in the world. Here, dialogue begins with oneself as one challenges given assumptions and viewpoints, and then one must be open to the views of other people, to speak in clear terms and to listen with the capacity for changing one's opinions, to be susceptible to transformation.

My interaction with philosophy is a concrete act that can change my perception of the world and alter my experience of life; it is not just the construction of a theoretical system and

the study of a discourse. Philosophy works as a therapeutic, as well as an encounter with wisdom, but the discourse of philosophy is in vain unless it heals the human condition. These spiritual exercises are intended to lead one toward inner transformation and a changed way of seeing, to restore one as an integral and as an integrated part of the cosmos, which then influences one's conduct in the world. One must both act in the service of the human community and consent to the general movement of the universe; this is not a contradiction. When one feels in communion with one's existence in the universe, one can begin to understand the complexity of human rights more deeply. For some, understanding involves an acceptance of the mysterious and mystical aspect of life, an embrace of the cosmos and a rational connection to expanding consciousness. This experience of such transformation may manifest itself in changed relationships to people and the natural world. Ultimately I argue that spiritual exercises, such as those offered by the ancient traditions, can nourish an understanding of the universe and enrich one's connectivity to humanity, thus strengthening the duty one feels toward the world and fellow human beings. Human rights education, connected to spiritual exercises, is not simply about learning about the legal rights every individual possesses; exercises such as these can help to situate rights in the context of shared humanity as experienced directly through contemplation, rigorous attention to the present, and deep awareness of shared existence. While the spiritual imperative of education can be hard to articulate and difficult to discuss, these ancient spiritual exercises offer a glimpse at how educators might foster a love for the universe and to connect this self-realization to a sense of duty toward one's fellow human beings.

While technical lessons can be easily communicated by teaching, the existential lessons of life are not always directly communicable. This lack of clear language to communicate the ineffable may argue against *any* attempt to approach the spiritual imperative in common

schooling, but exercises like those advocated by the ancient schools offer a practical approach to deeper love of wisdom and a goal for human transformation. Through such practice, one might consider the totality of existence and situate oneself within the cosmos in such a way as to further engage with consciousness, one possible approach to human rights education. I hold that spiritual exercises have a place in the philosophical tradition and thus have a role in education as it fosters the love of wisdom and the positing of oneself in the cosmos. This ancient approach to living more authentically as a human offers a framework for considering human rights education, to envision a world where humans treat one another with the dignity they deserve, as beings connected with the totality of the cosmos.

Moving Forward

My academic research and my pedagogical methods merge with my life in continually shifting and transformative ways, and my approach to education is framed in terms of spirituality and the questions that arise around that word. The questions that I encounter when discussing spirituality and education have to do with developing deeper relationships; one relates to oneself, to other humans, to the social world at large, to the natural environment of our planet, and to the cosmos and existence as a whole. For educators and students, these relationships all deserve equal attention and development, requiring both disciplined commitment and unwavering openness, as well as the cultivation of an awareness of the inextricable interconnections between these relationships. That is, one cannot think of one's "inner world" without considering one's "outer world," just as one cannot think about Earth without the context of the universe. Just as importantly, my conceptualization of spirituality is not simply about recognizing rationalized, compartmentalized patterns of relations to life and existence, but spirituality also entails an awe and reverence that must be nurtured and challenged continuously. Furthermore, it involves a

direct confrontation with difference, where one must struggle to understand alternative perspectives and practices with respect and love; these differences might demand that one examine one's own life, cultural traditions, and daily practices, considering them in a critical new light. Spirituality, then, is not simply an aspect of human existence, but works as a set of practices that are not set in stone. Instead, it is the wind that sways the trees, stirs the desert sands, drives the ocean waves, and carries songs across the sky. The wind is invisible to the eye, but as it blows, one can feel it and perceive its existence in everything; hear the bamboo whisper in the morning, see a lover's hair ruffle in afternoon sun, sniff the scent of frangipani on the night breeze, and know the wind is there.

Human existence is thus framed in terms of spirituality, these sacred relationships that change and are changed with every breath, and learning needs to acknowledge and develop these relationships, allowing time for students to listen and express themselves, to enjoy silence as much as the spoken word, to find space for creative moments and compassionate practices, to engage with the natural world just as one does with oneself, gently and sympathetically, with wonder and awe. At the core of such learning is love, but not a love that is simply accepted as present so that one can move on to other matters; love is that from which one acts and is that toward which one moves. It is the wind that blows and it is the tree that is blown. As an educator and as a student, and ultimately as a human being, I strive to strengthen my spiritual relationships, to continually challenge myself intellectually and emotionally, to share the wonder of life with others around me, to enjoy the beauty of the natural world, and to struggle for a social system that accords everyone this opportunity to develop these spiritual relationships, so that all people can flourish as human beings in this world, so that humanity itself might feel more intimately the vast connectivity and dependency all have upon one another as mortal beings.

In concluding this current project, let me return to the beginning of my endeavor. The decision to consider questions of spirituality in education was largely impelled by my experiences as a teacher, as well as driven by my own compulsion to delve more deeply into life, to ask the questions without simple answers. In this way I connect my existential inquiry as a learner with my creative expression as a writer, and furthermore I reach out as an educator to colleagues and students around me, to develop a community of trust and respect where questions of spirituality can be examined and practices can be lived. I desire dialogue that digs into these difficult ideas and at the same time I call for a practice of contemplative silence that complements language's communicative attempts. I turn to the natural world for lessons not always found in books and lecture halls, and I demand environmental education that helps to protect the planet where humans make their home. I look to artists of the world to provide alternative perspectives, to challenge current ways of encountering and discussing beauty, to offer aesthetic experiences that can transcend language's bounds. Finally, I open myself to ancient traditions for lessons and practices that might offer more authentic engagement with existence, not only to live my own life more authentically, but to develop a deeper relationship with humanity itself, and then to root the notion of human rights in the ground of being. This written effort is only the very beginning of my next phase of life as a student and teacher, so that I may continually swim more deeply in the profound waters of wonderment, so that I may more courageously walk the world with a sense of duty to my fellow beings and Earth itself, so that I may soar more celestially to secure a view of the cosmos as it reveals itself in ever unending magnificent complexity.

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