TRANSFORMING SELF AND SUBJECT: TOWARD AN INTEGRATIVE SPIRITUAL PEDAGOGY

Hart, T. (2006). Transforming Self and Subject: Toward an Integrative Spiritual Pedagogy. in Educational Futures: Neo-humanism and transformative pedagogy. *Edited by Sohail Inayatullah, Ivana Milojevic, Clement Chang and Marcus Bussey. Taipei, Tamkang University Press.*

Our lives are full of moments when we have a choice between going a little deeper or moving on to the next item, person, or task. When we eat a morsel of food, how much do we allow the taste and texture to wrap around our tongue before bringing in the next mouthful? When an idea or feeling (or a person) comes before us, in which moments do we open to it, and in which do we let it pass by? In the times when we do go a little deeper, experience is not measured by quantity but is instead perceived as quality or intensity. Both experiences have value but our lives are most significantly shaped by the intensities, the moments of greater depth. Entering into depth involves an opening or expansion of consciousness and connection, fundamental characteristics of spiritual knowing (Hart, Nelson, Puhakka, 2000). Through such opening we travel past points of certainty and meet both the world and ourselves in fresh ways.

Education is no different; the opportunity to open more deeply is always present. In contemporary practice, too often curricular expectations, looming standardized tests, a modernist approach to pedagogy and general anxiety push us toward *moving on* rather than *moving into*. On the educational surface lives information and there is often a tendency to skim along at this level and accumulate what we can, assuming this to be the goal. But elevating information acquisition to the goal of education glazes the surface of learning and obscures information's potential as a portal into depth, presence, intensity, and spirituality. When we dive in a little deeper, subject and Self open and both have the potential to be transformed.

A pedagogy of depth involves a consideration of inner significances as well as outer concerns. It does not require that more information be added to the contemporary curriculum, but invites us to the inside of the subject matter, the other and the Self. This

is a curriculum where the largest questions sit alongside the smallest, and all are fair game.

Suggesting a spiritual approach to education does not necessitate additional content or a religious curriculum. Even within a religious curriculum, it is not necessarily the information exchanged that determines whether this has been a spiritual encounter but instead the quality of that exploration. Jesus or Buddha, history or biology can quickly become either another commodity for a banking model of education or a living subject. A religious text or biology text becomes spiritual sustenance depending on the quality of meeting, the depth of engagement. If we are attending only to the surface of facts and factoids information has little chance of resonating down to our soul. On the other hand, even the most seemingly two dimensional content, the definition of a word, for example, comes to life and in turn brings *us* to life if we can encounter it deeply, perhaps through finding the beauty of its written form, the history of its origin, the phenomenology inherent in its etymology, the relevance of the word in one's life today. Like life itself, these subjects are living words, living subjects that are encrypted. The code is broken and the subject revealed only to the degree that we open to them.

The Spiritual Child

Emphasizing the depths of subject and Self leads to questions about the inner life and capacities of the student. If we are to open to students' inner life as well as that of the subject, will we find something that will serve spiritual growth? Is there a spiritual consciousness to be drawn out?

There has been a long dominant assumption that children are amoral or even immoral, they do not have capacity for spiritual considerations or experience and therefore religious, character or spiritual education must shape or mold virtue from the outside in (see e.g., Goldman, 1964; Wilber, 1996). However, children's spirituality may exist apart from adult rational and linguistic conceptions and knowledge about a religion. While they may not be able to articulate a moment of wonder or conceptualize a religious concept, their presence–their mode of being and knowing in the world–may be distinctly spiritual. As Gordon Allport (1955) suggested, "the religion of childhood may be of a very special order" (p. 101). There is growing evidence that children have

a rich and remarkable spiritual life (e.g., Armstrong, 1984; Hart, 2003, 2004a, Hay and Nye, 1998; Hoffman, 1992; Piechowski, 2002; Robinson, 1983).

The challenge for education that attends to character, whether in a secular or a religious setting, is to find a balance between drawing out the organic spiritual character, capacities, and compassion from within the child while offering our view of the "good life" from the outside in. There is not space here to engage in this discussion of children's innate spiritual presence, but the presupposition held in this chapter, based on growing evidence, is that children do have a rich and formative spiritual life, one that needs to be included as we consider educational goals and practices. These capacities often serve as a powerful wellspring for wisdom and wonder, calling and compassion (Hart, 2003, 2004a).

The critical implication for education is that the task of spiritually oriented education is to engage and draw out these potentials as much as it is providing students with knowledge and skills, religious or otherwise. The focus in this chapter is on an integrative pedagogy of depth that draws out subject and Self, including those innate capacities. This is an invitation for the process of education to become a wisdom tradition itself.

What follows will be a very brief sketch of some contours of that depth. It suggests a direction for teaching and learning in any moment. The six layers that follow might be used as a goal in curriculum design or as a self-assessment to determine how well the subject and the Self were plumbed.

In this map, *information* is given its rightful place as currency for the educational exchange. Information can then open up into *knowledge*, where direct experience often brings together the bits of information into patterned wholes involving mastery and skill. Knowledge then opens the possibility of cultivating *intelligence*, which can cut, shape, and create information and involves a dialectic of the intuitive and the analytic. This is followed by the layer of *understanding* that takes us beyond the power of intelligence to see through the eye of the heart. Understanding contrasts and balances objectivism and offers a way of knowing that serves character and community. Education then has the possibility for cultivating *wisdom*, which sees from a greater height and blends insight into what is true with an ethic of what is right. Finally the depths lead to the possibility of creative *transformation* changing both the known and the knower and generating new information to be explored.

This learning process might be thought of as microgenetic development, meaning the series of developmental changes that occur even in a single thought, feeling, or lesson. Microgenetic development differs from the development of the individual over time (ontogenetic). It is a process that can happen in an instant or over the course of an assignment or exercise and does so through epistemic shifts–expanded ways of knowing. In fact, each level represents an expansion of knowing which in turn reveals more of the subject.

It may be easier to recognize the spiritual nature of the deeper dimensions that will be mentioned, such as understanding or wisdom, but it is also the whole movement toward depth, transcendence and integration that embodies the spiritual impulse. What follows will necessarily be very brief; for further explication see Hart (2001a).

The Currency of Information

This is the golden (or maybe the silicon) age of information. Information abounds like never before and each time we look, the amount available seems to have grown exponentially. We have access to everything from pipe bombs to prophecy. We no longer need priest, permission, or professor to gain access to the mysteries, they are available in the bookstore or with a click of the mouse. Not so long ago we might be killed for possessing, or even mentioning the secrets. But today there is such a remarkable access to information that we may even begin to wonder if the world wide web is becoming the world wide mind–the collective unconscious of the planet in digital form (see Gackenbach, 1998). Computer technology and the internet represent the "second coming" in information access, the first being Gutenburg's invention of the printing press in the fifteen century. Both have precisely the same effect of providing access to more ideas more directly. But what are the implications for education?

Education gathers around information. But amidst a deluge of information what is the appropriate function of information for the educational endeavor and how should teachers and students hold and handle it? How does the silicon or the ink get alchemized into the gold of knowledge and more?

Information involves discrete facts and skills. Information includes the average temperature in London, the correct spelling of a word, the chemical formula for salt. It is the currency of education and will remain so. Most of educational debate orbits around which and

how much information should be passed along, and how well are we doing at it. Up to a point this is reasonable. It is certainly appropriate to share information and develop basic skills. As Aristotle says: "It is clear that children should be instructed in some useful things–for example, in reading and writing–not only for their own usefulness but also because many other sorts of knowledge are acquired through them" (in Baskin, 1966, p. 8). But we miss the forest for the twigs if this is our exclusive focus. What has happened is that the currency for learning–information–becomes the goal in and of itself; the dominant motif is one of acquisition.

Plato (cited in Baskin, 1966) tells us that when we focus on mere acquisition, we create "imitators" (p. 544), instead of artists. Whitehead (1967) says that "a merely well-informed man is the most useless bore on God's earth" (p. 1). Even at the University level he notes the consequence of reproducing mere imitators: "I have been much struck by the paralysis of thought induced in pupils by the aimless accumulation of precise knowledge, inert and unutilized" (p. 37). The task of education is, in part, to help children think and act well, not to teach them what to think. However, in a climate dominated by acquisition the organic and intuitive process of learning can get reduced to a linear downloading of discrete, often out-of-context content. Too often there is no time for the appreciation of and attention to value and meaning. This downloading is serious business and so learning to play with the information becomes a distraction from the curricular goal. The result is demotivation, and a loss of wonder and curiosity. Relevance and resonance are necessary to enliven and deepen the learning process.

Relevance implies that an idea or topic relates to us or something we are close to. If we find interest or meaning (relevance) in something, we pay attention and tend to learn it. Few things are more straightforward in life. Interest enables the three year old to know the names of dinosaurs, including which ones eat meat. It allows the child who struggles with simple mathematics to be able to interpret and memorize baseball statistics; children who have trouble with basic written language skills have little difficulty memorizing and writing the words to popular songs. Interest means that emotions have been engaged and we know that cognition and emotion are interdependent. Emotion activates attention which drives learning and memory.

Resonance literally implies that something vibrates us. Challenge, curiosity, rich sensory experience, and juicy information wakes us up producing an echo or resonance within us. As with art, it is not just the superficial outline, contours, or the shape of the information; "there is

something additional, a breath that draws your breath into its breathing, a heartbeat that pounds on yours" (Davis, 1992, p. 16).

The source for resonant exchange is the information and its particular form of presentation). Superficially presented information or information out of context is less likely to resonate within us. As Emerson says: "Nothing interests us which is stark or bounded, but only what streams with life" (in Sealts, 1992, p. 246). Great teachers know their subject deeply enough to bring forth its presence and vitality–its streaming life.

Mastering the Puzzle of Knowledge

Knowledge involves the comprehension of systems of information instead of simply discrete pieces. Having knowledge means holding together the puzzle of information and implies the basic ability to use information. At the deep end there may be comprehension and mastery over a domain or skill. The debater can make a reasoned and measured argument, the mechanic diagnoses the car problem, the writer shapes a story. Whereas acquisition is the motif when information is seen as the goal, mastery, in the form of skill or comprehension, is the high water mark of knowledge.

Beyond commonly understood meanings of knowledge as systems of information (e.g., taxonomy of plants) and as ability (e.g., applying a mathematical formula) it may also be thought of as a process of valuing; this meaning is subtler. . As fallout from the quest for scientific absolutes, knowledge is often understood to be independent from values and valuing, thus remaining "pure," "scientific," and "true." However, gaining knowledge is ultimately entwined with valuing. That which we select to remember or master and the way in which we view it is done so in a way that involves valuing. The chef filets the fish in one style over another because he or she has placed a higher priority on an outcome–for example, speed, or safety, or visual or gustatory aesthetics. When we gain knowledge we co-construct content and worth through our presuppositions, perceptual filters, and our intention. So knowledge, rather than being simply a static, abstract entity, is laden with value and is also in flux–it is an "undivided whole in flowing movement" (Bohm, 1981, p. 9). The implication is that attention to the subjective process of valuing is integral to the development of knowledge and begins an opening to self-awareness and experimentation with values in general. Bohm contends that the fragmentation of knowledge and

the separation of knowledge from values has "helped to lead not only to a dangerously irresponsible use of knowledge, especially scientific, but even more to a general loss of meaning in life as a whole (p. 8).

Perhaps the most universal way of moving information into the pattern wholes of knowledge is through offering material in the ways that we live and understand our lives: through stories and metaphors. Stories and metaphors offer patterns of meaning that may be interpreted at many different levels. They weave bits and pieces into patterned wholes located in time, space, with history and direction–just like our lives. Stories, whether the story of a biological cell, a metaphysical idea, or an historic event, connect ideas and events into the stream of life, to the "pattern that connects" as Gregory Bateson named it. Inevitably we act according to our stories (e.g., "I am a good student." "The world is round."). This learning is most actively engaged in the power of community, where we test out our stories in dialogue with others.

To move information toward knowledge, and activity toward mastery, ideas need to be encountered, played with, and used; "ideas which are not utilized are positively harmful. By utilising an idea, I mean relating it to that stream, compounded of sense perceptions, feelings, hopes, desires, and of mental activities adjusting thought to thought, which forms our life" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 3). Not just what we encounter but the way we encounter it is crucial as the valuing process, like skill or comprehension, grows from encounter. Swedenborg (in Blackmer, 1991, p. xxv) suggested that through this active engagement we grow or "make soul." First-hand knowledge or making contact (Hart, 1997) is at the heart of engagement. Whitehead (1967) writes: "The second-handedness of the learned world is the secret of its mediocrity (p. 51). . . . If you want to understand anything, make it yourself (p. 53). . . . Education must pass beyond the passive reception of the ideas of others" (p. 47). A long tradition of educators have recognized and advocated the active engagement that develops mastery of knowledge (e.g., Rousseau, 1957; Pestalozzi's, 1951; Dewey, 1963; Freire 1974).

The Power of Intelligence

Intelligence involves the ability to both use information and knowledge, and to create it; intelligence shapes and creates knowledge. It cuts with the knife of analytic thought and reconstructs through creative synthesis and imagination. The capacity for critical examination

and evaluation open up closed systems of knowledge; knowledge and information can be taken out of context, recontextualized and can be manipulated for one's own uses. As Krishnamurti (1974) says "intelligence uses knowledge" (p. 29) and this involves the capacity to think clearly. In intelligence, judgment overtakes mere opinion, and multiple perspectives emerge as the world is perceived more fully. Rather than seeing either/or binaries, intelligence sees the multiplicity of the world–"either, or, or, or" endlessly along with immeasurable combinations and relationships.

The Greek philosophers distinguished between "the fact that" and "the reason why" (Gray, 1968, p. 17). While knowledge and information deal with "the fact that," intelligence can take up "the reason why." And in this way intelligence is about the way knowledge is held and handled. This is the "art of the utilization of knowledge" (Whitehead, 1929/1967, p. 6). Training for intelligence involves cultivating thinking rather than mandating what to think.

As part of training for intelligence there is a shift from accepting and amassing answers, as is more typical at the levels of information and knowledge, to challenging problems through asking questions. In contemporary schooling

> Neither teachers nor students are willing to undertake "risks for understanding"; instead, they content themselves with safer "correct answer compromises." Under such compromises . . . [education is considered] a success if students are able to provide answers that have been sanctioned as correct. (Gardner, 1991, p. 150)

Gardner (1991) summarizes several experiments, from physics to the humanities, in which even high achievers are unable to apply and perform outside a limited classroom context and instead fall back on mental explanations and strategies that were established in preschool years. While the volume of information accumulated was impressive, their intelligence did not grow sufficiently to use the information in working on an unfamiliar task.

Undergirding intelligence is the activity of knowing. Rather than emphasize various forms in which intelligence emerges (mathematical, spacial, etc.) as Gardner (1983) has been so influential in doing, the focus here is on the aspects of knowing that are common across all of them. Once knowing is freed, it is able to express itself in infinite variety of integrated "intelligences."

The activity of intelligence can be fostered through (at least) three general functions: the skills of rational-empiricism, the development of logics and questioning, and the self-reflection of phenomenology (see Hart, 1998; 2001 for an elaboration of these dimensions).

While often equated with a purity of linear logic, the activity of intelligence is multifaceted and operates as a dialectic of the intuitive and the analytic (Hart, 1998). The mind reveals quantum leaps in pattern recognition, creative synthesis, and understanding that can not be explained by linear processing. By itself linear, sequential logic reveals only a partial view. As William James (1909) declares: "The one thing it [sequential logic] cannot do is to reveal the nature of things." (p. 252). The conscious aims of education can include the cultivation of both sides of this dialectic.

We grow intelligence when we move beyond seeing the goal as the simple regurgitation of facts, and even mastering knowledge. Of equal importance to the number of correct spelling words or facts repeated for the test, is how the student is learning to use their mind–to unfold their potential for concentration, creative expression, precise analysis, intuitive insight, and also (as we will see in the next sections) for love and wisdom.

Intelligence is not the apex of human development, in fact, intelligence by itself can enable brutality. Krishnamurti (1974) tells us, "You have to be educated so that you become a really beautiful, healthy, sane, rational human being, not a brutal man with a clever brain who can argue and defend his brutality" (p.62). Avoiding brutality involves spiraling inward toward self-knowledge and toward the heart of understanding.

The Heart of Understanding

The origin of the word "understanding" means literally to stand under or among. This implies crossing boundaries inherent in "standing apart from" and moves toward intimacy and empathy. This opens the door to a richer perception that transforms information and, along with it, the self who is perceiving. As Buber (1958) wrote, "all real living is meeting" (p.11), and understanding of the sort I am describing comes in the activity of meeting.

Conventional education is dominated by objectivism, a way of knowing which traps the other at a distance. The other remains an "it" for our examination, utilitarian manipulation, or as an object to possess. The root meaning of the term objective means standing against or apart from. This capacity allows us to step back from enmeshment with the world and has helped to catalyze advances in science. But this way of knowing is incomplete. Palmer (1993) describes the down side to this posture: "This image [standing over or against] uncovers another quality of

modern knowledge: it puts us in an adversary relationship with each other and our world" (p. 23). The modernist milieu of objectification of the other, including the natural world (environment and body), contributes to difficulties in relationships and limits experience from which to make ethical choices. At the beginning of this century William James (1909) recognized that "materialism and objectivism" tended to lead human beings to relate to their world as alien. And, as James, said: "The difference between living against a background of foreignness [i.e., treating the world as alien] and one of intimacy means the difference between a general habit of wariness and one of trust" (p. 19). The result of this habitual wariness and distance is anxiety, depersonalization, alienation, and narcissism. Objectivism serves as insufficient ground on which to fashion character or human values or a spiritual-oriented education.

Understanding requires a fundamental shift in the process of knowing. Buber (1958) describes this shift as a movement from an "I-It" relationship" toward one of "I and Thou." Understanding comes when we empathize with the other, lean into the other, and suspend our self-separateness for a moment. This way of knowing is as useful in science as it is in human relationships. Barbara McClintock, Nobel Laureate in genetics working with corn plants, described a less detached empiricism, one in which she gains "a feeling for the organism," that requires "the openness to let it come to you" (in Keller, 1983, p. 198). The other is no longer separate from, but is part of our world and ourselves in a profoundly intimate way.

Said another way, understanding is learning to see through the eye of the heart. All of the wisdom traditions speak of this heart, for example: the eye of the soul for Plato, the eye of the Tao (Smith, 1993), South on the Native American medicine wheel (Storm, 1972), and the Chinese "hsin" which is often translated as mind but includes both mind and heart (Huang Po, 1958). "In contrast to modernity which situates knowing in the mind and brain, sacred traditions identify . . . essential knowing, with the heart" (Smith, 1993, p. 18).

The heart of understanding is cultivated through empathy, appreciation, openness, accommodation, service, listening, and loving presence. These activities move past an objectivist knowing (standing against) to meet the other (object, idea, or person) more directly and spontaneously and provide a balance to the critical questioning of intelligence. Together intelligence–with its critical questioning and demand for evidence–and understanding–with a intimate, appreciative empiricism–form a powerful combination.

One primary goal in teaching for understanding is to help the student see his or her own heart with trust and clarity. Said another way, the educational atmosphere must be "for developing the sensitiveness of the soul, for affording mind its true freedom of sympathy" (Tagore, 1961, p. 64). "Love is freedom: it gives us that fullness of existence which saves us from paying with our soul for objects that are immensely cheap" (p. 57). Part of the educator's role is to help find the song that sings in the student and help him or her learn to sing it. This may come through questions in the spirit of: "Who are you? What have you come to learn and to teach? What is your offering, your gift, your work?" Instead we often do not ask and so the child has trouble knowing to ask themselves.

The Eye of Wisdom

Wisdom is an activity rather than a static entity to be accumulated. That is, "one does not have wisdom–as if it were an thing. Rather, one acts wisely (Lawson, 1961, p. 8). Wisdom is distinguished from technical mastery or intellectual acuity especially by its moral dimension. Emerson says that wisdom is a blending of "the 'intellectual' perception of truth and the moral sentiment of right" (Emerson in Sealts, 1992, p. 257). Wisdom involves "human action which possesses both intellectual and ethical orientation; and...[this] is the task of education" (Lawson, 1961, p. vii). Wisdom has been described as involving capacities for empathy, self-knowledge, listening, comfort with ambiguity, a tendency to deautomatize thought routines, and movement beyond conceptual limits (Sternberg, 1990).

Wisdom serves to dynamically expand and integrate perspectives and involves the capacity to listen and translate the power of the intellect and the sensitivity of the heart into discernment and appropriate form (action, attitude, etc.). Whereas the heart of understanding is universal and indiscriminate, wisdom is able to bring this broad unconditionality to the particularities of a situation. For example, the wise response is not always "Just love", it may be strategic, disruptive, confrontational. Jesus was said to have turned over the tables of the money changers who were sent up in a holy temple; Martin Luther King organized a sit in at a lunch counter in Montgomery; Gandhi's radical non-violence confronted the authority of the British Empire. And we would not say that these actions were "smart," but they seemed to be wise in some profound way.

These examples reveal another characteristic of wisdom–the wise person sees beyond immediate self-interest. In this way wisdom does not simply serve individual growth but the movement of growth (evolution) in general. Wisdom provides a larger perspective, one that often goes beyond what we can see from a stance of fear and self-interest. Thomas Aquinas wrote: "Wisdom differs from science in looking at things from a greater height. . . . [it involves] *gnome*, or the ability to see through things" (Gilby, 1967, p. 364). While knowledge and intelligence are often equated with complexity, wisdom seems to emerge often as elegantly simple. Even children have demonstrated the capacity for this kind of seeing (Hart, 2003).

But why is wisdom so absent from educational aims? Rorty (1979) suggests that the Cartesian shift marked the "triumph of the quest for certainty over the quest for wisdom" (p. 61). The goal thus became focused on rigor, prediction, and control rather than on wisdom or peace of mind.

Instead of grasping for certainty, wisdom rides the question, lives the question. Sternberg (1990) suggests that "the wise person views himself and others as engaged in an unending dialectic with each other and the world" (p. 150). An unending dialectic is an activity that raises anxiety in the one-right-answer world of most contemporary schooling. When questions are treated primarily as problems to be solved (the domain of intelligence) the question is set up in opposition to the questioner. From the start the question becomes something to beat, to conquer. This may be playful or deadly serious and represents the best of intelligent engagement. Wisdom treats the question differently. It seeks questions, like looking for the best fruit on the tree. It then bites into the question, living it, allowing it to fulfill its purpose as nourishment. Whereas intelligence will cut, dismantle, and reconstruct the question in order to work toward a solution, wisdom mainly rides the question to see where it goes and what it turns into.

What this opens up to is not domination of the question but the possibility of wonder and insight. It welcomes epiphany as James Joyce named it. Heschel (1972) concludes that wisdom comes through awe and reverence: "Wisdom comes from awe rather than from shrewdness. It is evoked not in moments of calculation but in moments of being in rapport with the mystery of reality" (p. 78).

Awe, wonder, reverence, epiphany are drawn forth not from a quest for control, domination, or certainty, but from an appreciative and open-ended engagement with the questions; this is why such qualities as listening, empathy, comfort with ambiguity and so forth

(as mentioned above) are associated with wisdom and why the heart of understanding is an essential component.

Much of acting wisely comes through the inward spiral of self-knowledge. For example, Merton (1979) suggests that: "the purpose of education is to show a person how to define himself authentically and spontaneously in relation to the world–not to impose a prefabricated definition of the world, still less an arbitrary definition of the individual himself" (p. 3). This keeps the question (and the person) alive, always at the edge of flowing into the next form, the next question.

When the inner life is attended to on a daily basis, it does not breed narcissistic preoccupation or indulgence, but the opportunity for depth and centering at the intersection of inside and outside. All of the mystics and sages affirm the Delphic oracle's admonition to "Know thyself." This inward awareness is not only important to provide balance but also because it reveals the intersection of our individual depth with a more universal depth. The universe lies not only about us but also within us–the outside can reveal the inside and visa versa. Each student's emerging self is the curriculum (Hopkins, 1970). "Right education is to help you to find out for yourself what you really, with all your heart, love to do. . . .Then you are really efficient, without becoming brutal" (Krishnamurti, 1974, p. 76).

Wise people seem to find points of entry into the wisdom space. This may occur from a walk in the woods, through prayer, meditation, service, music, and so forth. This activity shifts attention from normally dominant ego-generated chatter and opens awareness. One way this can be cultivated is through what the Dalai Lama calls Mindscience (Goleman & Thurman, 1991). This awareness or mindfulness involves "...a mindful reflection that includes in the reflection on a question, the asker of the question and the process of asking itself" (Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1993 p. 30). This process "begin(s) to sense and interrupt automatic patterns of conditioned thinking, sensation and behavior" (p. 122). Such awareness does not disengage the mind from the phenomenal world; it enables the mind to be fully present within the world. The point is "...not to avoid action but to become fully present in one's action" (p. 122). This is not a distant kind of objectivism but is instead a witnessing presence, one that Meister Eckhart (1958) refers to as "detachment," implying detachment from habitual responses. (see Hart, 2004b, for a discussion of opening the contemplative mind in the classroom.) (For more about teaching for wisdom see Hart, 2001b.)

The Paradox of Transformation

To transform means to go beyond current form. When education serves transformation it helps to take us beyond the mould of categories, the current limits of social structure, the pull of cultural conditioning, and the box of self-definition. We have the potential to "exist in such a way not only to comprehend the facts of our lives but also to transcend them" (Peden, 1978, p. 211), and this is what the deepest moments in education lead toward.

Transformation is both an outcome and a process; it is the push and the pulse that drives self-organization and self-transcendence. Transformation is a movement toward increasing wholeness that simultaneously pushes toward diversity and uniqueness–becoming more uniquely who we are or revealing more of what the subject is, and toward unity–recognizing how much we have in common with the universe (and perhaps even the recognition that we are the universe).

Transformation emphasizes fluidity and flexibility, movement and freshness, will and surrender, responsibility and liberation. However, these seem far from what contemporary education insists on. Instead, "conventional schools work primarily for the purposes of limiting consciousness and reality to the current norms and defining power relations among the next generation" (Marshak, 1997, p. 215). Today's schooling largely trains for adaptation to the status quo, as does much of psychotherapy–we seek to produce well-adjusted students (and clients) who can "fit in" and fulfill our expectations of them in the workforce and in the classroom. And while adaptation has its place, it is incomplete and confining: "If your ideal is adjustment to your situation . . . then your success is likely to be just that and no more. You never transcend anything. You grow but your spirit never jumps out of your skin to go on wild adventures" (Bourne, 1977, p. 334). Schooling has focused on adaptation to the status quo rather than its transformation within (person) and without (culture and society).

Each time of life has its developmental contingencies and opportunities; school age is a time for developing the tools of mind and the habits of heart that will serve and shape a life. Education for transformation or freedom does not to try to impose or force or even teach liberation but provides liberating (transformative) habits and tools, from the strength of will, to the clarity of mind, to the stillness of contemplation, to inviting the natural compassion of the

heart. Through their appropriate use, one may have the personal power and vision to consciously effect our own evolution. Goethe (1949) says: "Whatever liberates our spirit without giving us mastery over ourselves is destructive" (p. 184). Transformative education enables us to avoid getting caught in our own little whirlpool of existence, so that we may live in the whole river of life. This is the whole function of education–cultivating one's whole being, the totality of mind, and the "sensitiveness of soul" (Tagore, 1961, p. 64).

Energy is created in the reaction of transformation and it often heats up and catalyzes further growth beyond the individual. Interdependence at all levels reminds us that social structures (e.g., slavery), cultural beliefs or values (e.g., prejudice), and consciousness of the universe as a whole may be changed as the ripple of individual transformation grows to a wave. Gandhi's personal awakening to injustice led to the transformation of a society. In this way the microgenetic spiral that I have outlined in this essay serves ontogenetic (the development of the individual) and phylogenetic development (the evolution of the species and the world).

In and of itself we could claim that the act of creation (in art, of the universe, of the thought and quality of our life in this moment) is akin to transformation. Whitehead referred to creativity as the ultimate category–the category necessary to understand all other processes. That is, creation as a movement into novelty is the basic process of existence.

Perhaps creativity is the most tangible and reproducible symbol of transformation. Creative activity (broadly defined) provides a touchstone for the act of teaching/ learning. Any activity that involves freshness of thought or perception, offers provocation and opportunity to stretch experience, or helps to develop the tools to rethink and re-experience our world, is creative and therefore potentially transformative. In addition, since we know that the teacher teaches not just a subject but also and especially who they are, does the teacher express his or her creativity in some authentic way? As a teacher, are we a model and expression of growth?

Transformation is inherently a spiritual endeavor. This is an activity that comes as we live our spiritual questions more knowingly and honestly. And living these questions means being present with them in this moment. As Whitehead wrote: "The present contains all that there is. It is holy ground. . . .The communion of saints is a great and inspiring assemblage, but it has only one possible hall of meeting, and that is, the present" (Whitehead, 1967, p. 4). This implies opening up the subject and waking up ourselves.

Conclusion

This brief overview suggests that spiritual education involves a curriculum of inner significances as well as one of outer information. It is engendered by shifts in how we know and in turn what is known. The quality and intention of knowing directs the process. It does not require that more information be added onto contemporary curriculum, but invites us to the depths of the subject-matter, the other and the Self.

When the heart of the discipline and our own hearts and minds are plumbed, information then serves its rightful place as currency for learning, knowledge brings an economy of interaction, intelligence gives power, precision, and critical reflection to our enterprise, understanding opens the heart, wisdom balances heart and head leading us to insight and right action, and transformation culminates this deepening spiral as it enjoins us with the force of creation and communion.

References

Allport, G. (1955). *The individual and his religion.* New York: MacMillan.

Armstrong, T. (1985). *The radiant child.* Wheaton, IL: Theosophical Publishing House.

Baskin, W. (Ed.). (1966). *Classics in education*. New York: Philosophical Library.

Blackmer, C. (1991). *Essays on spiritual psychology: Reflections on the thought of Emanuel Swedenborg.* New York: Swedenborg Foundation.

Bohm, D. (1981). Insight, knowledge, science, and human values. In D. Sloan (Ed.), *Toward the Recovery of Wholeness*. (pp. 8-30). New York: Teachers College Press.

Bourne, R. (1977). *The radical will: Selected writings, 1911-1918*. New York: Urizen.

Buber, M. (1958). *I and Thou.* (R. G. Smith, Trans.). New York: Charles Scribner & Sons. (Original work published 1923)

Davis, A. (1992). The logic of ecstasy: Canadian mystical painting 1920-1940. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Dewey, J. (1963). *Experience and education.* New York: Macmillan. (Original work published 1938)

Eckhart, M. (1958). *Meister Eckhart: Selected treatises and sermons.* J. M. Clark & J. V. Skinner, Trans.). London: Faber & Faber.

Emerson, R. W. (1972). Education. In R. E. Spiller & W. E. Williams (Eds.), *The early lectures of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Vol. 3). Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. (Original work published 1883)

Freire, P. (1974). *Pedagogy of the oppressed.* New York: Seabury.

Gackenbach, J. (1998). *Psychology and the internet: Interpersonal, Interpersonal, and transpersonal implications.* San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Gardner, H. (1983). Frames of mind: A theory of multiple intelligences. New York: Basic Books.

Gardner, H. (1991). *The unschooled mind: How children think and how schools should teach.* New York: Basic Books.

Gilby, T. (Trans.) (1967). *St. Thomas Aquinas: Philosophical texts.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Goethe, J. (1949). *Wisdom and Experience*. (H. J. Weigand, Ed. & Trans.). New York: Pantheon

Books. (Passage cited in text is no. 504 from Maxims and Reflections, originally published in 1829)

Goldman, R. (1964). *Religious thinking from childhood to adolescence.* London: Routledge Kegan & Paul.

Goleman, D. & Thurman, A. F. (Ed.) (1991). *MindScience: An East-West dialogue.* Boston: Wisdom.

Gray, J. G. (1968). *The promise of wisdom: An introduction to philosophy of education*. Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott Company.

Hart, T. (1997). From category to contact: Epistemology and the enlivening and deadening of spirit in education. *Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 36* (1), 23-34.

Hart, T. (1998). A dialectic of knowing: Integrating the intuitive and the analytic. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice, 11* (3), 5-16.

Hart, T. (2001a). *From information to transformation: Education for the evolution of consciousness.* New York: Peter Lang.

Hart, T. (2001b). Teaching for Wisdom. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice 14*(2), 3-16.

Hart, T. (2003). *The Secret Spiritual World of Children.* Makao: HI: Inner Ocean.

Hart, T. (2004a). Mystical Child: Glimpsing the Spiritual World of Children. *Encounter: Education for Meaning and Social Justice. 17*(2)38-49.

Hart, T. (2004b). *Opening the contemplative mind in the classroom. Journal of Transformative Education. 2* (1) 28-46

Hay, D., & Nye, R. (1998). *The spirit of the child.* London: Fount/Harper Collins.

Heschel, A. J. (1972). *God in Search of Man*. New York: Octagon Books. (Original work published 1955)

Hoffman, E. (1992). *Visions of innocence: Spiritual and inspirational experiences of childhood.* Boston: Shambhala.

Hopkins, L. (1970). *The emerging self in school and home*. Westport, CT: Greenwood. (Original work published 1954)

Huang Po. (1958). The Zen teaching of Huang Po: On the transmission of mind (J. Blofeld, Trans.). New York: Grove Weidenfeld.

James, W. (1909). *A pluralistic Universe*. New York: Longmans Green & Company.

Keller, E. (1983). *A feeling for the organism: The life and work of Barbara McClintock*. New York: Freeman.

Krishnamurti, J. (1974). *Krishnamurti on education.* (Krishnamurti Foundation Trust Limited, Eds.). New York: Harper & Row.

Lawson, D. E. (1961). *Wisdom and education.* Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.

Marshak, D. (1997). *The common vision: Parenting and educating for wholeness*. New York: Peter Lang.

Merton, T. (1979). *Love and living*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Pagels, E. (1979). *The Gnostic gospels.* New York: Random House.

Palmer, P. (1993). *To know as we are known: Education as a spiritual journey.* San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco.

Peden, C. (1978). Freedom and wisdom: The heart of Tagore. *Journal of Thought, 13,* (3) 210-216.

Pestalozzi, H. (1951). *The education of man. Aphorisms*. New York: Greenwood.

Piechowski, M. (2001). Childhood spirituality. *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology 33*(1), 1-15.

Robinson, E. (1983). T*he original vision: A study of the religious experience of childhood*. New York: Seabury Press. (Original work published 1977)

Rorty, R. (1979). *Philosophy and the mirror of nature*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Rousseau, J. J. (1957). *Emile*. (B. Fosley, Trans.). New York: E.P. Dutton.(Original work published 1762)

Sealts, M. M. (1992). *Emerson on the scholar.* Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press.

Smith, H. (1993). Educating the Intellect: On opening the eye of the heart. In B. Darling-Smith (Ed.).*Can virtue be taught?* (pp. 17-31). Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press.

Sternberg, R. J. (Ed.). (1990). *Wisdom: Its nature, origins, and development.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Storm, H. (1972). Seven arrows. New York: Ballantine Books.

Tagore, R. (1961). *Rabindranath Tagore: Pioneer in education.* London: John Murray.

Tillich, P. (1951). *Systematic Theology* (Vol. I). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Varela, F., Thomson, E., & Rosch, E. (1993). *The embodied mind: Cognitive science and human experience.* Cambridge, MA: The M.I.T. Press.

Whitehead, A. N. (1967). *The aims of education and other essays*. New York: The Free Press. (Original work published 1929)

Wilber, K. (1996). *The atman project: A transpersonal view of human development.* Wheaton, IL: Quest.