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The teacher as prophet in a transformational ideology of education

Lalor, Drenda Power, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1987

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THE TEACHER AS PROPHET IN A TRANSFORMATIONAL IDEOLOGY OF EDUCATION

by

Drenda Power Lalor

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
the University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree
Doctor of Education

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1987

Approved by

David E Pugel

Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Dissertation Adviser David E Purpel

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The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the possibility for personal and social transformation through education. This inquiry examines the need for a transformational consciousness in order to meet the challenge of current world crises.

This study examines different perspectives of transformative education. Several theorists address this issue: liberationist, Paulo Freire; futurist, Alvin Toffler; humanistic and transpersonal psychologists and educators; James B. Macdonald in his work on transcendental theory.

The framework for this dissertation is centered in the work of Matthew Fox, who connects transformation with compassion, spirituality and social justice.

This study proposes that teachers can act as prophets of change, as catalysts within the schools for personal and social transformation. It examines current practices in teaching that perpetuate the status quo and create passivity and conformity in students. It examines the sociological literature on teachers, which indicates that teachers generally are conservative and resistant to change.

This study uses in-depth interviews to look more closely at the possibility for transformation from the perspectives of four teachers. These teachers were selected because they tend to be critical of current educational practices and to be innovative in their approach to teaching.

This inquiry examines the reasons these educators initially entered the teaching profession and the influences that have shaped their educational perspectives. It explores the degree of personal and professional change these teachers have experienced over the years and the reasons for such change. This inquiry seeks to determine whether or not these teachers see education as a vehicle for transformation and themselves as potential catalysts for change.

The result of these interviews suggests that these teachers do not connect current educational practice with the influence of the social, political and economic structure. They do not see themselves as potential catalysts for social transformation. They are critical of many current practices in education and believe education should emphasize personal growth and individuation. They do not use the language of community in describing a focus for education.

In order to examine the nature of the transformational process, this dissertation also involves a hermeneutic study of the author's own transformational experience as a person and a teacher. This examination indicates the factors that helped to instigate such change and the professional influences that shaped that process.

The study concludes with suggestions for further inquiry relating to issues surrounding transformative education and a discussion of the findings. The author's personal reflections on the understandings that emerge from this study close the final section.

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I am grateful to the members of my committee, not only for their support, but also for the power of their teaching. They initiated within me new awakenings and directions for personal and professional growth.

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Many thanks go to the four teachers who shared with me their perspectives on education, their personal experiences and their hopes for the future. As a result of their input, my own understandings regarding education have been deepened and refined.

I am grateful to my husband, Tony Lalor, for having lived this dissertation with me. He has acted as a sounding board for my ideas, offered me insight through discussion and

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CHAPTER I

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

There is a view among social critics that we are at a major turning point in history, one which requires profound and sweeping changes in human consciousness. Physicist Fritjof Capra (1982) notes that humanity is in the midst of a "profound world-wide crisis." Provided humanity does not destroy itself through nuclear annihilation, Capra warns that overpopulation and industrialization have so degraded the natural environment that the global ecosystem and future of life on earth are endangered. The future of humanity can only be insured, he says, if there are transformations in the "structure of the web" of social and ecological relations. Writers such as Patricia and Gerald Mische, Philip Slater, and Philip Stern point to the vast differences in the distribution of wealth between the rich and the poor, within this country and across the planet, that result in one small segment of the world population enjoying a standard of living that can be described as luxurious, while millions of others live in squalor, hunger, and disease. Dramatic transformations in intellectual and spiritual perspectives are critical, we are warned, if humanity is to continue to survive and a more humane and just world order is to be created.

Capra argues that humankind needs a new paradigm, a new vision of reality to replace traditional, life-threatening attitudes and practices. The world presently spends, Capra notes, 425 billion dollars a year on defense - over a billion dollars a day - while 15 million people die of starvation and 500 million are undernourished. Forty percent of the world population does not have access to health services, yet developing countries spend three times as much money on arms. Thirty-five percent of humanity lacks safe drinking water, yet one-half of the world's scientists are involved in the technology of making weapons. Industrial technology, Capra observes, has contributed to the degradation of the environment and, consequently, the health of human beings, plants, and animals. Food and water have become contaminated by toxic chemicals, and cities are covered in smog that destroys plants and causes drastic changes in the animal population. Scientists warn of the impending "greenhouse" effect created by toxic gases in the atmosphere which will cause drastic and devastating shifts in climate. A widening hole in the ozone layer created by atmospheric pollution threatens the health of all beings as dangerous ultra-violet rays pierce the earth's atmosphere. Capra sees the times as a crisis in human history, a "turning point" in man's evolution.

Other thinkers echo Capra's view that humankind is on the brink of a dramatic shift in development. Humanistic psychologist, Abraham Maslow stated: "I have a very strong

feeling of a change of pace in history. It seems to me that we are at a point in human history unlike anything that has happened before" (1971, p. 58). Maslow believed education to be a means through which adaptation to such change could be effected. Life is moving so fast, Maslow admonished, that the teaching of facts and even traditional teaching techniques are becoming obsolete. He encouraged educators to give up methods of the past and attempt instead to create "a new kind of human being," one who is comfortable with change, one who is able to improvise, who is able to face with confidence, strength and courage situations of which he has absolutely no forewarning. Societies that can turn out such human beings, Maslow noted, will survive; others will not.

As twentieth century man moves from the Industrial Age into the forefront of the Technological Age, futurists like Alvin Toffler, speak to the violent, revolutionary changes in civilization that are imminent. "The dawn of a new civilization," Toffler says, "is the single most explosive factor in our life-time" (1980, p. 9). This new civilization, "challenges all our old assumptions" (p. 2). Traditional ways of thinking, dogmas, and ideologies will not fit into this new paradigm. New life-styles, ideas, concepts, and modern communications will topple traditional perspectives on civilization. This "quantum leap forward," as Toffler calls it, will be accompanied by a clash of values, massive social upheaval, the restructuring of ideas, values and institu-

tions. Individuals, he insists, will have to be educated to cope with a future in which technology will create a new way of being, a brand new civilization, not one in which we can force an emerging new world into "existing cubbyholes."

Curriculum theorist, James B. Macdonald (1978), saw the advent of the new technology as a step in man's evolution. He predicted that humanity would transcend technology by "turning inward" and discovering the human potential to experience the world creatively. Only by turning inward, Macdonald believed, could humankind continue to experience themselves as creative and vital elements in a society ruled by technological "gods." These gods are man-made, of course, but all must serve them in order to insure personal and social survival, Macdonald noted. By turning inward, humankind will find and "re-discover" a creative energy that can override technological domination.

J. Krishnamurti pointed out that while technology solves certain kinds of problems, it introduces wider and deeper issues with which culture will need to wrestle. He echoed the need for men and women to undergo an inner transformation in the face of technological onslaught. If man does not come to understand and examine the deeper complexities of life, Krishnamurti warned, he may well use technology to destroy himself. "The man who knows how to split the atcm but has no love in his heart becomes a monster" (1953, p. 19).

The future of humankind as a species and the life of the

earth itself may hang precariously between what Patricia and Gerald Mische have called "creation or anti-creation." The Misches argue that humankind is "in the midst of a tremendous amassing of spiritual and material energy which can be directed for either creative or destructive purposes" (1977, p. 347). Their message, like Macdonald's, however, is one of hope. The Misches see in the crises of the times not only signs of decay but also the possibility of new birth. They note that the Chinese characters for "crisis" represent both the potential for catastrophe or breakthrough. "We live in 'Between Times,' the Misches point out, and this is the time of decision" (p. 350).

Marilyn Ferguson indicates in her book The Aquarian Conspiracy (1980) that the kinds of personal transformations necessary to make such critical life-saving decisions are emerging. Her research indicates that dramatic shifts in perceptions are taking place in the disciplines of medicine, economics, art, science, technology and in many other areas. Her investigations into the life and human sciences suggest that humanity is in the midst of a knowledge revolution that discards "traditional models of the cosmos and ourselves" (1980, p. 12) and reaches for new ones. Ferguson speaks to the possibility of a great cultural awakening and realignment stemming from personal transformations that result in social transformations - a change from inside out. The result,

says Ferguson, is not a new world just "mended" but a world "remade."

Education, I believe, has a role to play in the "re-making" and creating of this new world. The concept of transformation, as it is applied to education, involves a spiritual awakening leading to a new social awareness and sense of responsibility. Such a transformation involves the awakening of an intelligence that is characterized by critical inquiry, the examination of personal and social values and conditioning, and a personal sense of wonder and questioning. Transformation denotes significant and dramatic change, resulting in a new shape or form. Educators, of course, hold different views about the nature of what this change should be. I have examined the metaphor of transformative education from a number of perspectives. These perspectives include education for liberation through literacy, the self-actualization of human potential and the transcendence of self. I have found all these ideologies necessary but not sufficient in themselves for describing my own understanding of the purpose and scope of education for personal and social transformation.

One of the social/economic transformative systems I have examined is represented in the work of liberation theorist, Paulo Freire. An educator actively involved in literacy campaigns in Third World countries, Freire views education as a means for individual and social liberation. Only when people

are able to analyze their past and present, Freire believes, can they make decisions about their future. Freire emphasizes the importance of learning to read and write with critical reflection. Only through the development of curiosity and questioning will individuals come to realize their rights and develop a sense of dignity and self-worth. Only then will people command a voice in controlling their destinies. Says Freire: "Learning to read and write is a political act as well as an intellectual act" (1981, p. 29). The purpose of "political pedagogy" is to enable people to become genuine participants in government, by helping them become aware of problems relating to the national destiny, rather than "anesthetizing" them with inspirational and patriotic slogans. It is education, says Freire, that "discloses" not "covers up" practices that serve to insure the positions of the ruling classes.

Friere's position represents a basic plank in my own educational platform: the skills involved in reading and writing language must occur within a framework of critical consciousness and personal empowerment, enabling individuals to be participants in creating a new society. I agree with Freire that people cannot be both uninformed and free. The need for critical reflective questioning of the status quo is only a first step, however, in moving to the kinds of self-knowledge that are required for deeper and more dramatic personal transformation.

Alvin Toffler would applaud the development of a critical consciousness as a prerequisite for dramatic change. He speaks to the necessity of individuals developing a sense of personal values that can lead to the kind of critical thinking that people will be required to do in a highly technological society (1970). This society will offer multiple choices to individuals which will affect all walks of life. Toffler points out that as "overchoice" deepens, the person without a clear grasp of his own values and beliefs will be handicapped in making choices compatible with his own perspectives. Toffler's concern that individuals become aware of their own value systems is positive in that it represents a bridge to self-examination and self-knowledge. Such a position viewed from Toffler's perspective, however, is as James Macdonald has pointed out, only "utilitarian." In other words, values are examined only in relationship to the consequences of actions in outer experience. Toffler's position on values clarification is a purely rational, mechanistic one; it does not take into account inner experience, feeling, the importance of the dialectic between inner and outer experience in the formation of a value system. The examination of an inner realm of being as a source of values and knowledge is overlooked by Toffler and is not addressed in the work of Freire.

Humanistic psychologist, Abraham Maslow, on the other hand, spoke to the examination of inner experience as

necessary for growth and development. Maslow recognized an intrinsic, "subtle" self, not necessarily conscious, which has to be uncovered, sought out and "educated." Maslow believed that the task of the therapist or teacher is to help an individual discover what is already within him and to build on that material, rather than attempt to rearrange the individual according to some pre-arranged form (1968). The uniqueness of the individual Maslow believed is to be celebrated. The questions raised by humanistic psychology, are "How tall can people grow?" and "What can a human being become?" (1971, p. 7). The paradox in discovering the uniqueness of the individual is that in the process he also discovers the characteristics that make him similar to others. He discovers his "specieshood," said Maslow (1968).

The exciting implications here are that the individual begins to intuitively sense that his relationship is like that of a brotherhood. Here the seeds may be planted for a deeper, more mature awareness of the interconnectedness of all beings, the sharing of a spiritual essence that demands that all human beings treat each other as sacred creations.

Humanistic psychology, applied to educational theory, offers an intrinsic rather than a extrinsic model in which the individual is understood to be far more than a cog in a machine, expected to conform in his functioning to the movement and direction of other cogs. Individual differences and complexities are to be taken into account and treated with

respect rather than disdain. The teacher, said Maslow, should be more "receptive" than "intrusive." The humanistic educational model offers liberation to the individual, freeing him to follow his own intricate pattern, rather than being forced to conform to a pre-cut ideal - a first step in personal transformation.

Maslow moved closer to a spiritual perspective of the individual in his validation of "peak experiences" or snatches of "transcendent ecstasy." It is at these moments that both cognitive and personal growth can take place. Maslow indicated that for education to be effective it must consider the arts as basic, for they are so close, he said, to our "psychological and biological core." These experiences, he noted, give us glimpses into "infinite, ultimate values." The arts are triggers for peak experiences, and give us more clues to our own identity. Such knowledge is "essential" to education (1971).

Maslow's description of the peak experience connects with the theories of the transpersonal psychologists. In describing self-actualizers, individuals who operate at the higher levels of human development psychologically, Maslow identified and differentiated between what he called "healthy" self-actualizers" and the "transcendent self-actualizers." The transcendent self-actualizers, Maslow noted, tend to select peak experiences as the most important thing in their lives; they speak the mystical language of

Being - the language of seers, religious men, mystics, and poets; they see the unity of humankind and the cosmos. Maslow called his work with transcendent actualizers, Theory Z. It assumes a transcendence of the ego, a movement into the realms of mystic awareness and spiritual meaning. Theory Z moves us closer into the kind of transformation that can be called spiritual.

James Macdonald recognized the value of humanistic psychology in education in its movement towards intrinsic learning and liberation. He criticized the humanists for packaging their philosophy in the form of a platform. A platform, he believed, imposes external guidelines on the individual, contracting the concept of individual freedom. Humanistic concerns in education, he argued, should be expressed in two questions: "What is the meaning of life?" and "How do we live together?" (Burke, 1984, p. 84).

Psychologist Carl Jung makes valuable contributions toward further addressing these questions in his work with the concepts of archetypes and the collective unconscious. The meaning of life, Jung believed, was the "realization of the self." Jung believed that all individuals carry an individual destiny and destination (the self) and the realization of this self was the only thing that could make sense of life, the realization of the divine in each person (Jaffe', 1984). He called the realization "individuation," an integration of inner and outer realities into a meaningful

whole, the "undiscovered self." Realizing this "undiscovered self" becomes a spiritual quest.

It is my view that aiding the individual in this spiritual quest should be the proper and primary business of education. M. C. Richards and James Macdonald also support this position. The view that education can be directed towards transformation is the focus of Richard's book Centering (1964) and Macdonald's article "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education" (1978).

Jung's theory of archetypes is helpful in viewing education through the lens of spiritual transformation. Archetypes, according to Jung, are mythological images shared by all people cross-culturally. These images suggest a mystical link between the individual and the rest of humanity. These archetypes reside in the collective unconscious which is shared by all human beings. Physicist Fritjof Capra suggests that Jung's work may point further to the connection between humankind and the cosmos (1982).

Jung, because of his own religious experiences, was convinced of the reality of a transcendent, spiritual dimension, which he called "God," a stronger will which he said had often "crossed his path," giving him strange ideas and "maneuvering" his fate, beyond his intentions. Jung's mystical understanding of the inter-connectedness of all beings and the possibility for completion and wholeness give us clues to

answering the question Macdonald raised, "How do we live together?"

If we assume that all humankind are connected by a shared "unconscious," we must take a critical view of the boundaries that ego would have us believe separate us. If we take on the perspective that all of us are in a psychological sense a family, with each individual unit or family member being a manifestation of a transcendental force or energy, which Jung calls God, we have some clues as to how this family might live together. We would assume that ideally any family would seek harmony, cooperation, and reverence in their relationships. Such behaviors stem from the affection and respect for each other's well-being that generally characterize a family unit, despite individual differences and disagreements. The microscopic view of family becomes the macro-cosmic. Personal interests become social interests.

The essential unity and interrelatedness of all life is one of the essential tenets of transpersonal psychology. The educational framework springing from this psychology emphasizes wholeness, integration, unity of mind/body, a more comprehensive view of intelligence as both rational/analytic and intuitive/synthetic. Interest in man's spiritual development and transcendence links transpersonal and humanistic psychology. Investigations into transcendence and peak experience have led to the study of spiritual experiences associated with a higher state of consciousness, sometimes called

"cosmic" or "mystical" consciousness or "enlightenment" (Roberts and Clark, 1976). The transpersonal models of education emphasize the exploration of altered states of consciousness, including dreams, meditation, the different levels of awareness associated with brainwave activity, parapsychology and guided fantasy. These techniques are attempts to help the individual better explore the inner realm of experience, or to "know the self."

While I applaud the openness of the transpersonal education framework in exploring different views of reality, I am concerned about the emphasis placed on method and technique, pre-arranged methods, and structured experiences. Such techniques can become manipulative. Krishnamurti warned that the right kind of education is not so concerned with ideology and method or system, but in simply helping, as unobtrusively as possible, the individual to be "mature and free." Conditioning, he warned, even if it promises a Utopia, shapes a child to a pre-arranged idealistic pattern (1953). Such education becomes extrinsic and limiting in personal freedom and individual growth.

I would also note that transcendent peak experiences and investigation into psychic phenomena may be valuable learning experiences for individuals in connecting with the inner realms of personal identity and overcoming ego boundaries. Yet, such experiences may be confused with the ultimate mystical experience of unity consciousness achieved by the

great sages and mystics. Unity consciousness, as psychologist-philosopher, Ken Wilber, points out is the experiencing of the "fundamental self" as the "self of the cosmos" (1979). This experience is the ultimate state of awareness that there are no boundaries in the cosmos, that humankind and "God," or "Brahman" or "Ground of All Being" are one and the same.

Peak experiences and "flashes" of "cosmic consciousness" have been reported by nursing mothers, and athletes at the moment of victory. Wilber argues that "unity consciousness," or "at-one-ment" with the universe, is the spiritual goal of human consciousness in evolution and is the ultimate state of being reflected in the lives of sages like Christ and the Buddha. This state of being goes far beyond self-actualization or individuation. The transpersonal educational theorists, such as Thomas Roberts and Frances Clark, speak of "spiritual experiences" as connected with "cosmic consciousness" and move into a discussion of psychic-healers as such an example. The ultimate goal in transpersonal education may be transcendence, but such states of transcendence may or may not be reflective of "spiritual" development. This is an area in transpersonal psychology that remains to be clarified.

In examining different perspectives of transformational education, I find that the common element that binds these approaches is a commitment to helping the individual become a more complete, fully functioning human being. Each approach

concerns itself with growth and personal transformation, even though the scope and depth of that transformation may vary. Each approach views transformation not as amelioration but as a dramatic, profound shift in direction and consciousness. Freire's work, in addition, addresses a recreating of society with the individual as an active, critical participant.

What is missing from these ideologies is any reference to the power of love and compassion in the educational process. It is difficult to imagine an educational ideology that addresses personal and spiritual development that does not speak clearly to the significance of these two forces. "Only love," said Krishnamurti, "can bring about the understanding of another" (1953, p. 24). It is unfortunate, he contended, that in education we have become so tied to systems and methods and "ideals" that even teachers have become "idealists." As a result they have "put away love," and "have dry minds and dry hearts" (p. 24).

The twelfth-century Rhineland mystic, Hildegarde of Bingen, reminds us that growth and creativity spring from "veriditas" or greening power. Creativity and growth emerge from sources, she said, that are "wet" and "moist," from what she calls "greening love." She spoke of Christ love as "lush greenness" brought to "shrivelled and withered" people and institutions. Only through love which is moist and wet, as symbolized by baptism in God's love, can nature and humankind bear fruit (Fox, 1985).

In education, what is the fruit we wish to bear? Is it not the transformed individual, integrated and whole, who is awake to his connectedness with neighbors, his planet, his universe? To nurture this kind of creative growth requires, I believe, a love that as Hildegarde describes is "green" and "lush," deep and expansive. The power of such an energy, it would seem, must be alive and vital, growing and deepening within those who call themselves teachers. It is from this love that personal and spiritual transformation can evolve.

In exploring the spiritual and social implications of transformational education, I have found the compassion spirituality of Matthew Fox powerful in its implications for a holistic transformational framework. Fox's work speaks to the vision of a world transformed by compassion and celebration of the divinity and unity of all beings. Compassion, as defined by Fox, grows out of the mystic awareness of the interdependence and connections of all that makes up the universe and thus becomes the medium for social and cultural transformation.

> It is the way we treat all there is in life - ourselves, our bodies, our imaginations and dreams, our neighbors, our enemies, our air, our earth, our animals, our death, our space and our time. Compassion is a spirituality as if creation mattered. It is treating all creation as holy and divine. . . which is what it is (1979, p. 30).

Compassion translates into social justice. To be compassionate is to incorporate one's own fullest energies with the cosmic ones in "relieving the pain and suffering of

one's fellow creatures" and in celebrating the life, space and time that all creatures share as creations of the "One who is fully compassionate" (1979, p. 36). Compassion reveals itself, writes Fox, in "works of mercy: feeding, clothing, sheltering, setting free, giving drink, visiting, burying, educating, counseling, admonishing, bearing wrongs, forgiving, comforting, praying" (p. 8). Fox sees these acts as political in nature; they are works of justice, not just reflections of warm sentiment and emotion.

Compassion becomes a way of life, according to Fox, and the way one relates to all life forms, including the planet that Fox calls the Global Village. To be compassionate is to be "full grown," whole and complete in a spiritual sense that makes terms like "self-actualization" and "individuation" seem cursory.

Fox uses two contrasting symbols of spiritual experience to illustrate the implications of compassion spirituality in human existence. The first is the masculine symbol of Jacob's ladder, which has dominated Christian thought over the centuries. The climb up Jacob's ladder has traditionally represented spiritual ascent towards God. The idea of "worshup," notes Fox, leads to "pedestal piety" with people looking up to venerate those at the top as saints and heroes. The ladder symbolism separates justice and mercy with those at the top defining justice; later, consequently, the God of justice became a God of judgment. Jacob's ladder is delin-

eated by such terms as climbing, competition, restrictive, elitist, hierarchy, independent, linear (1979).

In contrast is the symbol of Sarah's Circle. Sarah, being beyond childbearing age, was visited by an angel who promised her that at his return one year later she would have a son. Sarah laughed. One year later she gave birth to Isaac.

The symbols associated with Sarah's Circle, then, denote joy, celebration, interdependence, strength and gentleness, fruitfulness and creativity. In circle dancing Fox observes, there is eye-to-eye contact, a joining of hands and energies, a sharing of energies. The symbol of Sarah's Circle is carried over in society in the cooperation of groups who work to heal sickness, poverty and suffering. Such groups as AA, ecological and environmental groups, the peace movement, and animal and children's rights groups are representatives of Sarah's Circle. Sarah's Circle is Fox's metaphor of compassion and cooperation, of creativity and rebirth, love and healing.

It is unfortunate that western culture, including western education, has integrated the ladder motif into its character. Public schools operate on the one-rung-at-a-time ladder concept with students compelled to climb the ladder methodically and at the same pace; grades set up competition and division; the students at the top of the ladder in achievement are considered elite; classrooms are serious

places, not joyful and creative places; learning is linear in approach, directed and controlled. Such a picture of education is sterile and appalling in its implications for stifling creative growth and the unique transformation of the individual.

Fox warns that there can be no compassion without creativity - whether we are facing problems of ecological disaster, nuclear proliferation, famine or boredom. There can be no solutions to easing suffering without the "creative impulse." Creativity, Fox suggests, should be a way of life, a spirituality for all people. This notion does away with the idea of art belonging only to the professional. It celebrates the artist in every individual. Fox refers to Jose Arguelles' position that art is "the means by which all matter is regenerated as spirit" (1979, p. 110). Art is meditation and a means of transformation in Fox's spirituality. "The most beautiful thing the potter produces," Fox reminds us, "is the potter" (1983, p. 192).

Rather than thinking of meditation as an introverted experience, Fox urges us to see meditation as involved in process and creation, and what we create, Fox tells us, is ourselves. M. C. Richards reiterates this concept in Centering: "The big art is our life" (1964, p. 41). Meditation can take the form of gardening, story-telling, pottery, cooking, relating to animals and nature. If education is to be an instrument for social transformation,

says Fox, it must allow art as a centering experience to permeate the entire curriculum and educational framework. It is a way of incurring our continued "greening" and unfolding.

In addressing spiritual transformation, it is important that I not neglect to reiterate the importance for Fox of the development of "critical consciousness." Compassion does not imply an anti-intellectualism. It requires a questioning attitude, the intuition to ask why, to ponder, to seek, to play with ideas. In order to bring about social and planetary justice, the compassionate individual questions the status quo, questions authority, questions institutions. This critical instinct is natural in young children but generally fades within the authoritarian confines of public school. An educational setting centered in compassion nurtures the questioners. Lessons are not dualistic, confined to right and wrong answers only, but dialectic, open-ended, many-sided. Fox encourages the end of "left-brain-itis" in education, not in preference to a right-brain metaphor for learning, but in favor of a "both-and" approach. Education reflecting compassion and creation - centered spirituality encourages, to borrow M. C. Richard's phrase, the "question-asker and the truth-seeker." Understanding that is more than superficial requires work, digging, examining, not lazy acceptance, Fox reminds us. It requires the dedication and courage of the prophet.

The courage of the prophet is revealed as he or she sets out to mend creation, to herald the end of violence and destruction. Every person has a prophetic call, says Fox, to "transform the world," to help bring about freedom and justice. Each individual, writes Fox, has a "prophetic vocation" to carry out "the creative energy or word of God" (1983, p. 260). It is part of the prophet's task to "bind" and "heal" brokenness and to address the right of persons to the opportunity for full human development, say Patricia and Gerald Mische (1977).

The educational implications of Fox's compassion spirituality are, to use the vocabulary of Sarah's Circle: joyful! Education becomes synonymous with celebrating and rejoicing. Students and teachers forget boundaries and masks and self-consciousness, fears, status and lack of status, and revel in the knowledge of what Fox calls our "royal lineage" as descendants and companions of the Compassionate One. Sarah's Circle invokes talking, laughing and moving, making eye contact with peers - not staring silently at the backs of the heads of others as all sit silently in straight rows waiting to ingest knowledge passed on by the teacher. It invokes sharing in the discovery of knowledge as a community and creating new knowledge together. It is not about personalism and competition for rank in class or society. It is about students and teachers learning and exploring together, celebrating unique strengths and using them to overcome weakness.

The opposite of celebration, Fox would remind us, is control. Conformity and standardization, I would add, are further manifestations of the same. The rigidity and inflexibility that characterize most large institutions, such as public schools, require a compliance to rules and regulations that insure that all behave and respond in similar fashion to the same stimuli. In school these stimuli may be bells to announce class change, lesson plans geared to the entire group with no regard to individual differences, or inflexible rules laid out to govern classroom behavior or even the daily ritual of pledging allegiance to the American flag.

The celebration of the uniqueness of the individual contrasts then with the present model of education implemented in public schools. Compassion has "a radiant faith in human nature" (Fox, 1979, p. 75) that does not require the tools of control or manipulation. Compassion is willing to trust, to "let go" and "let be." It is necessary, says Fox, to relax and release; it indicates reverence and respect. It is this reverence and respect for the holiness of the divine creative process within each individual that would allow the teacher to rejoice, anticipate the birth of the person the child can become.

To speak of spiritual growth as the aim of education, even if it is associated with the evolving of compassion, can be dangerous. It can easily be misunderstood. The term

"spiritual" may be confused with religious dogma or prescribed "truths," rigidity in thought and attempts at proselytizing others to a particular religious system. "Centering" as the term is used by Richards and Macdonald may be a less controversial term because it lacks the conceptions generally associated with "spiritual" or "religious." I take both terms to be interchangeable as both refer to the development of totality of human potential, which includes an awareness of the individual's relationship to the cosmos.

Both Richards and Fox see art as a means through which centering can take place and transformation can occur. Maslow reflects the same belief: "Education-Through-Art, may be especially important not so much for turning out artists or art products, as for turning out better people" (1971, p. 57). Art as meditation and centering is not concerned with the finished product, but the process involved in transforming one's creative energy from within to without. It would seem that the opportunity for children to speak of themselves through clay, dance, growing flowers, making ripples in a pond or caring for animals, would be an integral part of a transformational educational framework.

The Celebration of Creation is a theme that would permeate a learning environment in which children flourish. In such an environment children breathe fresh air; lie on their backs on green grass and watch cloud formations in a blue sky; they hold the moist earth in their hands and become

aware of its creative power and sacredness. This, too, I believe, is art as meditation. It is also a rejoicing in what Fox calls creation - spirituality; a spirituality that teaches about play, pleasure, justice - making, liberation and healing. It is through such experiences that the individual awakens to the wisdom of interconnectedness; the illusion of boundaries; the understanding that God is in all things and that all things are in God.

Ken Wilber calls such experience "contacting the transpersonal self" (1979). Within this awareness we begin to see everything in the environment as if it were our own self. In fact, says Wilber, this attitude represents "the intuition that the world is one's body and is to be treated as such" (p. 134). Wilber believes that it is from this "transpersonal intuition" that the compassion associated with the mystics arises. This compassion or love, Wilber advises, is not to be confused with the love associated with the persona or ego level of consciousness, in which we love others because they love us; we love others, Wilber says, because "they <u>are</u> us." This compassion and love further extends to our environment which we begin to view as part of our own organism.

It is out of such personal transformation in awareness that social transformation arises. Children who come to see themselves as citizens of the Global Village, and who view the Earth as part of their own bodies, grow into adults who

strive to heal and preserve the planet and its inhabitants and see it as their "prophetic vocation." Generosity replaces greed; cooperation replaces competition; community replaces separatism. Both children and adults become prophets of re-creation.

The educational philosophies of Freire, Maslow, Jung, and the transpersonal psychologists, are all reflected in places in the essence of Fox's work. Yet none, except, perhaps, Jung, argue the case for spiritual growth and transformation as fully and powerfully as does Fox. Fox does not address education structurally, but philosophically. I believe his work has dramatic meaning for a transcendent ideology of education. The development of the Total Person, whole, centered, aware of his divinity is the business about which education concerns itself. It is love and wisdom that are the essential tenets of such a perspective. These forces provide, I believe, the "greening" of which Hildegarde speaks, the moisture that nourishes the growth of rebirth and transformation.

This framework for education is not concerned with method and technique, but it doesn't disregard them, if intuition indicates need at the moment. It does not demand right-brain learning processes over left-brain knowing but operates out of the dialectic of both. It does not demand complete freedom of experience, if structure is required. It does require a special level and quality of consciousness - a

consciousness of compassion. It requires listening with inner ears to the needs of children, even when unexpressed openly. It insists on seeing with inner eyes into the minds and hearts of children who trust the sacredness of themselves and their souls to adults who call themselves teachers.

It may be naive to believe that education can be an agent for personal and universal transformation. It may be child-like to believe that education can initiate the drastic changes in human perspectives that are required to save a wounded and dying planet, threatened daily by nuclear annihilation; or to expand the consciousness of humankind to respond to the plight of the planet's impoverished masses. Yet, I am encouraged by the faith of mystics and thinkers like Matthew Fox and J. Krishnamurti. Krishnamurti asks:

> Why are we so sure that neither we nor the coming generation, through the right kind of education, can bring about a fundamental alteration in human relationships? We have never tried it; and a most of us seem to be fearful of the right kind of education, we are disinclined to try it . . . we assert that human nature cannot be changed, we accept things as they are and encourage the child to fit into present society - we condition him to our present way of life and hope for the best. But can such conformity to present values, which lead to war and starvation, be considered education? (1953, p. 30).

To answer Krishnamurti's question in the affirmative is to blindly turn away from the ominous realities of the present age. An honest response to this question calls for courage and commitment to a new direction, a new way of being. This new direction is not one to be taken up by the

unsure or the faint-hearted. It requires a complete turn-about, a rebirth, a transformation. The Greek word for such radical change is "metanoia."

Catholic theologian William Johnston defines "metanoia" as "a change of heart whereby we commit ourselves to community" (1984, p. 79). Community, according to Johnston, is the church, not the church of Christians alone, but Christians united with Jews, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, atheists and agnostics. "To love the church," says Johnston, is "to love the world" (p. 79). To be committed to the church is to be committed to the world.

Such a commitment may begin within the individual as a result of personal transformation - a transformation that is both psychological and spiritual. Such transformation is mystical in nature. It cannot be clearly explained or delineated. The stories of those who have experienced such profound inner change in their own lives are the only clues we have as to how such radical shifts in awareness and direction take place.

The questions to be explored are these: what factors encourage or incite such dramatic shifts in individual awareness? Can education actually play a role in bringing about significant change in individual consciousness? What kind of teacher is best suited for an educational approach that sees the growth and liberation of the individual as a focus of the educational experience? I use "liberation" in

this context to refer to the freeing of the individual to examine the role cultural conditioning has played in shaping her or his values, awareness, perspectives and to cultivate for the individual a new way of being and seeing within that culture.

Albert Einstein alerted us to the need for such dramatic conversion with these words:

> We must never relax our efforts to arouse in the people of the world, and especially in governments an awareness of the unprecedented disaster which they are absolutely certain to bring upon themselves unless there is a fundamental change in their attitudes towards one another as well as their concept of the future. The unleased power of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking (Johnson, p. 84).

The challenge for education today is to help usher in the change in thinking and feeling that will insure the continuity of life on Earth and a higher quality of life for those who find themselves among the "anawim," the outcasts and the downtrodden. The challenge to education is to encourage a personal and social transformation that leads to "compassion," a consciousness that recognizes the divinity within every man, woman, and child, and Mother Earth herself.

CHAPTER 2

THE NATURE OF SCHOOLS AND TEACHING

The challenge to education to participate in personal and social transformation appears almost unrealistic in the face of the current push in public schools to raise achievement scores and SAT scores, train children to be efficient test takers, improve discipline in the schools and raise academic standards. In March, 1987, a government advisory panel urged the Reagan administration to increase the budget of the national testing program from $4 million to $26 million a year. This increase would provide funding for testing 675,000 students nationally over the 70,000 tested currently and provide data for a state-by-state comparison of academic achievement ("Expand Student Testing," 1987). On my visits to schools as a curriculum supervisor, I hear teachers complain of the massive amounts of classroom time required to teach students to be efficient test-takers and to prepare them for state achievement tests. Teachers indicate that parents are demanding more instruction in basic skills and the acquisition of factual knowledge as opposed to experiences in the arts or in critical and creative thinking.

A recent community survey in the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County school system in North Carolina supports such charges.

In every subject area, respondents ranked the acquisition of facts as high in priority. Art ranked below drivers' education in importance in this survey. Discussion skills, reasoning and logic in problem-solving ranked lower than basic knowledge in every academic area. The study of ecological concerns ranked near the bottom in priorities in science instruction. Analysis of literature ranked at the top in literary study; the study of literature as a mirror of the human condition, significantly was not even included as a choice in the ranking (Buckell and Paul, 1986).

The concern for effective instruction in basic skills and the "facts" is probably reflected in the Carolina Teacher Appraisal Instrument currently used in evaluating teacher performance in North Carolina. This teacher evaluation model emphasizes classroom management and control techniques, student time-on-tasks, highly structured lesson plans, and immediate evaluation and feedback on correct and incorrect student responses in the classroom. In addition to the pressures of meeting the standards of this highly objective teacher appraisal instrument and maintaining some time for more creative instruction, teachers find themselves inundated by bureaucratic paperwork and drained by the demands of bus duty, lunch duty, hall duty, and the supervision of extracurricular activities. The nature of teaching today would seem to preclude opportunity or inclination to transcend the requirements of state and local curriculum guides to inquire

into the meaning, relevance, and purpose of what is expected of teachers and students. The question, "Is there another and better purpose and means of educating our students?" is rarely raised by the majority of educators in the classroom or in administrative offices.

External pressures alone are not the only factors that discourage the reconceptualization of public school education as a dynamic force for personal and social change. Dan C. Lortie in Schoolteacher (1975) points out that the ethos of the teaching occupation and the "orientation and sentiments" of teachers support conservatism and the maintenance of the status quo. Lortie's work is based on interviews with ninety-four teachers in five towns in the Boston Metropolitan area, a national NEA survey, and the faculties of all the schools in Dade County, Florida. As Lortie points out, attempts at defining a single, teacher personality type have failed; yet, respondents in Lortie's survey and interviews indicate that there are positions and inclinations that are peculiar to teachers generally.

Lortie reports that when teachers were asked in an NEA survey what it was that attracted them to teaching, the response, "the desire to work with people," overwhelmingly led the choices. A conventional response, Lortie points out as compared with other possible selections, such as "involvement with knowledge" or "creativity." Only a few of the teachers in the Boston area included an interest in crea-

tivity as a reason for wanting to teach; the NEA survey did not even offer "creativity" as a choice. Such an omission, Lortie notes, is suggestive in itself of how teaching is viewed by the largest teacher organization in the country. When teachers in the five towns in the Boston area listed personal qualities that suited them for teaching, it is noteworthy that less than one-fifth cited intellectual interests as descriptive. Lortie rightly suggests that such responses point to a conventionality among teachers that would seem to leave little room for artistic or intellectual pursuits.

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents in the NEA survey chose "rendering service" as an attraction to go into teaching, making it the second most popular response. Lortie observes that to see teaching as a service is an indication that teachers would not be skeptical about its value or conduct, and would, therefore, be likely to approve of current practices in teaching, rather than be critical of the profession or seek to change it. Lortie indicates that it is difficult to find teachers who say they considered entering teaching in order to change or improve its practices.

Another popular reason for entering teaching reported among the teachers in Lortie's study was that they always "liked school" or certain school subjects which they wanted to teach. They wanted to continue in school and sought teaching as a medium that could be used to express those

interests or feelings. Lortie observes that those who like school enough to want to continue in it, rather than seek other occupations with a different set of experiences and challenges, will not be likely candidates for initiating change within it.

The ways people enter teaching also tend to support continuity rather than change, Lortie indicates. Teachers often decide early to move into teaching as a result of admiration or identity with a particular teacher or teachers in general. Family influence is also seen as effective in encouraging people to go into teaching. In the Boston study, Lortie reports that one-third of the respondents had teachers among close relatives. Early entrance decisions about teaching are likely to be related to positive identification with teaching, and a reflection of approval for continuity and current practice. No one appears in Lortie's research in the Boston area who had a negative identification with teaching. Where, Lortie asks, are those who would counter the positive identifiers entering teaching and actually enter the profession to improve teaching practices or attack conventionality. There appears, according to Lortie's research, no counterbalance among teachers entering the profession to offset the conservative influence of teachers who identify positively with the prevailing practices in education.

Teacher training programs and student teaching experiences, according to the teachers surveyed in Lortie's work, have little impact in changing preconceived ideas and notions about teaching. A large number of respondents "volunteered" that their teaching had been influenced most by the teaching they had received as students. What, in their opinion, was good teaching then was good teaching now. When these teachers described their former teachers whom they admired, they did not contrast the views they held then about teaching and learning with more sophisticated viewpoints they may have acquired as teachers themselves.

From Lortie's findings, it is obvious that teachers tend to teach the way they were taught. There seems to be no indication that teachers generally engage in intellectual or creative examination of present pedagogical practices in hopes of improving the instructional process. There seems to be no evidence of teachers' inclinations "to do philosophy," as Maxine Greene proposes, to think critically about educational practice, to question why a certain technique or text is used, or to examine personal choices made concerning the principles supporting what the teacher says or does.

In keeping with Lortie's assertion that teaching is synonymous with "conservatism, presentism, and individualism," teacher response to what changes they would like to see in their profession was consistent with Lortie's view. When asked what changes would improve their performance, teachers

cited structural changes or changes in the behavior of others: smaller classes, fewer interruptions, better facilities, improved administration. These proposals for change, Lortie observes, are hardly radical or even new. These are proposals that represent only superficial changes in the traditional ways of "acting and thinking" about education. There are no calls for stronger collegial relationships or community or revisions in programs to bring about a "different tomorrow."

These teachers want more room to practice their craft individualistically, but the state of that craft, notes Lortie, is rarely questioned. There is no "discernible" evidence that teachers are concerned with the "deficiencies in the technical culture of the teaching occupation" (Lortie, p. 184). Teachers, it appears, assume that current instructional philosophy or practice is sufficient; shortcomings and difficulties in the profession are external; to improve instruction, for these teachers, means to change the environment, not the goals or means of instruction.

If, as Lortie's research indicates, passivity, conformity and conservatism are the characteristics that describe the American teacher and as they, themselves, indicate, teacher training programs have had little impact on changing their educational philosophies, it would seem that these programs perpetuate stasis, rather than invoke change. Henry Giroux has observed that the dominant rationality in educa-

tional theory and practice characterizing teacher-training programs is that of technocratic rationality. The assumptions that characterize this rationality, according to Giroux are the following: (1) Educational theory should operate within lines that are empirically established. (2) The natural sciences provide the "proper" model for educational thought. All variables in education that can be taken seriously can be expressed in quantitative terms. This view eliminates "philosophical analysis, historical inquiry, mystery, awe, and forms of transcendence" (Giroux, 1983, p. 412). (3) Knowledge is objective and can be described in neutral terms. Knowledge is reducible to "facts" with specific meanings and definitions. (4) Value and fact must be distinct and separate in the minds of educators. Statements of "facts" and "modes of inquiry" should be objective (p. 413). Inherent in this rationality, Giroux indicates, is a view of society that stresses "consensus, equilibrium, and order (p. 413)." Absent from this view is any attempt to question the "nature and quality" of the society or to "make problematic" the ideals, beliefs, and economic system in society. As a result, the nature of teaching becomes depoliticized as does the relationship between education and "wide social interests."

The teacher viewed through the lens of technocratic rationality is not viewed as a person in process or as Giroux notes, a "creator of values." She is viewed as both a re-

ceiver and a vehicle for transmitting the culture and its social norms. The teacher, then, becomes a cog in the institutional machine, denied a sense of self, meaning or significance. Her role is seen as predetermined and measurable. It is not surprising that the teacher aspirant who already has tendencies toward conservatism and conformity, and having been inundated with educational theory that has as its basis the perpetuation of the cultural mind set, enters the classroom with the same consciousness with which she left high school.

It is this mind-set that characterizes the teachers in Lortie's study. They do not present themselves as inquirers, searchers, or visionaries. It is likely that their charges in the classroom will generally turn out very much like themselves, particularly the successful students who like school, as their teachers did, and who satisfactorily conform to the expectations of the classroom. As Philip Jackson indicates in his article "The Daily Grind," the students who become valedictorians and presidents of honor societies, like many of their teachers, I would add, owe their success as much to "institutional conformity as to intellectual prowess" (1983, p. 57). Those who become teachers are likely to have been students who, themselves, adapted successfully to the demands of school life without questioning its value or relevance. If it is true that teachers "teach what they are,"

then what most teachers teach is conformity and acceptance of the status quo.

Responses from the teachers in Lortie's study would indicate that these teachers as a group would unquestioningly perpetuate the "banking" concept of education described by Paulo Freire. In "banking" education students are viewed as "receptacles" to be filled. Information is narrated to students, who dutifully file away, or "deposit" the information. Education and knowledge are not viewed as processes of inquiry but as representations of a fixed reality. The more information or knowledge that students file away, Freire notes, the less likely they are to develop a "critical consciousness" that would make them "transformers of the world" rather than human beings who adapt to the world as it is and the "fragmented view of reality deposited in them" (1983, p. 285).

The following are the attitudes and practices associated with banking education:

a. The teacher teaches and the students are taught.

b. The teacher knows everything and the student knows nothing.

c. The teacher thinks and the students are thought about.

d. The teacher talks and the students listen - meekly.

e. The teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined.

f. The teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply.

g. The teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher.

h. The teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted), adapt to it.

i. The teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students.

j. The teacher is the subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects (p. 284).

Freire's criticism of the practices in banking education has both social and political overtones. The effectiveness of the learning process in banking education is determined by how easily the students come to adapt or fit into the prevailing society. The more easily the student can be led to adapt, says Freire, the more easily he can be dominated. The practices in banking education serve the oppressors - those in absolute control - to the extent that creative thought is stymied and gullibility is stimulated. Students, in other words, are not led to question or inquire but to receive passively the information passed on by those in authority - in the classroom those in authority are the teachers.

There are bank-clerk teachers, Freire notes, who have good intentions and who do not realize that they are serving to dehumanize their students. I believe there are many such

teachers in American schools who perceive themselves as caring and loving, who see themselves as humanitarians in education, and who are not aware that their actions serve to perpetuate ignorance and blind acceptance of what is passed on to them as truth. The teachers, Freire notes, may not even understand that their deposits of knowledge may "contain contradictions about reality" (1983, p. 286). These contradictions, hopefully, may be discovered sooner or later by the students, themselves, as personal experiences begin to contradict the ready-made realities they have been given. If people existentially seek humanization and as a result come to see that reality is on-going and changing, they may then begin to struggle for liberation, says Freire. They may begin to shake off their roles as objects and seek to become thinking, conscious human beings.

Freire challenges the "revolutionary" educators to not wait for such a possibility to materialize but to begin to engage with their students in education as a partnership. Both teachers and students must become involved in critical thinking and a quest to become more fully human. The teacher must abdicate the role of "depositor, prescriber, domesticator" and become a "student among students." Only through such changes in perspective, says Freire, can the power of oppression be undermined and the cause of liberation furthered.

Philip Jackson, another prominent critic of education

and current school practices, has taken a look at the effects of school life on students and how these effects, consequently, influence their reactions to the world at large. Jackson has focused on the significance of familiar, everyday activities in the elementary classroom and the impact these events have on the lives of students (1983).

All elementary school classrooms may not be identical, Jackson points out, but the differences are minimal. All classrooms are equipped with bulletin boards, chalk boards, and desks. Even the smells of cleaning fluids and waxes are similar. Not only is the physical environment stale, but so is the social environment. Daily, the same students and the same teachers take their places at the same desks. The class is usually crowded with twenty to thirty students. Factory workers, Jackson notes, are not nearly so crowded and clustered. Unions would not allow it. Activities in the class are cyclic and repetitions. The day is broken into periods of time for different subjects and special activities. Classroom activities, themselves, are basically unchanging. There is "seatwork," "group work," "testing," "teacher-demonstration," "question and answer period." All activities are performed according to specific rules: no talking except during discussions, eyes on your paper during a test, raise hands to speak, no unnecessary movement. Jackson also notes that participation in school is compulsory. Students have no

choice but to attend. They are, in fact, prisoners of their classrooms.

Jackson points out that there are three facets of school life that may go unnoticed by the casual observer but which even the youngest student must learn to deal with. These three significant facets of school life are, crowds, praise, and power.

The classroom, Jackson notes, is not only crowded - it is busy. The teacher will manage as many as 1,000 interpersonal exchanges a day, as she goes about calling on students, giving out supplies, granting special privileges to deserving students,and acting as timekeeper for a myriad of activities. The crowded conditions of the classroom inevitably result in delay. Students must take turns to use limited resources, form lines for lunch and water fountains, wait to be called on, or wait to have a question answered, as the teacher cannot respond to all individual children at once.

Interruptions in the classroom such as irrelevant comments, misbehavior, or having other students ask the teacher questions when she is working with a particular student, also stem from crowded classroom conditions. Students must learn to ignore such interruptions and to continue to work quietly and alone. It is not uncommon, Jackson observes, to see students sitting at the same table and being required not to

talk with each other. Students must learn, Jackson notes, to be alone in a crowd.

If students are to cope with the demands of the classroom, Jackson adds, they must learn patience. Patience is required for all those in prisons, factories, corporations and schools. In schools, students must be able to wait their turn, suppress a desire to act out, to blurt out answers, express anger when interrupted, push to the head of the line. In most classrooms there are "powerful sanctions," to force students to maintain an attitude of patience.

The second facet of school life that Jackson addresses is that of evaluation. Evaluation of strengths and weaknesses comes primarily from the teacher. It is also from the teacher that students come to know what is right or wrong, good or bad. Yet, classmates also participate in evaluation. Students may applaud or jeer a student's response or the teacher may ask who can help another student with an incorrect answer. Self-judgment is also a form of evaluation that the student faces when he encounters words he cannot spell or problems he cannot solve.

All judgments are not related to academics. Teachers rarely scold students for having the wrong answer, Jackson observes. What a teacher does scold for is violation of the rules and regulations of the school: being late to class, pushing in line, answering out of turn in discussion. Personal qualities are evaluated as well, such as neatness,

attentiveness, helpfulness. The student must learn to cope with evaluation. He must learn to act in a way that enhances the likelihood of praise and reduces punishment, to publicize good evaluations and hide negative ones (e.g., the report card) and try to win approval of both the teachers and classmates. The boy, for example, who performs well in creative dance may be praised by the teacher but ridiculed by male peers. Students may also devise ways to disguise their failures to comply with the expectations of the teacher or school through "cheating," for example, faking interest in a social studies lesson. Another coping mechanism, noted by Jackson, is that some students adopt a "cool" detachment to evaluation, whether it be positive or negative. They employ a "psychological buffer" to withstand the stress of classroom life.

The third significant feature of schools that Jackson addresses is that of unequal power between student and teacher. Jackson notes that in a society that professes democratic ideals, people often become alarmed at a discussion of oppressive power in the classroom. Most people prefer to play down this aspect of school life that demands conformity to the expectations of others, yet, this is one of the most prominent features of classroom life, says Jackson.

Parent power tends to be restrictive, Jackson notes, and related to "don't" and "stop." Teacher power is as prescriptive as it is restrictive. It is the teacher's authority to

tell the student what he will do. What the student will do is look and listen. The student must abandon, says Jackson, personal plans for action and substitute the plans of the teacher. A worker may choose not to follow the prescriptions of his boss and take the day off or walk away from the job. The student, however, is compelled to follow the teacher's instructions or suffer the retributive consequences of failing to do so. Schools are like institutions such as mental hospitals or prisons; the inmates or students are committed involuntarily and are under the watch of those in authority, who have greater freedom than they and can leave the institution as they choose. Teachers, Jackson comments, may not like the comparison, but their roles are like that of prison guards. They guard the exits; certain freedoms are allowed, but the guards will monitor the limits of those freedoms.

Students are expected to adapt to the teacher's authority and become good models and students. Those who are not good workers may have to adopt practices to cope with the oppressive power of the teacher. A student may try to "curry favor" or engage in "apple polishing." Another tactic is that of hiding words and actions that might displease the teacher. If asked if he has been to the drinking fountain, a student may say, "no," in order to get a second drink.

Jackson points out that the elements of crowds, praise, and power in the classroom form a hidden curriculum that each

student must master if he is to be successful in school. In schools, as well as in prison, Jackson notes, conformity and good behavior pay off. A student with superior academic ability, Jackson says, is at an advantage institutionally as well as academically when he enters school. Not only is he able to succeed academically, he is able to quickly understand causal relationships and come to grips with the rules and regulations of school life.

What students learn through this hidden curriculum, says Jackson, is to subjugate his desires to the will of the teacher, develop patience, even resignation. He learns to subdue personal actions and wishes to the welfare of the group. He learns to be passive, to acquiesce. He learns to tolerate petty frustrations, interruptions, delays, and accept the plans and policies of those in control, even if the policies are neither clear nor rational. He becomes, I would add, one of Freire's "automatons," not only because of the nature of the academic instruction he receives, but also because of the need to adjust and conform to the expectations of the institution called school.

William Pinar in his article, "Sanity, Madness, and the School" (1975), has examined the psychological impact of the dehumanizing practices of banking education and the conditions of schooling on the young. The cumulative effect, he says, is that of madness. Students leave school "credentialized but crazed," mere "shells" of what they could have

become. Pinar has identified and explicated twelve effects of schooling through studying the works of British psychologists R. D. Laing and David Cooper.

The first deleterious effect of schooling identified by Pinar is that of "hypertrophy" or "atrophy of the fantasy life." Because of the narrative nature of instruction, a child who may start the day alert and attentive, soon finds herself daydreaming, staring out the window thinking about recess or friends, all in an attempt to block out the droning of the teacher's voice. In contrast, another student may force himself to pay attention at all times. When his mind wanders, he forces it back on the lesson. After several years of forced attention his mind becomes tied to the lesson. It wanders less and less. While one child may be viewed as dull and inattentive by the teacher, the other may be seen as bright but unimaginative. One child, absent in daydreams most of the day, year after year, loses touch with the "real world." Another student becomes an automaton, one-dimensional; he has lost a significant part of his humanity.

Another effect of schooling, says Pinar, is a "loss of self." Students are encouraged to model themselves after others who are successful; perhaps, a political figure, an outstanding athlete or a model student. In order for a student to assume the role of someone else, he must first become dissatisfied with himself. Pinar quotes Freire who says that the oppressed cannot be free as long as "to be is

to be like" and "to be like is to be like the oppressor." In addition, students must transfer dependency from parents to teacher, give up autonomy, as they accept the necessity for instruction. School requires, says Pinar, a loss of self to the control of others.

The evaluation facet of schooling also described by Jackson, contributes says Pinar, to a loss of self-love. Teacher criticism through grading can contribute to self-deprecation. Students' transference of dependency from parents to the teacher results in the students seeking validation from the teacher. Yet, a student rarely gets A's in all subjects; he is made to feel deficient in one area or another. A students' self-worth is contingent upon the affirmation of others, particularly parents and teachers, and often teachers and parents concur in their criticism of a child's achievement. The result is a loss of self-love; it is self-love, Pinar observes, that is a prerequisite to the capacity to love others.

Pinar attributes the disagreements and fights that occur among children in school to the competition children experience in vying for the love and approval of the teacher. While teachers need to "love" students and let them be, says Pinar, they, instead, intervene, correct, instruct. Children cannot strike back at the teacher; thus, the anger is displaced onto classmates. Pinar labels this phenomenon "the thwarting of affiliative need." Student relationships as

persons are hampered in development as children compete against each other for care and validation.

As a result of hours and days of physical discomfort resulting from straight back, hard chairs and feelings of "I don't like school," which must be ignored, children, Pinar suggests, become numbed to feeling. Instead they become thinkers only, ignoring feeling and internal messages. Such a response hinders individuation and personal growth. Children undergo what Pinar calls an "estrangement from self." The child whose actions in school are always initiated by the teacher becomes "other" rather than self-directed. The child does not ask, "who am I?" but "whose am I?"

The student also gives up the ability to live from the "inside out," and instead may adopt a "role," such as "good student," "hard-working," an observation also shared by Jackson and Freire. As a result, schools produce "hollow men," or obedient automatons, "programmed to make the right computations" (1985, p. 375)," says Pinar. They become strangers to themselves and to others.

If, Pinar indicates, the child does not internalize the externalized self or "role," then he is likely to internalize the "self" of the teacher. Otherwise, the child may develop a false-self, a mask, to avoid friction with the teacher. The child, having lost his own sense of identity needs to identify with another, and the teacher becomes the most

likely model. Pinar quotes Freire on the dangers of such an internalization: "The oppressed do not see the 'new man' as the man to be born . . . as oppression gives away to liberation. For them, the new man is themselves become oppressors" (1975, p. 375). Should the child not develop the need to identify himself through another, but still feel the need to succeed, he may decide to demonstrate obedience, but he does not have to believe in what he does. He may choose then to "play the game." He sees the school process with its rules and regulations as the "game," and himself as a player. The resulting lack of authenticity reveals itself ultimately as cynicism, even nihilism. Pinar notes that many writers have pointed out (he cites Laing) that this false self-system prevents genuine interaction with others; a student becomes an object, a robot-like creature. On the other hand, if the child "fights for life," and manifests his struggle in socially unacceptable behavior, he may be labeled "schizophrenic." At any rate, Pinar reiterates, the child is maddened.

The loss of a sense of a personal self is further heightened by the impersonality of the large numbers that make up classroom memberships. Any group larger than twelve, Pinar argues, is depersonalizing. There is no place in the classroom for seclusion, no place to be alone with the personal self. Pinar notes that what students learn is to be members of a herd, or referring to H. S. Sullivan's observation, they learn to be social without having anything to do

with others. Another aspect of crowded, impersonal classrooms and schools is that children do not get genuine confirmation of themselves as human beings. What they get, says Pinar, are "questions, instructions, ignorance." Consequently, students may use "symbolic forms" to gain recognition, such as trying to answer questions. Such acknowledgement, Pinar points out is not genuine but "disconfirming." Other students may display disruptive behavior in order to gain recognition, even if such recognition is negative.

Pinar ends his critique of schools by pointing out that in addition to being impersonal, dehumanizing places, schools are also ugly, unimaginatively designed, drably painted and furnished with straight hard chairs. The result of such an environment is that children lose aesthetic perception. In addition, curriculum is approached through dissection and analysis. Students do not study the beauty of nature, notes Pinar, but phyla and phenomena instead. Students learn about oaks and sycamores but do not see a tree. In the humanities, students are taught to critique and analyze a novel or a poem. They learn to respond cognitively but not aesthetically to the impact of literature or art. The emphasis in school is on the development of the intellect to the neglect of the aesthetic and sensuous.

The end result of the practices which students endure in public schools is that they become both hollow and mad, says

Pinar. Pinar's work supports the views of Jackson and Freire that schools, rather than being places that nurture critical reflection, healthy emotional development and aesthetic appreciation, are, in fact, institutions that actually thwart such development. Jackson maintains that the "daily grind" of school life itself produces automatons. For Freire, the educational practice that students receive from bank-clerk teachers prepares students for domination. Researchers such as Holt, Herndon and Kozol would concur.

There is, in fact, a great deal of research on the current policies and practices of public schools and speculation about how these practices are experienced by students and teachers. One of the new dimensions of educational research, however, is the criticism of the generalized nature of the research itself. There is a call for a more personalized, in-depth look at the individual response of particular students and teachers to the educational process. While sociological research, such as Lortie's, for example, is helpful in providing a general, broad view of teacher characteristics and experiences, there is a need, I believe, for a closer look at how individual teachers view and cope with the public school environment. While sociological research is helpful in providing a broad view of teachers' general perceptions of the realities of school life, a more in-depth look at how individual teachers personally encounter

and respond to teaching would further enrich our understanding of the teaching experience.

In addition, then, to examining the sociological literature on teachers, I will extend my research by interviewing several individual teachers. Whereas sociological research blots out the diversity and unique personal differences among teachers, I anticipate that personal interviews will be helpful in discovering particular and unique perceptions, attitudes and values that are not evident in more generalized forms of inquiry. I am concerned ultimately with the existential, the particular, the unique meaning that a teacher may formulate from his or her personal experience of the educational process. To gather this information I will talk at length with several teachers in an attempt to more clearly comprehend how different individuals encounter and react to the daily teaching experience. In addition, I will reexamine my own experiences as a teacher, in an attempt to understand how my own personal and professional views and perceptions have been shaped by educational experience. A careful look at my own educational hermeneutics should be helpful in formulating an understanding of how other teachers are personally affected by and affect the teaching/learning situation. My method of research, then, will be that of interpretive inquiry, involving analysis and interpretation of the writing and experiences of scholars and teachers.

Statistical oriented research concerns itself with categorizing, rationalizing, ordering, and, thereby, facilitating the transformation of data into quantitative terms. Its purpose is to extrapolate knowledge derived from a limited sampling to a generalized population. The focus of statistical research is on what is projected to be the probable experience of the collective rather than the individual. Carl Jung reminds us that "the more a theory lays claim to universal validity, the less capable it is of doing justice to the individual facts." Jung points out that if the average weight of each stone in a pile of pebbles was determined to be 145 grams, it would be unlikely that anyone could reach in and pick up a pebble weighing 145 grams on the first try, maybe never. Statistical research, then, tells us little of the "real nature of the pebble" (1958 p. 16). Statistics do not account for understandings, values, intuition, or sensitivity on the part of an individual, all of which shape the reality she or he experiences. Interpretive inquiry, on the other hand, attends to the unique meaning-making process within the inner world of the person.

A phenomenological/hermeneutical inquiry approach attempts to describe and interpret individual experience. Sylvia Ashton-Warner's Teacher and Spinster are examples of such an approach. In these books, Ashton-Warner describes her experiences in the educational process. Her insight is derived from the meaning she garnered from an examination of

her own perceptions, thoughts, feelings, decisions; of how they constructed and continuously recreated her own world as a person and a teacher. Such a study calls for an earnest reflection upon the self; it requires a momentary standing outside of personal experience, observing it without presuppositions and examining it without prejudice.

Through the hermeneutic process a person experiences both interpretation and understanding of his or her world. The interpretation and understanding can be metaphorically represented as a circle, depicting day and night. The top half of the circle, interpretation, is like day. It involves conscious activity. Understanding, the bottom half of the circle, is like night. It is still and mysterious. Both day and night exist independent of each other; yet, the understanding of night is influenced by the totality of the previous day's activities and interpretations. Interpretation, day, is affected by previous understanding. Meaning flows from the interaction of the two. For the individual, self-understanding comes as she/he examines the active world of his or her experiences; his or her interpretation of these experiences will be shaped by understandings that have previously occurred. "The fundamental human quest," said James Macdonald, in his paper 'Theory-Practice and the Hermeneutic Circle,' "is the search for meaning, and the basic capacity for this search is experienced in the hermeneutic process, the process of interpretation of the text (whether artifact,

natural world, or human action). This is the search (or research) for greater understanding that motivates and satisfies us" (p. 5).

The search for meaning through personal hermeneutics is not guaranteed to be either effortless or non-threatening. Childhood memories, educational experiences, significant events in adulthood, and perceptions of an ever-changing world can result in expressions of sadness as well as delight. The individual on a quest for insight and meaning can be prepared for both.

In examining my own personal journey into day and night, I seek to recognize the forces that shaped my perceptions of the world in which I lived and now live. The degree to which I challenged those forces and the degree to which I passively bowed beneath them, reveal the depth of my courage to be unique or my need to conform. The influence of my own schooling as it affected me as a person and as a teacher offers insight into the power of educational experience in molding my present perceptions of teaching and learning, being and becoming. I am not the same person or teacher today that I was fifteen, ten, five and even one year ago. My journey has been marked by transformation, a change in consciousness, both intellectual and spiritual. It has meant casting aside outgrown and formerly unexamined beliefs and viewpoints. In that sense the hermeneutic process can be involved in liberation, the freeing of the self from ideas

and perceptions that chain the individual to her past and prevent her creating a present and future that is more healthy, more whole.

The "when" and "under what circumstances" such changes have occurred should not be difficult to pinpoint, the "how" and "why," however, will probably remain in the realm of mystic unknowings. It simply happens. Consciousness, in my case, was awakened, deepened, and extended beyond the ego-centric and the self-serving. Education became a personal metaphor for expansion and growth. In the process, I found myself developing deeper insight and understanding not only into myself but also into my students and the teaching/ learning process. My story has been one of discovery and awakening. In reexamining it and sharing the meanings I have derived from it, I would hope that the reader might find encouragement in discovering the potential for growth and change in his or her own life.

In talking with teachers, I anticipate their gaining insight into their own hermeneutics in the process. As they share their memories, trace the influences that have shaped their personal views of teaching and learning, examine the changes and amplifications that have occurred in their views of the educational process, they will be delving into areas of both day and night. They will be asked to interpret these experiences and the impact they made on their personal and professional growth. The result will be, to varying degrees,

a deeper understanding of how these experiences have played a part in constructing the world as they presently experience it.

I will be interested in knowing what motivated these teachers to enter education to begin with. What is it they hope will happen either to them or their students as a result of their interaction in the classroom? Where did they get their ideas about how learning takes place, why and when it takes place? I'd like to know about their personal educational experiences and the power these experiences exerted in shaping their realities as persons and teachers. I am particularly interested in the degree in which these teachers have experienced change over the years in their perspectives of teaching and themselves as teachers. To what degree have they been static and to what degree have they been dynamic in their personal growth process? Because of my interest in spiritual awareness and centering in teaching, I am interested in finding how and to what extent and in what ways these teachers experience such an awareness. I'm curious to learn to what degree these individual teachers fit the conventional model described by Lortie; to what degree do their classrooms and their teaching reflect the "banking" description of education critiqued by Freire, the "daily grind" and "hollowness" in public schools depicted by Jackson and Pinar.

I am especially interested in how these teachers view themselves in terms of world citizenship and the responsibility that awareness of such citizenship entails. To what extent in their personal and professional lives do they reflect a compassion that involves action to help ameliorate conditions of injustice and suffering? I'd like to know to what degree these teachers accept traditional cultural values and to what extent they question current social, political and economic practices. How do these teachers view themselves politically in an age threatened by nuclear destruction and ecological disaster? I am interested in knowing to what degree individual teachers see education as a potential force for social transformation, or, if, indeed, they perceive the need for such transformation.

CHAPTER 3

THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY

William Pinar has suggested that through the study of "currere," the effect of educational experiences in shaping our belief systems and sense of self, we can come to know what we are, to detach ourselves from roles assumed through conditioning and form personalities according to "wishes" more aligned with the authentic self (1978). Such study leads us to examine the "leben-swelt," the inner self, the self that gradually becomes more inaccessible to us as we assume images and roles demanded us by culture and environment. Pinar describes this process as an intellectual one. We start by putting educational experiences into words and then using our critical faculties to determine the "principles and patterns" that have been operating in shaping the personality.

I have found Pinar's concept of "currere" helpful in coming to self-understanding, in discovering how my educational experiences in public school and in the university have, indeed, shaped my viewpoints as a teacher and as a person. The impact of teachers, in particular, has been both significant and paradoxical in my life: from my earlier teachers I learned conformity, from certain graduate school

professors I learned to celebrate and grow into individuality; yet, whereas the intellectual process of "currere" has been necessary in my growth towards self-knowledge and understanding, it has not been sufficient. The intellectual, psychological processes involved in "currere" have been helpful in analysis of the development of my personal perspectives and images, but it has been the awareness of a spiritual reality within and outside myself that has enabled me to begin to transcend not only the conditioning experiences of formal education, but also the psychological impacting of childhood environment and emotional experience.

Like many women, I spent most of my life as a child, adolescent and young adult always trying to please, to placate, to play the "accepted" role. My success, my self-concept, hinged on pleasing others, doing and saying what was accepted, conforming, fitting molds established by family and society. Such behavior was reinforced by a loving but authoritarian mother who expected impeccable behavior. This behavior included never questioning her viewpoints or disagreeing, never being loud or "silly." In elementary school, I won approval from teachers because of my good behavior and good grades. I was a sensitive little girl and still shudder when I remember being rapped on the leg and scolded in reading circle by my first grade teacher. I have always had a nervous habit of crossing my legs and absent-mindedly swinging my foot back and forth. The red mark on my leg left

by the teacher's ruler was not what brought the stinging tears to my eyes; it was that I had displeased her. I was embarrassed that I had been "bad."

Being a Southern woman made the task of breaking away from accepted norms even more difficult. Southern women, I believe, are still indoctrinated, more than their counterparts in other sections of the country, to be polite, to be "feminine," to conform to the traditional role expectations of women. The Southern woman, brought up in the Bible Belt, is infused with the notion of sexual stereotypes that are supposedly ordained by God and often verified by a patriarchal Protestant clergy. I was not surprised to learn recently that a group of fundamentalist Christians in Tennessee had attacked a popular public school reading series which depicted, in one of the stories, a young boy in the kitchen making toast. This reading text, the spokesman for the group complained, promoted feminism and contradicted the word of God regarding conventional male and female roles. The reaction of this group is extreme, even for the South, but is in keeping, I believe, with the sentiments of many present day men and women in this part of the country.

In addition to being indoctrinated into the importance of fitting the female personality stereotype, the Southern woman, as far back as Scarlett O'Hara, has had the importance of physical attractiveness impressed upon her. Attractiveness combined with "femininity" has assured the Southern

woman of finding a suitable husband to take care of her, one whom she could lean on and with whom she could find identity. Even as late as 1969 when I graduated from college, having an engagement ring by the graduation date was a mark of success - a feather in the cap - evidence of being acceptable and successful as a woman. I, like most of my sorority sisters, wore a diamond solitaire down the aisle to collect my diploma. It seemed to be the appropriate accessory for the cap and gown. The career instigated would be short-lived, as the popular myth went, for the college-educated, attractive Southern woman was to move within a few years to her three bedroom suburban house and begin her natural career as mother and homemaker.

In 1969, I like my female peers, never questioned what happened if the marriage failed or motherhood never happened. At that time I was too busy playing a designated role, polishing the persona, adding layers to the mask that hid the person within. It wasn't important to know who the inner woman was, it was the outer image that counted: the one that was passive, pleasing and smiling, too busy play-acting in someone else's production to even think about writing her own script.

It wasn't until entering the doctoral program in graduate school in 1982, that I even began to question my own identity. I had been assigned a temporary advisor, Dr. David Purpel. At our first meeting, he asked the question that

began for me a revolution in my life. He simply turned and asked casually, "Who are you?" I immediately gave him my name, thinking this must be a very busy man who had probably not had the time to even find out the name of this yet another "green" graduate student advisee. "Oh, I know your name," he said, "but who are you?"

I glibly began to spout information about my job, educational background and ambitions. "That's not what I'm asking," he persisted. "Who are you?" I've always been fairly good at using words, being an English major. I had until this point in my life, usually been able to come up with acceptable if not authentic answers to most questions. This time I was stumped. No matter what nonsense I sputtered, he seemed to know that I didn't know what I was talking about. I felt stupid. Confused. Angry. Trapped. Nothing I said seemed to please this man.

Answering this question, "Who are you?" has caused me to suffer more than I wanted to bear and to grow in ways I could have never imagined. My first assignment as a graduate student in 1982 was to seek the answer to that question. I believe that this question has to be the most significant question in the education and transformation of the person and of the teacher, for as Dr. Purpel later advised me and my fellow students in one of his classes, "We teach what we are."

Who and what I am as a person has changed over the past few years and so has my teaching. When I first began my

career as a teacher, I realize now, my style was imitative, certainly not original. I taught as I had been taught, the teacher instructs; the students listen and comply. The most positive influences on my teaching had come from my student teaching experience with my advising teacher and a gifted Shakespeare professor in college. From both these teachers I had learned the importance of letting students talk, encouraging them to share ideas, to debate, to examine varying points of view. Nevertheless, my insecurity as a teacher (and probably as a person) prevented me from giving my students too much reign; I felt the need to let them know that I was the one who intellectually had the upper hand; I was the one in control and who would make the final judgment on the worthiness or unworthiness of expressed ideas.

In addition, I wanted to be one of the "good" teachers: the ones who covered the curriculum, kept the students under control, and occasionally inspired them enough to get excited but not excited enough to be heard by the principal down the hall. I turned in records neatly and on time. I was even praised at a faculty meeting for having a student membership register that was letter-perfect. And I was a "new" teacher at that, the principal said. He was really pleased. I'm embarrassed to admit it now, but so was I.

I was a dedicated and hard-working young teacher. I wanted to play the accepted teacher role, but I was eager to learn innovative and more successful strategies. I realize

now that I did not have a clear-cut purpose or direction in my teaching, other than to teach what was in the curriculum and to make it as painless as possible for my students and on occasion, even enjoyable. I liked my students and enjoyed them as people. My supervisor saw me as one of her more "creative" and "open" teachers and was aware of my interest in growing and improving myself professionally. She liked my openness with students and my willingness to try new approaches. She recommended in 1972 that I apply for a six-week summer institute sponsored by the State Department of Public Instruction on the education of the gifted child. The focus of the institute was not only the identification and instruction of gifted children, but also the development of creative approaches to teaching and learning.

This experience proved to be a turning point in my understanding of the nature and purpose of education. Much of the literature we read and discussed addressed the description of the academically gifted child, yet we were admonished to remember that all children have "gifts." As teachers we were encouraged to set up learning situations that nurtured the development of strengths of all students, not just those legally defined as "gifted" by the State Department. The development of creative and critical thinking, a questioning attitude, were goals we were encouraged to move towards with our students. Foremost, we were told, students must be allowed the freedom to stretch

and explore, to take part in creating knowledge and not just absorbing and storing it. In addition, we were "given permission" as teachers, to explore, take risks, create and try different teaching techniques and not to fear failure, but to try again in our attempts to grow and improve ourselves as teachers. Our students were not simply empty vessels to be filled as the aged metaphor goes, neither were we. This was the first time I can remember that as a teacher I was encouraged to follow and trust my own instincts, to pull from my own human resources.

During the institute that summer, I also met a woman, much older than I, who introduced me to Eastern religious philosophy, Christian mysticism and parapsychology. She had sensed, somehow, through our working together that despite my vivaciousness and supposed confidence, I was struggling, confused and unsure. I shared with her some of the problems I was experiencing in my marriage, the insecurity I still carried as a result of a poor, working class background, the frustrations of never being able to live up to a myriad of ideals I had set up for myself as a person and a teacher. She suggested that I begin to do some reading in religion and psychology, to keep a journal and to take note of my dreams. Through her influence I became aware of a number of worlds I had never explored mentally or spiritually. I began to understand reality as kaleidoscopic rather than static. I became intrigued at the possibilities of the spiritual and

intellectual evolution of human kind; yet, in spite of my readings, questing, and meditations it would be years before I came to explore the possibilities for the evolution of consciousness and growth within myself. It would be years before I would begin to bring macroscopic understanding down to the microscopic - to myself.

I returned to my classroom at the end of the summer, filled with anticipation and the excitement of new beginnings. This was an inner city junior high where many students carried knives more frequently than textbooks. With court ordered integration, district lines had been redrawn so that this school which had previously pulled only kids from white middle and upper middle class neighborhoods, now also drew students both black and white from lower socio-economic areas, many from appalling home conditions and some fresh from juvenile detention centers.

I was assigned a morning block of highly academically achieving students and an afternoon block of non and below grade level readers for language arts. The principal at this school believed in firm discipline and corporal punishment, particularly for these often unruly and disruptive students. Good teaching, in this principal's educational philosophy, meant that teachers talked and students listened. Students were to be kept "busy" and quiet.

This year, I decided, I was going to be bold, to make some changes. My learning experience in the summer teacher

training institute had taught me to trust my intuition. My intuition told me to move slowly. To these students, particularly those in my afternoon block, the words freedom and fun associated with classroom learning were as alien as satellites to cavemen. I wanted to start a revolution, but a quiet one. I was not willing to have it blow up in my face with students throwing books and erasers at each other and me in the name of liberation. I had seen some of my fellow upstart teachers flash into the classroom in September armed with a knowledge of Postman and Silberman (but not the wisdom, I presume) and watched and heard their classrooms erupt into ear-piercing shambles.

I'm not sure what happened to me and my students in room 106 that year. Gradually, I tried a little of this and a little of that. I felt my way. As my students became accustomed to one little freedom, we moved to a larger one that required even more responsibility. We moved gradually from straight rows to desk groupings and circles. We learned that it was OK to move and talk without permission as long as we didn't all do it at the same time. We learned that learning was multi-dimensional and it didn't come exclusively through the written word in text books or assignments. We talked. We drew. We painted and sang and made up plays and clay sculpture and wrote stories and essays and poems.

We also quietly formed a conspiracy. We never spoke of it. But all instinctively knew that when the teacher closed

and locked the doors, we were going to get about some serious learning - with discussions, debates, paintbrushes and student-made filmstrips. It was going to be noisy and active and alive and controversial. We also knew the principal would not approve. There were two doors in the classroom, the windows covered with student art so that we would not be caught going about our secret activities. If one of these doors should suddenly be unlocked from the outside by the principal, the jangle of keys on his huge metal key ring would give us ample time to move quickly but purposefully to our seats and move very obediently and quietly towards the front.

We never spoke of our little game and we were always certain to open both doors full and wide during those times when we were quietly sitting in our individual desks reading or writing. During these times the principal would often pass and remark about what nice students there were in 106, always quiet and attentive and still.

In the next two years I continued to explore and stretch myself and my understanding of the educational process. I had some startling successes. Some of my non-readers began to read and others moved up months and grade levels, not because of the phonics charts they had unsuccessfully labored over for years, but because they were reading their own selections from boxes of books I hauled monthly from the public library. I discovered that one of my students, reading at

about the third grade level had a wonderful imagination and could dictate and eventually write incredibly funny stories. The class loved them. Before this time his claim to fame had primarily been his lock-picking skills.

I also had some failures. I had boys with behavior problems that got into fights and were sometimes sent back to reform school. I spent most of my time caught between incredible excitement and overwhelming exhaustion. What might be a beautiful lesson one minute could turn into chaos the next. Some of these students were always on the defensive, ready to take offense and "mix it up" at the slightest provocation from a classmate. I, too, knew to walk softly. Nevertheless, I came to be fond of these kids that no one seemed to care about. They knew it. They liked me, too. I look back upon those years with good feelings about what I was learning as a teacher.

Unfortunately, my dedication to teaching was keeping me so busy that I had little time left to learn much about myself as a person, where I was going or what I really wanted in my life. When I later accepted a new job in a neighboring city, I found myself teaching English to academically gifted students, teaching reading to low-level reading students, coaching debates, drama, sponsoring a service club, working on curriculum committees, and serving as faculty representative for sundry other administrative purposes. I studied for a master's degree, conducted teaching workshops

and taught in special summer programs. All the while I perfected my mask. To colleagues and friends and family, I smiled and chirped about how rewarding my life was; I was "fine," my job was "fine," my marriage was "fine." So I said and pretended to believe. I kept myself too busy to consider otherwise.

When I left my job at the junior high school to take this new job that involved my teaching academically gifted students most of the day, my former principal warned me that I was "wasting my life." Children with superior academic ability had no special needs, he said, nor did they need special instruction. They would get whatever they needed "on their own." Besides, he added, really good teachers could teach a class of thirty students successfully no matter what the range of ability. Why didn't I stay with the kids that really needed me, he asked, the "slow" students, the poor readers? I didn't have an answer to his questions. I just knew I wanted a change, and I was bored with the lack of intellectual challenge in my work. I was excited, frankly, at the prospect of actually thinking with students and having to spend less time in teaching basic skills.

My experience with ninth grade academically gifted students that first year, particularly, was both invigorating and draining. I enjoyed the class discussions, the probing and debating that the students engaged in as they discussed The Great Gatsby or 1984 or issues in American history. But

keeping up with these students was exhausting. I had not taught American history before, although I did have a minor in history in college. It was not enough. I found myself up late at night and visiting the university library in order to be able to just keep pace with some of these students, particularly those whose fascination for history had led them to do intensive reading. I learned as much as I taught. Yet, I also discovered that while these students tended to be verbal and articulate they had difficulty in putting their ideas on paper coherently. This was not a skill that they had been able "to learn on their own." Before the year was out, however, these students' essays could compete with those of competent college students.

Despite their academic competence and mental maturity, I found these very bright young people as vulnerable in their adolescence as any of their peers. While they relished the challenges of being with their intellectual peers in their classes, they resisted the label of "gifted" in their neighborhoods. One evening at a youth meeting in church, I was working with a student of mine in setting up a game we were all to play. When we accidentally knocked over the stack of blocks we were using, I laughed and said, "Well, we really have to be gifted to make a mess like this." She turned to me, horrified and whispered, "S-h-h- I don't want these people to know I'm in that class. They'll think I'm wierd or something!"

Not only did these students struggle with adapting to two different realities, but I learned that teachers and parents were often insensitive to the fact that these bright young people were not necessarily gifted in all areas. Their math teacher, they told me, often said to students when they asked for further explanation on solving a problem, "What do you mean, you don't understand. You're supposed to be gifted, aren't you?" A colleague reported that when the parent of one of her students inquired about his English grade in her class, she had commented to the parent that she must be proud of her son, a star on the basketball team and such a good student. The parent had replied, "Of course, but we'll be really pleased when he also makes an A in English." I also heard teachers complain of these students talking too much or making noise in the hall and adding, inevitably, "And they should know better as smart as they are." These students, I realized, had their own unique set of problems and needed as much understanding and empathy as my low-level reading students.

My former principal had told me a good teacher could teach all kinds of students together successfully. I considered myself a good teacher, but my experience in teaching reading to less successful academic students and in working with academically gifted students began to convince me that this was not true. I began to find it difficult to imagine how in a class period of forty-seven minutes, I could engage

in a dynamic discussion of King Lear with one group of students and teach phonics to another at the same time. Someone had to get short-changed. I began to lose faith in the myth of the successful one-room schoolhouse. I have yet to regain it.

About this time in my teaching career I woke up one morning to realize that it was my thirty-fifth birthday. My life I began to feel was moving much too quickly. I had also begun to feel a sadness inside me, a deep emptiness. The feeling was compounded, I realized, by my inability to conceive children. I was depressed. Despite the intrinsic rewards I found in teaching, I felt my life lacked direction and purpose. If direction and purpose were not to come through motherhood, I decided, I would seek another course, I enrolled in graduate school. At least in the process of earning a doctorate, I would have opportunity to grow further as a teacher and increase my chances of working with curriculum outside the classroom. I had no way of knowing that my decision to enter graduate school would turn out to be one of the pivotal points in my life.

My initial baptism-by-fire experience as a new graduate student occurred, as I have indicated, when I was asked those three chilling and haunting words, "Who are you?" My educational program from that point on seemed magically geared towards helping me find the answer to that question. It seems as I look back now that some unfathomable, mystic force

had a hand in the entire process. With almost every course I took, I found myself being exposed to perspectives and ideas I had never examined or even thought about before. My reading in Jungean psychology, mysticism, and quantum physics had opened me to possibilities in human consciousness that I had never considered. Now it seemed that those ideas were cropping up in various forms in my course work. In fact, my first course at the university, "Personal and Social Transformation and Teaching," taught by James Macdonald, focused on the thesis that human consciousness was on the verge of a paradigm shift: a movement away from separateness and a mechanistic and violent reality to one of spiritual harmony and unity.

There are not words to describe the impact this one course with James Macdonald had on my development as a person and a teacher. Here words and phrases like "spiritual growth," "intuition," "aesthetics," "dialectical consciousness," and "transcendent" were associated with curriculum that held the centering and growth of the individual as the aim of education. Macdonald adopted M. C. Richards definition of centering, the "completion of the individual," utilizing all his or her potential, mental, spiritual and physical. Integration, Macdonald believed, was the goal for both teachers and students as they engaged in the "dance," Macdonald's metaphor for the learning experience. As we involved ourselves in the "dance" with Macdonald, we express-

ed our own sense of self through clay and paint and journal writing; the study and appreciation of nature and the exploration of other realities through meditation and centered movement. We laughed and cried together and explored Macdonald's question for curriculum development: "How do we live together?" Strangers initially, we soon found ourselves coalescing into a family of sorts during that summer. We learned from our teacher and with him and he with us.

Again, as I had in the fall of 1972, I returned to the classroom with new found excitement. I relied more and more on my intuition; I began to listen more than I talked; I had experienced the "dance" Macdonald had talked about before in teaching, but now it became a more frequent awareness for me. In the teaching-learning metaphor of "dance," sometimes the teacher leads and sometimes the students lead. Often there is a mystical moment in which roles are "blurred" and no one knows who's leading; teacher and students dance together. The movement is subtle and fluid and the dance takes on new patterns and forms and suddenly there is art. Heads nod, "ah-h-h," some say, "Yes, that's it," others may observe. "Look what we've done together," the students and teacher seem to acknowledge without speaking. The more open and relaxed I became with my students (and myself) the more I experienced these transcendent moments in the learning process.

During the next two years, I became aware that other

courses and teachers at the university were also effecting profound changes in my perspective of myself as a woman and as a teacher. A course in the changing roles of men and women in society heightened my awareness of the changes going on in myself as a woman. I was moving from emotional dependency and little-girl role playing to a new sense of independence and individuality.

Courses in movement and body awareness made me more cognizant of the interaction of mind, body and spirit in the centering process. Classes in curriculum and philosophy of education prodded me into examining anew my own views on education, to reevaluate my ideas based on an ever-widening perspective. A course exploring critical issues in American education caused me not only to explore issues in education but issues involving myself as an American. I was called upon to look at myself as a political being. In addition, Dr. Purpel was always keeping me busy reading. "Oh, you mean you haven't read that?" he would ask. "Oh, well, you really must read that, and, of course this too!"

The influence of these readings, in addition to my course work began to create for me a dramatically different consciousness. I became more critically aware of my "self" and the environment in which that self operated. This new awareness was like what M. C. Richards has called an "awakening." I began to consciously examine the forces that had led

me to the shaping of my belief systems, values and perspectives as a person and as a teacher. Maxime Greene compares this experience to that of a "stranger." To take the stranger's point of view, she says, is "to look inquiringly and wonderingly on the world in which one lives" (1973, p. 267). It is like returning home after a long visit in another place, Greene says, and noticing "details and patterns" in the environment that were never seen before. The stranger examines local customs and practices and tries to understand them. He may decide that they no longer make sense. The stranger then begins to question, "to engage in inquiry" (p. 268), to search for new meaning and purpose. For me this search permeated both my personal and professional life.

Greene points out that for the "teacher as stranger," the search involves the examination not only of the personal environment and the personal beliefs and perceptions the teacher has assimilated through the environment, but also an examination of the purpose and nature of education. "Why am I doing this?" she asks. "What difference will this action make in the lives of these students?" The teacher begins "to do philosophy," as Greene calls it. She begins to think about what is happening when she teaches, to look critically at the principles underlying her actions and to question what is meant by "enabling others to learn" (1973, preface).

As a teacher, I began to question not just "how" but

"why." Why am I, are we, doing this? What is and what should be the purpose of education?

M. C. Richards provides what I believe to be the answer to that question, "the birth of a person is the aim of education," says Richards (1964, p. 125). Education becomes, then, a transforming process, a process of birth, change, and growth. The teacher, herself, is also involved in this process of transformation. Transformation becomes a spiritual quest, for the teacher and the students. It involves getting in touch with what Carl Jung has called the "soul," the inner depth of a human being that contains all our "knowing and being," both our darkness and animal instincts as well as our divinity (Kelsey, 1968).

Jung's work has influenced my understanding of myself as a person and my role as a teacher. In moving towards wholeness and health in the process of individuation or centering, Jung believed that it was necessary to confront the darker side of the unconscious, to know the self, its weaknesses and its strengths. To fail to do so means to project the dark or "shadow" self onto others, the result being bigotry, cynicism, anxiety, compulsions, phobias and irrationality. Jung also believed in a spiritual reality beyond the self from which human beings can find help in bringing about healing and wholeness. Only by reaching beyond the self can the human being find adequate help in dealing with the destructive, dark forces of disintegration, both within and without.

A teacher, I believe, who is accepting of herself and, yet, seeks personal growth, is more likely to accept the dual nature of her students. She is more apt to let them be, to progress at their own pace, rather than feel the need to constantly correct, advise, or instruct from a false pedestal of supposed perfection. She can admit her weaknesses and shortcomings with her students as she grows more confident and trusting of her inner resources as a human being. She has less need to project a false persona of invulnerability.

It is out of this awareness of the "shared weaknesses" of all human beings that compassion grows, says Matthew Fox (1979). Fox's work has helped me develop a heightened social conscience and awareness of my connection, not only with others, but the planet itself, its trees and earth and water, animals and plants. To live a life characterized by compassion, says Fox, is to actively be involved in healing and mending the pain of the world in which we live. It is through creative action that justice is brought about and pain relieved. I believe that as a teacher and a person I must take a stand, choose an "arena," as Maxine Greene puts it, in which to work for reform and justice. It is not "feeling," Fox writes, "but action that will mitigate the world's misery" (1979, p. 279). For the teacher, education itself can be an arena in which to actually promote compassion and healing in the world.

In order for her students to become aware of the need for social action, I believe it is necessary for the teacher to create within her students a critical consciousness, an awareness that things may not be as they seem, a desire to explore, question and examine. In doing so, the teacher becomes liberator, opening up an awareness, a state of mind, through which students can be freed of unquestioned, pre-digested ideas and viewpoints, transmitted through family and society. In this sense, the teacher acts as the "transformative intellectual." Giroux describes such a teacher as treating her students as critical thinkers and problem-solvers, giving them a voice in the learning experience and engaging in dialogue with them to make knowledge "meaningful, critical, and ultimately emancipatory" (1985, p. 371). The teacher encourages her students to ponder, examine, and challenge both her and the social order. She attempts to create the kind of open forum of ideas in her classroom that Jonathan Kozol advocates as a necessity in order to produce "honest patriots." These are not patriots blind to evil in the country in which they live, but those with a knowledge of both good and evil; those who are "restless to root out the second, passionate to reinforce the first" (1981, p. 94).

In the teacher's zeal to promote the examination of viewpoints that differ with those of the status quo, it is important that she be aware of tendencies to indoctrinate students with her own brand of propaganda. As a truth

seeker, the teacher must realize that truth may take many forms. What the teacher may do is to present her personal versions of truth, prefaced by the admission that it is, in fact, her personal view, based on reflection and experience as well as the theories, research, and input of others. The task of the transforming teacher is to shake minds out of complacency, not to drill them into another one-dimensional truth. Maxine Greene notes that the existential teacher cannot tell another person how to live; she can, however, "create classroom situations that make it difficult to maintain peace of mind" (1973, p. 281). When the teacher is asked after a heated discussion, "But, what do you think?" the teacher knows she has been teaching in the spirit of inquiry and problem-posing education.

It has been my experience that problem-posing education, to use Freire's term, can be a painful process for students. Students may feel threatened and even angry when confronted with points of view that may be alien to what they have been exposed to in their homes or social and religious groups. I discovered in teaching Hesse's Siddhartha to juniors and seniors in Advanced Placement English, that some of my students were actually angry at suggested parallels in Buddhism and Christianity. In works like Ibsen's, The Doll House, Harding's Return of the Native or Dreiser's Sister Carrie, students often become heated in their discussion of these heroines who insisted on challenging the conventional roles

of women in their societies. Differences in political as well as social belief systems emerged in our study of Ellison's The Invisible Man, and Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, novels critical of a society in which a person's nature is determined by color, background, and economic considerations. Some students were often disgruntled with each other and me. I accepted their irritation and tried to understand that much of this emotion stemmed from having what had been secure, protected positions questioned by others and, hopefully, themselves.

I believe now that every teacher who shares concern for the downtrodden, the exploited and the future survival of the planet itself is required out of moral conscience to help students become aware of the inequities and suffering in society and the world. Poverty and hunger and injustice are usually glimpsed only momentarily by our middle and upper middle class students as they flip their remote control channels on their color T.V. sets in search of the best music video-station. If all education as E. F. Schumacher has said is about values (Fox, 1979) then teachers have a responsibility to examine the values that their instruction imparts. Compassion and an awareness of the brotherhood and sisterhood of all beings are the values that have the potential to counteract the effects of a materialistic and self-seeking society; the billions of dollars pumped into advertising by Madison Avenue does not serve the ideals of mutual sharing,

but the desires of greed and self-fulfillment. It is also important that students understand that in order for the rich to remain that way, there must be certain people who are poor, and that there are economic and social structures that insure this division of wealth and material goods.

Students of well-to-do families may not be as inclined to accept or want this information as some others, for it is they who are most likely to benefit from the economic structure of society as it is. Nevertheless, education that is oriented towards helping students expand their awareness beyond themselves and their immediate environment steps in and questions the right of 20 percent of the American people at the top of the economic ladder to own 49 percent of the wealth, while the 20 percent of people at the bottom of that economic ladder divide a meager 3.1 percent (Fox, 1979, p. 61). It questions why, according to Philip Stern, (cited in Fox, 1979) inequitable tax concessions give 2.2 billion dollars annually to 3,000 families with incomes of over a million dollars. It asks why tax handouts to the wealthy, amounting to 77 billion dollars, or 25 times the amount paid to support all the American poor, go unquestioned (p. 203). It is information such as this that may cause students ready to start the competitive climb up the economic ladder to "success," to stop momentarily to consider what each step up that ladder can mean to the unskilled, old, sick and unemployed at the very bottom of the ladder.

It is important that students also be made aware that despite U.S. pride in the notion that American education is not nationalistic in character like education in the U.S.S.R. or China, the influence of U.S. nationalism is evident in educational curriculum. Pledging allegiance to the flag, flag-raising and lowering ceremonies, emphasis on American heroes and American perspectives on world history, and "my country first" patriotism works towards creating, say Patricia and Gerald Mische, a "sense of superiority and prejudice" (1977, p. 232). The development of this attitude works to exempt America and its foreign and domestic policies from careful scrutiny. Teachers, say the Misches, cannot successfully teach ecological ethics if they feel they should not discuss arm sales, war policies, and injustice against those in other nations in the name of national security. I believe that teachers have responsibilities as citizens to speak out on these issues and others that relate to the welfare of fellow citizens. Government spending of 50 percent or more of the national budget on defense to the detriment of domestic programs to insure adequate health care, child care, housing, employment and nutrition for the poor is an issue that deserves critical examination. The need for a burgeoning defense budget when there is presently the nuclear equivalent of 15 million tons of TNT stockpiled against every man, woman, and child in the world is also worthy of critique by students in American classrooms. It is necessary that

education become an avenue for an awareness of political and economic realities if young people are to begin to develop a consciousness characterized by truth and justice. They must first become aware of the different forms and faces that injustice assumes.

In my experience with academically gifted students I have found them to be particularly sensitive and open to the discussion and examination of such issues and to all issues relating to the welfare of both animals and people. I have found them to be ecologically aware of the need to conserve the land and its natural resources, to protect the air and water from contamination and exploitation. I have discovered among these students many who already question the materialism and consumerism that characterize American society. It is not surprising that these students display such sensitivity and awareness. These youngsters generally come from homes that have afforded them nurture and caring, homes in which their basic needs for safety, health, security, and love have enabled them to move towards the self-actualization that Maslow describes. Paradoxically, these students will also be the ones, who because of their more highly developed intellectual aptitudes, will enroll in the better colleges and universities, and in some cases will receive scholarships to attend them. As a result, they will leave these schools to take well-paid jobs or enter family businesses that will insure the perpetuation of the social class from which most

of them come. In this sense, these students, whom I have found to be particularly sensitive in their understanding of the universal values of love, justice and truth, become the chosen, the elite in American society. Their less fortunate peers in public schools, even if they finish high school, may not find employment or will become skilled or semi-skilled workers following in the footsteps of family members ahead of them.

I would not wish to have the more successful students deprived of their caring families or excellent educational opportunities in order to balance injustice on the other end of the scale. I would wish instead for an educational system that offers the nurturing and potential for development that makes it possible for all students, no matter what family or socio-economic background, to receive the encouragement and care that is needed to insure that they, too, have the opportunity to share in the benefits of living in an affluent society. I would wish for that society to also be just, compassionate, and generous.

In order for the society in which we live to more fully express these values, I believe there must be growth and change within the consciousness of individuals that make up that society. Such growth and change can be nurtured within an educational framework. Socrates believed that education could serve as a means towards self-realization and service to the common good. Socrates' vision of education involved

personal growth in truth, beauty and goodness leading the individual from strictly personal concerns to the "responsible" participation as a citizen. The "idiots" were those who looked to their own good (Mische 1977, p. 220). The word, religion, a derivative of the Latin "religare" meaning to bind or make whole points to the focus of education for personal and social transformation, the process of healing and growth for individuals and the world. Meetings of the World Conference on Religion and Peace in Kyoto, Japan in 1970 and Belgium in 1974, attended by 500 leaders of the world's major religions resulted in an outline of the beliefs that these leaders shared as a cornerstone for a "human world order." They are as follows:

> A conviction of the fundamental unity of the human family, and the equality and dignity of all human beings;
>
> A sense of the sacredness of the individual person and his conscience;
>
> A sense of the value of human community;
>
> A realization that might is not right; that human power is not self-sufficient and absolute;
>
> A belief that love, compassion, selflessness, and the force of inner truthfulness and of the spirit have ultimately greater power than hate, enmity, and self-interest;
>
> A sense of obligation to stand on the side of the poor and the oppressed and against the rich and the oppressors; and
>
> A profound hope that good will finally prevail.
>
> (Mische 1977, p. 316)

These convictions are those that I believe should characterize an educational belief system that seeks to promote a profound change in individual and world consciousness. Such a system is grounded in religious values such as those expressed at the Kyoto Conference. Curriculum and instruction is examined through the lens of the spiritual values of community, interdependency, democracy, and love as opposed to what Matthew Fox calls the "ladder mentality" of competition, separateness, elitism, and violence.

Tunia Paulus' little book Hope For the Flowers (1972) aptly describes through the eyes of two caterpillars what the ladder-mentality that characterizes both schools and society, and actions is like. In this parable, two caterpillars Stripe and Yellow meet as they are climbing a huge pillar of caterpillars that are struggling to the top of a huge column of caterpillars. Yellow has already begun to question whether there is not more to life than climbing or being climbed, being squashed, stepped on, and pushed and shoved on the slow, tedious crawl to the top of the pillar. She convinces Stripe to leave the pillar and make a home with her in the grass. After time passes, however, Stripe becomes restless and decides once more to resume the climb with more zeal than ever before. He avoids meeting the eyes of other caterpillars because such contact he knows could be "fatal." Stripe becomes ruthless in his climb over others, yet, he

feels he isn't "against anybody." He is just doing what is necessary to get to the top.

Once Stripe finally does make it to the top of the pillar after struggling to shake off those near him, to his dismay he discovers that not only is there nothing at the top, but as he looks around he notes that there are thousands of other caterpillar pillars, all filled with writhing, struggling creatures like himself, all going nowhere. In the midst of his disappointment, Stripe suddenly spots a beautiful yellow butterfly whom he recognizes as Yellow. Yellow tries to grab Stripe and save him from the pillar, but Stripe decides that is too easy. He must get back down the pillar on his own. During his journey downward, he whispers to others passing him, "I've been up. There's nothing there." Needless to say, his warnings are ridiculed or ignored.

During his arduous, dark climb downwards, Stripe becomes frightened. His vision of the beautiful yellow butterfly begins to fade and Stripe wonders if he is not foolish to go on believing in butterflies. He has no proof that they really exist. Once Stripe reaches the bottom of the pillar, he reunites with Yellow. She shows him how to enter a cocoon. Once inside Stripe becomes frightened and unsure. It is so dark and he is alone: "He felt he had to let go of everything." But time passes and suddenly one day, Yellow who has been waiting patiently outside the cocoon looks up and sees a huge striped butterfly emerging. What was once a

furry, misguided caterpillar, a mere worm, has turned into a glorious winged creature.

Stripe realized before it was too late that his ruthless self-centered climb to the top of the heap was ultimately worthless. There was nothing of value at the top after all. To have made eye contact with his fellow climbers would have reminded him that they were brothers and sisters under the skin, and it would have been difficult to continue to squash and trample over and shove his brothers and sisters from the pillar to a certain death below. Headway could only be made by violently denying others an opportunity to move ahead.

Stripe's story reflects a change in direction that is required of individuals and nations if the world is to survive in the face of ecological destruction, famine, and nuclear war. It will take courage to abandon the pillar, turn around, make eye contact and look at other human beings eye to eye as brothers and sisters and to enter alone into the fearful darkness of self-examination in hopes of finding a spiritual strength and beauty that soars above personalism and greed. Yellow, in the butterfly parable acts as Stripe's friend and teacher, showing him another way, encouraging him to take a chance and follow a new direction. Her beauty and steadfastness give Stripe the hope that although the journey may be arduous and fearful, he, too, can become whole and complete.

Personal growth is not an easy process. What ends in celebration may often begin in uncertainty, fear, and pain. I have experienced all three emotions as I have found myself in the past five years moving in significantly different directions in my life. I have felt fragmented at times, confused, and even alienated. Like Stripe, I too, have felt at a loss at times to explain myself to others. Richards has pointed out that the initial steps in the centering process may often look like "derangement." To friends and colleagues and to my family, my words and actions must have, indeed, appeared strange and enigmatic.

In the spring of 1984, long-standing differences between my husband and me, compounded by my own radical change in perspective led to separation and divorce. My feelings at that time can be echoed by others who have stood on the brink of a dramatic change in direction due to a significant shift in personal consciousness. Richards aptly describes those feelings:

> I do not want the fire. Though I am burning in it, I deny it. For I am afraid to think what will become of me. I will be consumed. I will not know myself. All the familiar apparatus, all my supports, will they not be melted away. I cannot risk everything (1964, p. 133).

It is a fear of change, I believe, that holds us in stasis, paralyzed and unable to move out to explore different ways of knowing and becoming and being. We can become so accustomed to our chains that often we fail to recognize them

as fetters but see them instead as bonds of security. In our personal lives, in society, in the struggle of nations, we grow so accustomed to linear, ladder-like ways of thinking and being that we can conceive of no other possibilities.

Fritjof Capra notes that during periods of significant cultural change, although the "cultural mainstream" may continue to hold rigidly to old ideas and patterns, there will be "creative minorities" that will appear and "carry on the process of challenge and response" (1982, p. 28). Teachers, I believe, can be a part of these "creative minorities" whose consciousness senses the needs for transformation in a disintegrating world. There may be, in fact, teachers already involved to different degrees in education that is opening, empowering, and compassionate. These are the prophets of hope and change, whose roles as teachers can be significant in bringing about the transformation of persons and society.

CHAPTER IV

OTHER INDIVIDUAL EXPERIENCES

Introduction

After examining my own personal and professional journey into the greater awareness of myself as a person and as a teacher, I was interested in talking with other educators to determine if they, too, over the years, had experienced transformations in thinking and understanding that had influenced their perspectives on the educational process. I was curious to know what personal and professional experiences had shaped their lives and viewpoints since they entered the teaching profession. I wanted to know what impact such experiences had on their present understanding and if in one way or another these teachers had reflected on the issue of transformation and what their concepts were.

My interest in interviewing these individuals lay in my focus on the importance of personal experience as a source of truth and meaning. This is not to say that generalized sociological research is not a valid means of understanding experience, but it is to say that exploration of the unique ways that different individuals interact with their environment and their inner consciousness can also provide an in-

depth, personalized look at the nature of human perception and how it is formed and changed.

I would also add that the experience or perceptions of one individual in no way invalidates the experience or perceptions of another, nor does it act as a confirmation of truth for all others. What is validated is the significance of individual human experience in helping us understand ourselves as persons and the ways in which we connect or do not identify with the experiences and understandings of other individuals. Through knowledge of the experiences of others we can gain insight into complex issues.

I selected the individuals for this study out of my own personal acquaintances. They are educators whom I see, not necessarily on a regular basis, but frequently enough so that I had before the interviews some knowledge and intuition about their views on education as well as their views about society and culture generally. These are individuals, then, who were accessible, and who were willing to discuss openly their understandings and experiences as persons and educators. I believed I would feel comfortable with them and they with me as they shared their experiences and personal views.

I knew that two of these individuals had experienced crisis in their lives that had been turning points for them in terms of personal growth and development. I did not know to what degree these experiences figured into the shaping of their present belief systems concerning themselves and others

as well as their professions. I wanted to learn more about these experiences and find out if the other two individuals were also able to identify significant situations in their lives that they recognized as being pivotal to the formulation of their present states of awareness and perception.

I knew from previous conversations that one of these individuals, Bob, was in tune with the concept of personal transformation as involving not only intellectual shifts in perceptions but the psychological and spiritual as well. I wanted to know more about his understanding and personal experience of this process. I intuitively sensed that the other three individuals, whether or not they articulated such understanding, were at some level aware of similar processes occurring in their own lives. I was interested in discovering to what degree I was correct, and to what degree this awareness operated in their lives. I wanted to know if they felt at ease with the concept of humankind having a "spiritual nature" that attempts to move the individual towards wholeness and integration and if they were comfortable in discussing the potential for transcendence associated with this process.

I knew that these educators often expressed concern with the philosophy and practices of the educational system. I wanted to know to what degree their concern was articulated in terms of the social and political, the personal and spiritual. I wanted to know what kinds of changes these

teachers believed were needed in education and to what degree these changes reflected transformational thought.

Finally, I had always found these individuals to be, to put it simply, "interesting." They are people who have points to make, observations to share, things to do and places to be. They all exhibit in action and speech, a sensitivity to others, a concern for the well being of other individuals. They demonstrate a compassion in their lives that attracted me to them as individuals who are at some level aware of the interconnectedness of the planetary community.

By spending time with these individuals I felt I could deepen my own understanding about the teaching/learning process and the different paths individuals take to find meaning in their lives. Their stories, I believed, however they might coincide or differ with my own and those of each other, would be valuable in helping me further develop my understanding of the role of education and personal experience in the transformative process. For these reasons, I was pleased that Bob, Jane, Leta, and Sallie all agreed to share their stories with me. I hoped that they would glean from this experience a deeper understanding of the dialectic of inner and outer forces that have shaped their lives and that through their experiences, others, including myself, might gain further insight into the scripting of our own stories.

I conducted all the interviews in private homes or offices. The interviews lasted from one hour and a half to three hours. Two of the teachers called me after the interviews to clarify points they had made or to add further input. I spent an additional half hour with one of the participants in his office in order to gain more information concerning one of his personal experiences that had great impact in changing his perspective on life and his profession. All the educators involved agreed to my taping their interviews and to my taking notes on significant points as they spoke. I described to the teachers the general focus of my work and my reasons for wanting to interview them. I began the interviews by asking the participants to share with me general information about their family history, early memories of school and their future ambitions. Recalling these feelings and events appeared to help the participants to relax easily into the interview. Each of them responded freely to questions, sometimes going back to previous questions to elaborate or clarify points. I made a conscious attempt not to "lead" participants in their responses or to indicate my personal reaction to them, interrupting only to ask for clarification on answers or to ask another question.

All the taped interviews were transcribed. I used these transcripts and my notes to write up the interviews and the analysis of the information I gathered from them. I submitted this material to the teachers involved so that I would be

assured that I had accurately represented their points of view and their responses to my questions.

Sallie

I wanted to interview Sallie because I have had the opportunity to visit her classroom over the past two years and to watch her interact with her seventh grade students in language arts and social studies. Sallie teaches a block of Academically Gifted students in the morning and a block of basic or low-achieving students in the afternoon. With both groups of students I had observed that the message Sallie clearly sends to these young people is this: "You are special and important. I'm glad you're here. We have so much to learn and do together." I had also noted that Sallie seemed to have a special interest in encouraging students to explore new ideas, to critically examine information, and to ask questions rather than glibly regurgitate facts and information.

I also knew that Sallie was an outspoken critic of many current practices in education and that she questioned some of the more conventional thinking reflected in society and government. I also sensed that Sallie, like myself, was aware that she was involved personally in a process of growth and change. I wanted to know more about what forces had shaped Sallie as a classroom teacher and had affected her personal world view. I had never seen Sallie as a "conventional" classroom teacher and wanted to know more about her

personally and to what degree her ideas about education corresponded to my own transformative ideology.

Sallie and I met for this interview in the den of her home, which I observed reminded me in some ways of her classroom - comfortable and inviting, but not overly tidy. Sallie immediately opened the door in the room onto the screened in back porch to let in some fresh air. I noted that her classroom doors were also always open as well as the windows. She admitted that, "It's just a phobia; I can't stay in that room all day with those doors closed." I also suspect it has something to do with Sallie's need for "openness" in her classroom as well. She admits that her classes are noisy but that it's "too taxing" to maintain a totally silent classroom. "Besides," Sallie added, "those kids run that classroom. I can't teach and control all day, too. I have to get over and sit down and say. . . what did you do last night, just for fun."

Sallie was born in Baltimore, Maryland, but at age five, Sallie and her mother and father moved to a small town in eastern North Carolina, where Sallie grew up. In this community, Sallie remembers, "You were basically not supposed to think." The community was conservative with standards for conduct and rules for living that were clearly defined. Sallie's parents were high school graduates and her father worked in electronics.

Sallie attended a school with grades one through twelve. There were only forty-five students in her graduating class. Being part of a small class in a small school was important to Sallie as she looks back, because "you were a real person; you had a true identity," unlike today's large conglomerated schools in which a student might be number 453 on the graduating list. From high school, Sallie went on to Meredith, a small women's college in Raleigh, where again she experienced the assurance associated with being a student in small classes. Having skipped two grades in school, she entered college, a shy sixteen-year old. Had she entered a large university, she believes, she would not have gained the confidence that she developed at Meredith, where she was able to participate in leadership roles. These positions helped her become more comfortable and secure. Being a student at a woman's college also gave her the opportunity to see women as leaders and people who could "speak out."

Sallie admits that she had no plans to enter education. In fact, she wanted to be a social worker and "save the world." As a result of studying at a woman's college, she decided that she was going out to "conquer the world and . . . cut a path for future women." Her mother, however, felt that such an ambition was totally inappropriate and insisted that she get teaching credentials. Sallie, in turn, persuaded one of her English professors to write her mother informing her that it was "a waste to major in education."

Nevertheless, when Sallie graduated and married at age twenty, her husband was just leaving the armed services and entering college. She realized that she would have to be the breadwinner. Finding it difficult to get a job as a sociology major, she became a teacher, just as her mother had encouraged, and has continued to be one for the past eighteen years.

Sallie remembers that her early intent was to make a difference in the world and that is still for her "an ongoing dream." She assumed when she married that she would work for a few years, bring up "bright, well-adjusted children" and then return to work. She expected to work hard in life, believing that a person gets out of life what he or she puts into it. She was not prepared, she recalls, for life's complications and difficulties and had to learn that nothing in life that is worthwhile is either "free or simple." Experience has resulted in both personal and professional changes for her. One of the understandings she tries to convey to her students is that difficulties in life can be opportunities for learning and growing.

Sallie admits that she is quite different now as a teacher than she was during the first ten years in the classroom. Two dramatic experiences occurred for her in those early years in teaching that had profound effects on her views about education. The first occurred when one of her first graders stabbed the student teacher with a pair of

scissors. This incident helped her realize that she could "not save everyone in her classroom every year." As a result, she has learned to better accept her weaknesses and limitations as a teacher and to realize that a teacher cannot push and shove and try "to mold and shape" people. In working with a schizophrenic child she also learned that a teacher had to learn to wait and have patience.

Sallie's experience with the student involved in the stabbing incident was one of many experiences that have impressed upon Sallie the need for teachers and schools to recognize the need for psychosocial intervention with children and their parents. Young unwed mothers particularly, Sallie believes, need instruction in parenting. Sallie at one point in her teaching career actually started a class after school for the young mothers in a neighborhood housing project. In this class she worked with the mothers in teaching socialization skills and thinking skills to their children. "We are going to have a class everyday," she would tell them, "before you send them (the children) to me at age five and expect me to make a person out of them."

The second major incident in Sallie's teaching experience that she recalls having a profound effect on her occurred when she was teaching fifth grade one year. During the vocabulary lesson one of the little girls in her class suddenly leapt up and ran out of the room. Sallie followed her onto the playground to find out what was wrong. Sallie

had come into this class only a couple of months earlier to replace a friend of hers who was on maternity leave. She had no way of knowing the brother of this student had been killed in a car crash a few weeks previously. Sallie had used the word "demolish" in a sentence about a car crash during the vocabulary lesson. "I'm going to remember you from now on," Sallie told this student on the way back to class. What Sallie learned from this experience, she recalls, is that a teacher has to know a student emotionally before she can teach her. The teacher must find out who the child is before she can work with her appropriately.

To get to know and reach children is difficult, however, in today's large classes, Sallie notes. Not only is education not geared to the needs of the individual child, she observes, it is like a "production line," with all children assumed to have the same needs, backgrounds and goals. The opposite is true, Sallie believes. In a class of thirty-three she points out, the teacher may have twelve students from "disruptive family units." These are kids who come into class with a chip on the shoulder and want "to throw things around," Sallie observes. In the same class there are others who are "just kind of living on the fringe." They deserve an opportunity to learn; yet, it is difficult for a teacher to meet all the various psychosocial needs of various children in a classroom and teach academics as well.

Sallie has actually role-played socialization skills in some of her basic classes in which many children are from poor socio-economic backgrounds and deprived conditions. Students role-play how to walk through the classroom, pass and even bump into each other "and not kill." Students discuss the behavior required when students sit as units with desks together rather than individually in rows. What are the options they discuss, other than hitting, when someone's book is over on your desk? These are socialization skills that many children do not get at home and that the teacher must address if she is to be able to work with the class as individuals and as a unit.

Teachers need extensive training in counseling, Sallie believes, in order to be able to deal with the various kinds of children she will encounter in the classroom; yet, Sallie notes, schools are currently so "master this skill oriented, textbook oriented and computation oriented" that "we've lost the person." Sallie agrees that students must have certain basic skills to be successful in society but believes there must be opportunities for students to get to know themselves and each other. "However, the powers that be and who have decided that success is based on X score on a test and, therefore, you are going to be tested on everything you teach, have lost sight of the value of the "child." Sallie admits that she worries that her students will not do well on the state testing in the spring, because she has not spent as

much time as she might have on test-taking skills. Instead, she has spent more time on essay writing and, of course, there is no essay writing on the test, she notes. As a result, she will have to spend a few weeks before the test, actually teaching for the test. In addition, Sallie observes, teachers are generally so pressed to raise achievement scores and are so overworked that "they tend to slough off that area you don't test," the needs of a child for care and compassion and nurturing.

Sallie is also concerned over the evaluation procedures used in public schools and the resulting competitiveness and lack of self-esteem that it causes, particularly with Academically Gifted students. She would prefer a Pass/Fail system rather than the traditional better grade method of evaluation. Sallie believes that schools have placed such an emphasis on making A's and B's that the message to a student is that if you don't make those grades you are not a worth-while person. Sallie admits that one day she began to realize that she was so concerned with the self-esteem of her students in her basic classes that she habitually gave them higher grades than she gave the AG students. Once she began to realize that the stress on the importance of grades was affecting the self-esteem of her top students as well, she became as generous with them as she had been with her basic classes.

One student she recalls, whom she taught several years ago, maintained a constant rash from the stress she placed on herself to make straight A's. Sallie's response was to deliberately give her a "B" and tell her so. "No one should go through life making straight A's," she told her. "It's so boring. Why don't you just relax and not study one night and go out and have fun or come home with me and we'll go out and have a pizza." At the end of the year the student made Sallie a little booklet on relaxation. She had finally begun to enjoy life and have fun.

Sallie has also read her classes Hope for the Flowers, by Trina Paulus, the story of the caterpillars crawling desperately up the caterpillar pillar, stepping on others on the way, only to find there was nothing at the top. It disturbs Sallie that competition among students is so great that when she asks "Are we our brother's keeper?" the answer she most often gets is "no." Fewer and fewer students, Sallie observes, see that as the role of mankind. Schools should offer courses in ethics, Sallie believes, and sees teaching community and group responsibility as a priority.

The schools could free up more time to teach ethics and compassion and to reach individual children if they made more productive use of technology and the media, Sallie observes. Instead of teaching students endless facts, schools can teach children instead how to retrieve these facts from computers. Computers, in addition, can be updated more frequently with

new information as opposed to textbooks, many of which are outdated when they reach the schools. Teachers can then become facilitators, showing students how to research information and then teaching students how to use this information conceptually, to debate it, examine it, produce new ideas. Education should be more than the "opening of a book," says Sallie, it should be about "opening windows."

In addition, Sallie believes that schools could make more use of educational TV, rather than forcing teachers to tape certain shows themselves and "smuggling" them into their classrooms. Schools need to invest in more current news filmstrips and audio-visuals that are of good quality and that can present students with basic information, Sallie believes, particularly in the area of social studies, the nature of which changes daily. News commentators, novelists, poets and artists in the community could be valuable resources to the school in presenting information and exchanging ideas about their areas of expertise. Schools are behind the times, Sallie observes, in the methods that can be used to present ideas and information.

In addition to finding out more about Sallie's views on education and teaching, I was also interested in learning if there were particular personal experiences that had affected her perspectives on herself and education. Sallie responded that the breakup of her first marriage was the turning point for her in terms of emotional development. She had never

been an advocate of counseling or psychotherapy until that time. She couldn't understand when she went to her gynecologist, during the breakup of her marriage, why he kept asking her how she "felt," instead of giving her input about her physical condition. She confessed to him that she couldn't answer that question. She didn't know how she felt.

Sallie eventually went to counseling. For the first time in her life she realized she was given "permission to have emotions" and then told, "It's all right for you to feel." She began to be aware that her parents had never really permitted her to express emotions. "They were very cold," Sallie told me. "As long as I did OK, things were all right. But we never had any warmth; we don't hug, even to this day we don't do that. I don't think my mother has said 'I love you' in twenty-five years." Sallies first husband also lacked the ability to demonstrate warmth and affection, she observed. Today, in her present marriage, she is getting the warmth she missed before and is able to give it in return.

Sallie noted that the first ten years she taught, she never looked at the total child. She felt uncomfortable, because she never really felt that she interacted well with students. She taught her students effectively, she believes, and was able to give reassurance and love, but she was "always afraid to let go and actually get close to them." In education courses she had also learned that there must be

an invisible line drawn between teachers and students and to cross that line would mean "trouble."

After being in counseling, Sallie found herself able to transfer warmth to her students and acquaintances much more easily and admits that her "feelings as a person towards humanity in general are more open and accepting. . . ." After her divorce and therapy, Sallie went back to full time teaching and as a result of her newly acquired intrapersonal skills found herself always called on to teach the "difficult" classes. She found in these "difficult" classes some very bright students, but many of them needed "serious help." She would encourage these children to seek help, talk to friends, counselors, their ministers to find ways to work through their problems.

A second way that counseling helped, Sallie admits, was that it made her less prudish and conservative. Many of her friends today might be considered "weird," Sallie admits, particularly the "truly talented" ones who "don't quite hear the same drummer as the rest of us." Whereas she might not have been accepting of their behavior a few years ago, she thinks now that "its great" that people accept their own individuality. She is able as a teacher to appreciate differences as well as conformity in her students. When her students were drawing commemorative stamps recently, one of her students drew the Statue of Liberty, but changed the words, "golden light" beneath the stamp to a tribute to Bud

Lite. "Well," Sallie told him, "You did what I asked you to do but also did what you wanted to do. That's OK. You should help others to understand that there's a way to do what you want to do and play the game."

Sallie's interests and involvement outside the classroom have extended to the Beyond War peace movement and Birth Choice, an organization which counsels pregnant women who are trying to decide whether to continue or terminate their pregnancies. The Beyond War movement is an educational organization that seeks to inform people of the crisis the world faces in the age of nuclear weapons and to demonstrate and communicate a new way of thinking that will bring about a world beyond war. The premise of the Beyond War movement is that all people share an interconnected life support system and that people must transcend loyalties to families, races, or nations and extend that loyalty to all life if the planet is to endure. Sallie's attempts to incorporate these understandings into her own classroom teaching and in classroom discussions. Her work with Birth Choice has made her more aware of the need to inform young girls, particularly those from disruptive and abusive family backgrounds, of the responsibilities parenting actually entails.

Sallie's overriding concern for public education and society is the effect of disruption of the family and the inability of teenagers having children of their own to parent appropriately. She is always concerned when she hears her

fourteen-year old students saying that their ambition when they grow up is "to have babies;" without understanding the involvement they need to have in "the personal and emotional level and maturity of their kids - the economic level of their families." "America," Sallie believes, "must start spending more money on its children and not so much on Trident submarines." Children need quality care before, after school, and in some cases evening care. If positive change is going to occur in society, Sallie observes, it must start at the grass roots level with the nurturing of the American family and children.

At the end of every week, Sallie admits, she looks through her plan book and realizes that she never got to all the "stuff" the curriculum guide indicated she was supposed to do. She finds it difficult to accept that meeting the deadlines for completing the requirements of the curriculum is more important than dealing with the sensitivity of children. "Sometimes," she says, "I just want to sit down in the middle of the group and just listen to them talk." This inclination has led her to quickly assess what students already know when she begins a new unit, that way, Sallie said, "I don't have to spend so much time on the trivia."

Sallie confesses that when she first started teaching, she would search the want-ads every spring, trying to find another job. Teaching was tiring and draining. She still finds it that way, but now in the spring she finds herself

sad that her latest group is leaving. She admits that she complains "as much as anyone," but she also adds that she likes what she does. She accepts now that "it's OK to not be as perfect as I wanted to be." She sees herself as growing, nevertheless. Next fall she says, as always, she will get off to a "better beginning" and will have learned from past mistakes.

Sallie is obviously a humanistic teacher who cares for her students as individuals and is interested in instilling in each child a sense of importance. This perspective is also revealed in her concern for students from difficult family and low-socioeconomic backgrounds, and her statement that the country should spend less on Trident submarines and more on improving the conditions in which families live. Her concern is also revealed in her belief that teachers should have more training in counseling and less pressure to teach children irrelevant facts and test-taking skills.

Sallie's comments regarding her concern for the "competiveness" she feels schools instill in students, rather than communicating the ethics of brotherhood, begin to speak to a more spiritual ideology than she articulates. Her involvement in the Beyond War movement illustrates, I believe, her intuitive awareness of the possibility for personal and social change that can lead to global community as opposed to ego-centered individualism.

Sallie admits that she is a "bit conservative" as a result of her background and upbringing, and that at times she wishes her "Chevrolet and apple pie" classes could encounter a teacher who was more radical in her thinking. Yet, she continues to play the devil's advocate in classroom discussions to probe her students into looking more critically at current issues and ideas and to explore more "open" points of view. "I'm always wary," Sallie said, "of people who have no gray areas in their thinking."

Sallie's attempts to help her students become more reflective and aware of the need to seek and question the material they study, the information they receive from the media and government policy, and action in the world community are initial steps towards the kind of analysis that can eventually initiate personal and social change. Most teachers, according to Lortie's study, and that of Goodlad (1984) tend to be content to impress upon their students the importance of learning "facts," with little or no concern for the students' interaction with those facts or examination of their relevancy or meaning. Although conservative in many areas of her thinking, by her own admission, Sallie, in her focus on the examination of ideas rather than the ingestion of information, moves beyond conventional instructional strategies.

Sallie's compassion for others is revealed throughout her interview. She left college with a desire "to save the

world." She originally planned to be a social worker. She still sees this mission as an "on-going dream." She questions why the government spends excessive amounts of money on national defense but fails to do more to help "nurture" families or help people at the "grass-roots level." She worries that her students do not see that they have responsibilities to other human beings, that they do not see themselves as their "brother's keeper."

Sallie, however, lacks a substantive vision of how the changes in personal and social perspectives that she would like to see could take place. Her suggestions for bringing about such change are that schools should offer courses on ethics and parenting and alter the evaluation system to reduce competition among students. Teachers could be given more training in counseling and more time to work with students as individuals. Government, she believes, should provide adequate before and after school care for students. While these strategies could be beneficial in improving social and psychological well-being, they are too simplistic to attack a larger more complex problem; as a result, the depth and scope of significant change in attitudes and action that would be effected would be limited.

Sallie has not yet examined the complex social, political and economic realities that contribute to the consciousness of the culture in which her students live and grow and which are responsible for the behaviors and attitudes

that they demonstrate. She has not identified the structures that shape the environment out of which her students from "disruptive families" emerge, or in which fourteen-year old girls feel the most productive event they will participate in after leaving school is "having babies." Sallie does not acknowledge the social consciousness that encourages personalism at the expense of brotherhood, nor does she view the schools themselves as an extension and reflection of that consciousness.

Sallie's focus is on personal growth that can emerge out of counseling and therapy and changing the priorities of government spending to provide better domestic programs. She has yet to explore the more complex socio-political issues that must be addressed and transformed if dramatic transformative change is to occur in individuals and society. These issues involve the inadequate distribution of wealth, power, and opportunity; competition and individualism. Until such issues are addressed and rectified, Sallie's dream of "saving the world," will remain a futile and empty vision.

Bob

Bob is an Assistant Superintendent in a local school system. He was a classroom teacher for three years and then went into counseling and soon after into administration, first as Coordinator of Counseling and later as an Assistant Superintendent. I was interested in interviewing Bob because I knew that many of Bob's ideas and viewpoints are considered

quite unorthodox and out of step with those of his more conservative colleagues in administration. I knew that Bob had experienced, over the past few years, a series of personal transformations and shifts in perspective that had affected both his personal and professional life. I wanted to learn more about these experiences and how they had affected his views on education and contemporary culture.

Bob was the seventh and last child born to his parents who were both in their forties at the time. His mother had a fourth grade education. His father also lacked extensive formal schooling, but Bob remembers him as "a very wise man" who read all the time; politics, novels, newspapers and magazines and "technical books." Bob was the only sibling in the family to go to college. Bob attributes this move to his father's fascination for reading and learning, as well as his own yearning to do something different with his life. Bob's father was a contractor and built most of the schools and churches in the town in which Bob grew up, but Bob didn't feel that he fit into that kind of work environment.

Bob remembers that even as a young child he felt "different" and that he had little in common with his brothers and sisters. For one thing, he always "loved" school. His first grade teacher once recounted that Bob had been a fanatic about reading and had read almost two hundred books his first year in school. Unlike his brothers and sisters he was also an athlete. He knew early that he wanted to go into

education but decided not to play college basketball and to concentrate on his studies instead. Like many young teacher aspirants Bob was inspired to enter teaching because of some very good teachers he had in high school. He also liked the idea that teaching would allow him to stay in touch with athletics.

Bob remembers that he "loved" teaching, but he knew early that he wanted to become a counselor. Yet, he found the counseling program in public schools ineffective in its approach. He considered accepting a job with the State Department of Public Instruction in public school counseling but later became Coordinator of Counseling for the school system instead and eventually Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Personnel Services. In this position he was involved with social work, health services, guidance and special education certification and placement. During this time Bob earned a doctorate in education. His dissertation focused on the value of keeping a personal journal in which to record dreams, feelings, and personal experiences as a means of personal growth and self-understanding. Today he is an Area Assistant Superintendent which makes him responsible for twenty-seven schools and their administration.

His administrative style, Bob admits, is different today than it was four or five years ago. Then he was a "mover and a shaker," he says, always ready to "run in and fix things," to make things happen and to change things. Now he says he

is learning patience, learning to listen, trying to understand what's going on within the system and the people who run it. Bob says that it is a challenge for him "to stop trying to run the engine" and just sit in the back of the cars on the train yet still help things stay on track. He even feels sometimes that he is just running along beside the train, not even on board. "I have spent so much time trying to decide where it (the train) should go. Now I'm trying to look at it where it is - how it is - how good it is, and wondering how much we can change it."

When I asked Bob if he was hopeful for dramatic changes in public schools and their orientation, his reply was that he wasn't sure anymore, neither was he sure what schools really ought to be anymore. The public, Bob believes, is getting out of schools what basically it wants. "If I did what I wanted with the school district, I'm not sure the public would accept it; they'd probably ride me out on a rail." While Bob is concerned about the effect that pressures from conservative, religious, fundamental groups can have on thwarting radical changes in education, he is heartened to learn in his workshops with faculties that there are "just as many people that are gradually sure they are running out of where they are. It's not working for them. They're not ready to jump on the bandwagon, but they know that where they are is not working."

Bob, from personal perspective and experience believes that it takes more than dissatisfaction, however, to initiate drastic change in consciousness. Such a transformation, Bob believes, usually involves a personal crisis. Bob's own shift in perspective began six years ago and was initiated by the ending of a love affair. Bob found himself empty and devastated. He was depressed. Nothing seemed to matter or to make sense. He remembers feeling fragmented physically, intellectually, emotionally. During this period of time he began to have a series of mystical experiences and a series of dramatic, lucid dreams which were startling in their impact. Bob had always viewed himself as a scientist, a rational and logical being. He had no background or interest in the metaphysical or in religion, and, thus, had no suitable lens through which to interpret what was happening to him. Some of these experiences Bob told me, "make the hair stand up on the back of my neck even now to think about them." Yet, he remembers that something inside of him seemed to always reassure him that although he felt such devastation over the ending of this relationship that "all is not lost; it's just the beginning."

I asked Bob to describe one of those experiences. He told me that one Friday afternoon during this period of time, he called his staff together and told them that he was dealing emotionally and psychologically with some occurrences in his life that were disturbing and that, as a result, he felt

he was physically and emotionally at a breaking point. "If I'm not back here on Monday," he told them, "it's all yours."

Bob spent that weekend pacing the floor in his basement, undergoing attacks of anxiety and fear, a sense that he was about to "disintegrate," and experiencing an overpowering sense of death. Bob was unable to sleep for two nights. He clung to a post in his basement in an attempt to hold on to his sense of reality. He was finally able to fall asleep early Sunday morning only to awake a few hours later to find himself "moving in and out of reality." His body seemed to be, Bob said, in another "arena," an area of incredible sterility and nothingness, without sound or feeling. Bob alternately began experiencing an incredible surge of energy coursing through his body "like ping-pong balls." His body would visibly vibrate during these times and his head would be filled with the sounds of thunder and the crack of lightning. These experiences led Bob to a psychologist friend who helped him restore some sense of emotional balance through biofeedback. Bob later found meditation helpful in dealing with these dramatic experiences; nevertheless, he continued to have experiences involving visions and bright lights and a series of dreams that he found insightful in helping him to understand the changes in understanding and perception that he was undergoing. Two of these dreams that were particularly significant for Bob dealt with the church and religion.

Bob was brought up in a conservative Baptist Church, although he, himself, was never "religious" or "emotional" about religion. In one of his dreams he found himself on a bicycle riding away from the church altogether. In another dream Bob saw himself sitting in the balcony of a legislative building. He experienced a "knowing" that he was part of a "higher law" that makes its own laws, "natural laws." He felt the need to be in touch with these laws. That didn't mean to Bob that all man-made laws were to be broken. "When you're in touch with the Self," said Bob, "you don't want to break laws or to do wrong or evil. You may appear decadent, however, because you don't conform." He found the work of Carl Jung to be particularly helpful in developing his understanding of the growth of this Self or consciousness that he felt emerging in his life.

Up to this point in his life, Bob had been primarily a "behaviorist," a man of "structured mind," a man with an aesthetic nature he recalls, but certainly not one to be inclined towards the mystical. It took the kind of powerful, traumatic experiences with other realities that Bob underwent, he believes, to shake him out of the rational, scientific mode in which he operated and to make him open to other ways of seeing and being. The process of transformation for Bob has been he said "like a cleansing, being dipped down into the water, washed off and returned to myself again with a new freedom."

As a result of his experiences and the consequent changes in his approaches to educational leadership, Bob has found himself rejected and attacked. He worked diligently to build a counseling program, he recalls, that involved a more affective holistic approach, involving values clarification, decision-making and coping skills which often "may not always match up with cultural mores." Bob also brought volunteers into the schools to discuss "healing energy," and the balance and interconnection of mind, body, and spirit, relaxation techniques and visualization. His former superintendent seemed to understamd what he was doing but warned him that he was on the "cutting edge" and at a certain point he would have to withdraw his support. More conservative groups in the community accused him and his counselors of not teaching clearly defined moral values; others felt school personnel shouldn't be discussing "moral choices" with students. When a new superintendent came into the school system, Bob's programs were dismantled and put back on a more traditional track.

Bob admits that he sometimes wonders if all the efforts he put into building these counseling programs were worth the effort. "I've asked the question, 'Why struggle so hard when someone can come in overnight and change it?'" Yet, he says, he now realizes that all the hard work he has done in building such programs was to raise his own consciousness as much as that of the students and counselors and others involved in

these programs. "I've been the recipient of all the suffering, the pain and rejection, all that stuff, because I'm at the jumping off place, but I've learned so much. I'm not sure if I know more. I may know less but. . . all the work I've done to promote affective programs in schools - I'm the benefactor."

For Bob one of the most profound understandings he has come to in the past few years is that "I don't have all the answers." He's not sure anybody does. "I'm not sure that anybody knows how the transformation of a culture works. It may be arrogant," he added, "to even say what a culture should be." Yet, Bob believes that something deep inside the individual does know. "That," he says, "is the deeper wisdom." Bob notes that the way to get in touch with this wisdom is to grow in "self-understanding." "The journey in coming to know the 'deeper wisdom' is to become more in tune with the evolutionary energy that is within us . . . it knows, and . . . we will know through it." Bob calls this wisdom "nature's effort to reveal itself to itself." This energy is divine and "comes to us when we are ready (to handle it). The God-like thing becomes very human." Bob makes it clear that he is not talking about the "God of Moses" so much as something he feels in contact with deep within, that he believes is "just a greater human that's coming into being," or "a new dimension of the new man and new woman in the 21st century."

While Bob says that neither he, nor anyone, perhaps, has the answers that will "prevent nuclear war or educate all the people and raise their consciousness or stop poverty or prevent people from starving to death," he is convinced that something divine within humankind knows. By seeking and waiting for this wisdom to reveal itself, "We begin," Bob said, "to become an instrument of the creative energies of the universe . . . it is that energy or that knowledge that flows through us that can effect change."

Bob compares this potential for the creative expression in humankind to the process used by Einstein. Einstein, Bob explained, said his brain was like everybody elses. "He would work hard, wear out pencil after pencil, finally get frustrated, throw down the pencil and take a walk. In that walk he would suddenly be illuminated. It was as if something was stubbornly after him to get him to pay attention to a deeper level of knowledge and understanding." Bob believes that in moments of personal "surrender," like Einstein's, an individual can come to know what to do and how and when to do it.

All significant change within a culture begins with the transformation of a few individuals, Bob believes. ". . .if what's happened to me has any meaning at all for me, then that's the way I see it. It's not the masses." Bob sees sweeping changes occurring when "a certain consciousness is shared by a few hard-working, dedicated, crazy individuals

who are willing to go out there en masse. It may not be going public but going out together, sharing ideas and in hoping that to some degree the public will pick up on those ideas." Bob believes the passion and conviction of these individuals can affect consciousness to the extent that change can occur. Ideas that may seem radical at first gradually become acceptable to larger groups of people.

When Bob conducts workshops, what he finds himself doing he says is trying to create an "openness to stimulate an interest in the greater idea of things." Often students will receive what Bob is saying as a religious teaching, but Bob says there will always be two or three who will "really understand the (personal) transformation process." These students will keep in touch with him after classes are over and share with him their own personal journeys in understanding and where these experiences are leading them. A teacher, Bob believes, can awaken the consciousness of a few youngsters in his or her class but not all of them to the same degree or at the same time. These few youngsters, however, can make a difference. They may eventually have jobs or positions of leadership in which they can be influential. Yet, it may be that people can simply work quietly in their own way "trusting something deep within that says 'OK - now we're ready; now it's ready.'" The point is to stay on the path Bob says, until something within shows the individual "the way," or "how to make a difference."

When I asked Bob what he thought the focus of education should be, he replied that it was difficult to state what schools should be when he was still grappling with what he should be. Yet, he observed that he did have ideas about how schools should operate and what they should be about. While Bob has no problem generally with the basic skills that the state mandates children should have to operate within the culture, he believes schools should embrace something much broader than the "physical knowledge" and orientation that culture somehow "bends and twists us to accept." Bob labels this area that of the "spiritual." Bob believes schools should promote self-understanding within individuals that leads to what Carl Jung called "wholeness," the completion of the personality. Such a personality can operate within any setting within the culture. He compares this state of being to the Biblical challenge "to be in the world but not of the world."

To Bob this statement means that schools help children see themselves as "more than the world," that their "experience and knowledge transcend institutions and structures; everything that they have learned, seen, felt or thought possible." It's not enough, Bob believes, to just teach children coping and decision-making skills and how to have good human relationships. What schools should be teaching children, Bob believes, is "the power of their lives." The curriculum should focus on freeing the person by teaching him

this truth. This "real truth" is the truth of human potential; it is knowing this truth that results in freedom, "of being set free from everything we've learned."

Schools need "spiritual teachers," Bob said, without calling them that. There is a "yearning and need" for these kinds of teachers who can help students find "a sense of meaning about life." Bob pointed out that he is not talking about teaching religion in schools but in helping students develop spiritual understanding. To do this, teachers may have to speak in parables. If Jesus had not spoken in parables, Bob observed, he would have probably been crucified before the end of his three year ministry. In speaking in parables, Jesus spoke to people so that they were able to receive his message at whatever level their consciousness could comprehend it.

Bob believes that even the most "academic-oriented teacher or the most artistic or vocationally-oriented teacher" can incorporate within their subject matter spiritual concepts that can bring their subject matter and their students alive. Bob believes students are ready for such teaching and that teachers are ready for it. Nevertheless, such an approach, Bob believes, from his own experience, must not be too threatening or controversial. That may sound deceptive, Bob observes, but if teaching in parables held Jesus in good stead "that may not be a bad example for our educational programs."

Bob believes that one of the fundamental requirements in an educational perspective that centers on personal growth is the ability of the teacher to really listen to the student, "to profoundly be with that student" in order to help him or her come to realize personal power. As a counselor, Bob recalls, he was an active counselor, always ready to "really run in there" and "help them overcome." Now Bob says, he has learned to listen, to be active but from the "inner self," to watch how the person he is working with breathes, blinks his eyes, responds. He listens, he said, to "something greater in me," deeper than surface mind. "It's not ego," Bob said. "Ego wants to say, 'Hey, I'm a knowledgeable man. I've got the answers here.'"

"Now," Bob said, "I listen with my whole body and mind to try to be where that teacher is who comes in to complain or seek advice. It's like being in tune with where they are." The result, Bob has noted, is that people leave his office apparently energized and feeling support when Bob has, in fact, said very little. It is this ability to connect with another that is essential, Bob believes, for the teacher who hopes to be a catalyst for transformation with his or her students.

Bob ended the interview with a statement made popular by the marines, "We're looking for a few good people!" Such people, according to Bob, have the fever for incorporating the spirit of the universe into their subject matter. In

classrooms staffed by such teachers, learning becomes vital and alive because education is seen as "life - not a goal." Teaching would become "a living process and administration a means of paving the way to achieve such."

Bob, in describing his perspectives on education, speaks in terms of goals for personal growth that are directed towards helping students discover "the power of their lives" and to transcend "all that they have learned." He speaks of the importance of moving towards "wholeness" in this process and "self-understanding." Bob's language here is therapeutic, reflecting, perhaps, his own background in psychology as a counselor. He speaks to the need for students to examine their values, coping and decision-making skills. He moves a step further, noting that skills involving self-understanding and how to have "good human relationships" are not enough. Students, he says, need "spiritual teachers" to teach "spiritual understanding," a "sense of meaning about life."

While Bob does not clearly define his meaning of "spiritual understanding" he does speak of students needing to be aware of "healing energy," and "evolutionary energy." His language becomes more mystical as he speaks of "being in the world but not of the world" and connecting with a "deeper wisdom" within. He moves beyond the therapeutic language associated with the development of a healthy ego to speak of education helping children to see themselves as "more than

the world," and to transcend the influence of "institutions and structures" and all they have "seen, felt, or thought possible."

Bob's emphasis on personal and spiritual growth seems to be connected here with the individual experience of altered states of consciousness and transcendence that leads to an awareness of realities outside the range of usual perception. Bob recounted during the interview some of his own experiences of such states of awareness and the personal growth that he felt had resulted from these experiences. These experiences made him more open, he said, to different possibilities for seeing and interpreting the world, other than those processed only by the "rational" or "scientific" mind.

The notion of education becoming involved in the personal growth of the individual towards wholeness and a greater openness and awareness of the possibilities of the complex dimensions of universal realities is valuable in helping individuals to recognize their own potential as transcendent beings. Yet, while Bob laments a culture that "bends and twists" students to accept a limited knowledge of their potential, he fails to question the socio-political forces that constrain individuals within the very consciousness Bob feels they should transcend.

In expressing his views on education, Bob does not address the need for schools to encourage students to critically

question the forces outside the classroom that are significant in structuring their perceptions and their lives. Bob speaks to the need for students "to transcend all they have learned" but not to the need for students and educators to examine the social context in which these learnings have been acquired. Bob recognizes the importance of students becoming aware of their personal power, but not the significance of their using this power to transform the cultural and economic realities that thwart the potential for personal growth and the development of a democratic and just community. Bob fails to address the need for schools to examine their connection with the larger society and to critically question the socio-economic structures that lead to inequality and injustice within the culture. Bob does not connect the possibilities for social transformation with that of personal transformation.

Bob speaks to the need to let go and surrender before the creative knowledge of how to best effect change can occur. He uses Einstein to illustrate this process. Einstein would work diligently, Bob said, on a problem, then throw down his pencil, go for a walk and then suddenly, in a moment of illumination find the answer for which he was searching. Bob's emphasis here is on the cessation of thought and action as instrumental in bringing about the creative solution. What Bob does not acknowledge is the dialectic between the action and the moment of surrender that

resulted in Einstein's finding a sudden solution to his problem. It is doubtful that Einstein would have achieved his vision of relativity without an active involvement in mathematics and physics prior to his illumination.

Bob's emphasis on "surrender," his loss of attachment to "causes," his belief in the importance of "letting go" is similar to the language used to describe the path of the Via Negativa in Matthew Fox's discussion of creation-centered spirituality (1983). Entering the Via Negativa involves letting go of all images, projections, ideas, or as Meister Eckhart says, praying "God to rid me of God." It is often suffering and pain, as Bob described in his own experience, that allows such emptying to take place. It is out of a dialectic of the Via Negativa, experiencing the void, the stillness and darkness; and the Via Positiva, the celebration of one's "royal lineage" that the creative energies emerge.

Bob's model of transformation as he applies it to himself and education generally is caught at the level of the Via Negativa: a freedom from imposed ideas, images, and belief systems, a "cleansing" Bob called it, when describing his own transformational experiences. Bob is yet to move into the stage of actually using the "creative energies," he spoke of in committing himself in education to creating a culture characterized by compassion and social justice. Meister Eckhart's reminder that "Mysticism ends in politics," is a challenge to Bob's understanding of psychological and

spiritual growth which centers only on the transformation of individual consciousness.

Like many of the teachers in Dan Lortie's study, Bob went into education because he had always liked school and was influenced by some good teachers he had along the way. Bob today is still basically uncritical of the structure of public schools and is supportive of the state's requirements in terms of the subjects and basic skills taught in schools. In addressing the larger issue of education, Bob spoke about how schools should "operate." Bob does not acknowledge a contradiction between the humanistic, transpersonal educational philosophy he advocates and the mechanistic metaphor he uses to describe the framework in which education occurs. The relevance of the subjects and skills mandated in public schools or how they are taught is not examined or questioned in Bob's philosophy. The alienation, competitiveness, and fragmentation that evolve out of the state's emphasis on testing and achievement in these subjects and which serve to thwart the personal growth Bob advocates, go unquestioned. Bob does not critique the impact of the interrelationship of academic requirements and procedures nor the socio-economic structure that fosters those requirements and procedures on individuals whom Bob believes should be given the opportunity for growth into wholeness.

Bob's views on transformation are directed towards individual contemplation and personal growth in awareness and

wholeness. Bob speaks of the impact a few dedicated individuals can have on changing social consciousness, in helping others to also expand awareness and to transcend the illusory boundaries of self. Yet at no point does he speak to the need for social consciousness to become a consciousness of justice and compassion.

This is not to say that Bob is not a compassionate man. His concern with the quality of individual lives and how individuals can be helped to find power and meaning in those lives is evident in his interaction with the teachers with whom he works and the encouragement he gives his students who are beginning their own personal journeys. The extension of this compassion could effect change to make the local, state, national, or international community a safer, healthier, more just society in which all are provided opportunities to grow in self-actualization and transcendence.

Jane

Jane and I had our first conversation about four years ago when I visited her fifth grade class. As I moved about the classroom, my eye caught the title of a book lying on Jane's desk. The book was A Liberating Vision written by California legislator John Vasconcellos. Vasconcellos' view is that government should be "humanistic/holistic," that human beings today live in a unique time of "change and crisis" and that the primary issue of the times is "how to grow a healthy human being" (1979, p. 3). My conversation

with Jane revealed that the ideas explored in Vasconcellos' book were concerns that she, too, was interested in investigating more deeply.

Often during brief exchanges over the past four years Jane and I have found ourselves discussing ideas and concerns about teaching and education that related in some ways to Vasconcellos' work and our own concerns about American education. I had never had an opportunity to have an in-depth conversation with Jane before. The interview, I felt, would provide an opportunity for a closer look at Jane's philosophy of teaching and to determine to what extent Jane's ideas related to my own perspectives on education as a transformational process for human beings.

Jane grew up in a small town in eastern North Carolina. Her father was a sociology professor at a large state university nearby. His intellectual influence was always felt by her and her younger brothers. Jane's father was quite liberal, Jane pointed out, politically and sociologically, but when it came to his own family, he was the traditional father who ruled the roost. He held high standards for his children academically and was a creative and stimulating teacher for them as well. Jane and her brother always felt her father's pressure to succeed. Jane's mother was college educated but did not work outside the home. Jane remembers her as "the typical housewife."

As a child Jane loved music and dreamed of being a piano teacher, but decided later that having kids come into your home everyday for lessons would not be too glamorous. In the ninth grade Jane fell under the influence of a young, single, attractive female English teacher who taught poetry using contemporary rock music. This teacher became her idol, and from that point on Jane determined that she would major in English and teach.

Jane remembers her education courses generally being dry and stale, but two of her professors had an impact on her that remains today. One of these professors impressed upon her the internal needs of adolescents for understanding and the pain of going through that particular period of growth for young people. This professor impressed upon her the need to put the student before the subject matter.

Another education professor whom Jane remembers as very "unusual" pointed out to her that her shyness and introversion would hamper her from really connecting with students in the classroom. In working with him, Jane began to realize that she had always turned over the work of living to her friends and began to wonder how she would fare out in the world without her "support system." Anxiety attacks and struggles with her perfectionistic streak led her to therapy. "In therapy," Jane said, "I learned who I was and what I wanted to change." She also learned that personal change is a long, difficult process. She credits this professor for

taking the interest and time to see her as a person and to recognize and point out to her the need to seek change.

Unfortunately, Jane remembers, this same professor was not as successful in reaching other students in his class. He tried to "raise the consciousness of some of the cheerleader types," Jane recalls, "who were going into education for the old reasons. They probably weren't that intelligent; they just needed a nice little job for females." Jane laments that all the professor's efforts to help these young women see children as human beings and to understand "where they're coming from," seemed to be lost on these future teachers. He couldn't seem to make them understand, Jane noted, that children were not just "little vessels" to be filled with knowledge when they walked into the classroom.

Jane graduated from high school in 1971. "We had just gotten in on the tail end of revolution and the war protesters," Jane recalls. She and her friends were questioners and searchers, "so unconforming we were conforming," at least in the group itself. Jane went into education with the idea that she would try to change the system. Unfortunately, she has found that the system has changed her. She admits she has "mellowed out" too much, that while she abhors the materialistic values she hears her eighth grade students espouse these days, that she, too, has become materialistic. She has bought a house and has car payments and now it's "easier not to rock the boat." For a while Jane was

comforted that the school system would get so bad that "it would collapse," but now she says she's not sure "we're going to be that lucky."

Despite having conformed too much to the system by her own standards, she senses that she is still viewed as unconventional by her more conservative colleagues. They don't understand her use of music in the classroom, classical and contemporary, to teach literature and writing, or her asking students to write down their "feelings" or ideas that come to them from just listening and being in touch with the music. Nor can they understand her tolerance for Mohawk haircuts or unusual dress.

The teachers Jane works with are generally "good" people, Jane observes, but are "typical, middle Americans and anything different threatens them." She does not see them as "arts oriented" or involved or interested in pursuing the spiritual aspects of their lives. They are people with average intelligence who are doing their jobs in the way they "think they should be done," Jane said.

Even her eighth graders, Jane believes, sometimes think she is "weird," because she encourages them to think and ask questions and explore ideas. Jane observes that her students are very much involved in living out the values of American culture; leave school, get a good job, buy a nice house and hopefully, a Mercedes. "Some of them really scare me," Jane said, "because they are so self-centered." Jane sees in some

of her students not only the potential for being "not caring and not doing anything," but also the potential for them to be "destructive." Jane believes that the families of these children, the culture and the school system, itself, encourages these values in children. Furthermore, Jane notes, kids today are not "searchers" like so many of those in her generation.

Jane's interest in the arts is related to her own searching attitude towards life. The arts, Jane said, provide the "background for learning and for being." Through the arts human beings can find out about life and themselves. Most people don't see the arts in that way, Jane believes, because they live a "mindless existence" and are not interested in "hypothesizing" about that existence or looking for answers.

Jane believes that the arts should be an integral part of the educational process because they "touch that spiritual world we don't understand." She also believes that being involved with the outdoors and nature is valuable in terms of spiritual growth and searching for understanding and "just feeling that you're a part of it." Being in nature, an individual can put aside questions like "What am I going to do about this or that?" and "What am I going to do tomorrow?" For the moment, Jane says, a person can just be still and be a part of natural creation, which comes from God.

Part of the search for self-understanding and understanding of others, Jane believes, comes from traveling and visiting other communities and cultures. On her first visit to Europe, Jane and a friend backpacked, stayed in hostels and made no reservations ahead of time. "It was not a vacation," Jane said, "but a little life." Being in a foreign country, Jane and her friend found themselves often asking for help. "It makes you realize that Americans are not kings of the universe." Europeans, Jane feels, "have more of a sense of time and history and being a part of humanity," unlike she added, "our throw-away society." Europeans, because they are part of an older culture, Jane feels, do not judge people as superficially as most Americans. "People don't look at you strangely if you have a spot of dirt on your shirt."

Jane admits that she feels lonely at times because very few people seem to understand and share her ideas about the culture, schools, the arts and the spiritual search. Many of her friends with whom she grew up, her "artsy" friends, have moved away. A few of them are moving back to North Carolina from the western part of the country now, she added, and are very politically oriented. They believe that change can come through politics. Jane isn't so sure. "Politics," Jane believes, "is a big machine" that destroys idealism. Change will have to come on a much smaller level, Jane says. The one thing that Jane believes would bring about change in

education is exposing young students to the arts, nature and meditation.

Jane, who rebelled against organized religion as a teenager and a college student, is now part of a meditation and centering group at a local church in the community. This experience Jane described as "presenting yourself before God," and letting the conscious mind stop and rest. She calls it "getting in touch with the God in you," and says she doesn't see much hope for education without such an opportunity for young people in schools; neither does she see much hope for solving the world's problems without people first getting in touch with the spiritual part of themselves. What's really needed, Jane believes to take care of pollution, disease, and starvation is "awareness" and "caring." The answers, she believes, are spiritual.

Her involvement in the meditation group has led Jane to become involved with another group at her church, the Stephen Ministry. In this group, people are paired with others in the community who are involved in crisis. The purpose of the group is not to instill religious belief but to lend support and strength to others, to say, "You're not alone." Jane feels Americans tend to be very compassionate people when it comes to family and friends but not the community at large. The church has generally failed to instill these values in people, as has education. Yet, Jane is encouraged that the ministers at her church are instilling members with an

awareness of the need for social concern and the plight of the poor. Education, Jane believes, should also concern itself with addressing these issues.

Teachers, Jane said, also need a global awareness of the world's problems and should be more humanistic and spiritual in their approaches to teaching. There is a need, Jane feels, for teachers to be more creative in their approaches to teaching and less fact-oriented. The current emphasis on "back to the basics" and annual statewide testing in every subject, Jane feels, will result in schools turning out kids who will "fit the mold so well" that they will become "grown-up robots." It's not the highly academic students who will help solve the world's problems, Jane believes, but the highly creative, the "risk-takers." Today, in schools, it is the creative, "socially a little off the wall" kids who are different and have their own ideas, that teachers and other students "put down." It will be one of these kids, Jane believes, who may develop a new source of energy or contribute the most to solving world problems.

Schools should be places that are "open and free," Jane says. They should be liberating in teaching students to critically examine their thinking and the way they live. Schools should "deal with life" and help kids learn to cope and live life as individuals, Jane said. Jane points out that it's taken years of struggle for women like herself, at 34, to realize that it's permissible to be single and not be

attached to a man to find identity. It's been difficult for single women because society has reinforced the idea that there must be something wrong with the woman who did not fall into the pattern of marrying and having children. Schools, Jane said, reinforce such cultural beliefs by teaching conformity instead of "liberation from traditional viewpoints."

Despite her concerns with the schools, Jane feels she will remain in education. She would like, however, to teach older students, hoping that they may be more able and willing "to work with ideas" than younger students, to whom life and the future appear so secure. She has also considered, she told me, working on her Ph.D and later teaching in college education courses, hoping that she can instill in aspiring teachers some of the ideas she has about education. Although at times she feels "despair," Jane, I sense, still likes teaching and doesn't want to abandon the profession she once believed she could change.

During our interview, Jane's responses to my questions were always direct and straight-forward and were delivered with little elaboration. It was obvious that Jane had spent some time intellectually examining over the years many of the ideas we discussed. Nevertheless, her responses generally lacked emotion. I could not determine if the reason for the lack of intensity in her responses was due to her admitted shyness or her lack of hope for change in schools. By her own admission, her ten years of teaching have "mellowed" her;

the ideas she carried with her into the classroom in earlier more "non-conforming" years have been neutralized by a system that demands conformity not only from the individuals it presumes to educate, but also from those who do the educating. The culture, itself, has taken its toll as Jane finds herself strapped with car and house payments. Jane has an awareness of the need for schools to be involved in treating students humanistically, to encourage them to examine life rather than to accept it at face value. She has the perception to see the need for schools to address the spiritual nature of the child and the child's need to be allowed to develop as an individual. Jane is correct, I believe, in pointing to the significance of experiences in the arts and nature as avenues through which children can come to explore and understand themselves. She recognizes that schools reinforce conformity to the culture rather than encouraging the creative questioning of its precepts.

Jane's orientation to change is both psychological and aesthetic. She speaks of "searching for understanding" through music and walks in the outdoors and of experiencing a connection with all creation. Jane speaks to the importance of meditation in fostering spiritual growth, "caring" and "awareness." Her emphasis is on the growth of the individual through "getting in touch with the God within." Traveling has also become a metaphor for growth for Jane, learning that "Americans are not kings of the universe," and coming to

respect the reverence for time and history and being "a part of humanity" that she perceives in European culture.

Jane's own sense of being a part of humanity is expressed through her church work as a lay minister, calling on those in crisis in the community and lending support and encouragement for individuals during difficult times in their lives. Jane left the church during her earlier years of "protest," but feels that her church's emphasis on helping the poor in the community through providing food, clothing, shelter and counseling is a sign of the church now moving towards a greater awareness of the need for the development of a social consciousness. Such a direction is in line with Jane's own sense of social responsibility developed, in part, through the influence of her father, whom she described as a liberal in his attitudes about the welfare of society.

Although Jane has abandoned her earlier hopes of changing the educational system, her sense of social and political consciousness is still evident. She speaks about the "self-centeredness" and materialistic goals of her students and their potential for violence. She feels the families of these students and the culture in which they have grown up have had a dramatic influence on shaping such values. The educational system she sees as also supporting and encouraging the development of these values. Jane does not elaborate on the ways in which the educational system promotes such understandings, but she does point out that the emphasis on

ingesting facts, testing, and achievement in school tends to make students "robots" who will leave school to "fit the mold." Jane sees the need for students to critically examine their lives and "the way they live." In her classroom, Jane encourages students to ask questions and "explore ideas," even though they think she is "weird" for doing so.

Jane's despair about the possibility of significant change in education, in both theory and practice, is responsible, I suspect, for her interest in transferring to a higher grade level and simply removing herself from the frustrations of her present teaching situation. In the higher grades Jane hopes that the intellectual maturity of the students will make them more amenable to examining abstract ideas and critically questioning different viewpoints. It is true that middle-school adolescents tend to be more concerned with acceptance by their peers than famine in Africa. Nevertheless, the ability to dissect ideas and even experience a feeling of compassion towards the less fortunate is not sufficient to infuse human beings of any age with the understanding that the ideals of brotherhood and community should transcend the family circle. Nor does it inspire them to be less self-centered or materialistic. Jane already knows this. Her own concern with the impact of cultural values on her students and the influence of the educational system at large reveals such.

Jane's ambition to get her Ph.D and teach teachers in the university in hopes of instilling them with her own ideas about teaching is motivated by the hope that influencing these teacher aspirants will effect a change in the present state of education. Yet, Jane, herself, admits that she came out of college ready to change the system only to have it change her more than she would have liked.

When Jane spoke about her earlier ambition to change the educational system, she did not mention what her plans or strategies would have been in attempting to bring about such a feat. Jane felt then and still feels now that there is something wrong with what is happening to students in American schools and that "something" is connected with the perpetuation of the cultural values she sees her students espousing. She contrasts these values of individualistic interests and pursuits of materialism with her own awareness of the need for a social consciousness that recognizes the needs of the impoverished and downtrodden in the community.

Jane's response to the need for change in education rises out of her concern for more humanistic approaches in teaching, the notion that students are not "vessels to be filled," that teachers need to find out where students are "coming from." Jane also speaks to the need for teachers to be less "fact-oriented" and more creative and to recognize and affirm the uniqueness of individuals. Jane speaks to the possibilities for personal growth and awareness through

experiences in the arts, nature, and meditation. All of these practices would contribute to ameliorating conditions in public schools that affect students' personal growth and that would help students become more healthy and whole individuals, but they would not effect the dramatic change in consciousness that Jane would like to see.

Jane recognizes the need for students to critically reflect on the state of their lives and the reasons for their behaviors and ideas, and to "ask questions." While Jane indicates that she feels these questions should be directed at the "culture," she does not address the need for students to examine the political and economic forces that shape this culture. While humanistic and creative approaches in instruction and the practice of critical inquiry might make classrooms safer, healthier places to be and grow, such practices will not bring about the personal and social transformation that is necessary for social reform. This area of concern seems incomplete in Jane's perspectives.

Leta

As a child growing up in a small town in Iowa, Leta remembers that school represented to her, repression, boredom, and irrelevancy. She even refuses to talk about the experience. The most enjoyable and memorable experiences Leta can recall about school were the periods devoted to music instruction and recess. The only child of a second generation Prussian father and Anglo-Scottish mother, Leta's

fondest memories as a child were of escaping to her grandparent's farm to ride horses bareback and be in the outdoors.

Leta's paternal grandfather had immigrated to America, leaving behind his wife and five children. Hard work and savings eventually provided Leta's grandfather with enough money to send for his family. Leta's grandmother refused to learn English, and Leta can remember having her grandmother hold her on her lap and singing and telling her stories - all in German.

Leta's maternal grandfather began work as a cook on a great uncle's steamboat before eventually buying a farm on which to bring up his family. Leta's mother was a beautiful woman, Leta remembers, and a "free-spirit." Leta recalls that her mother still talks about singing in "dine-and-dance" places in the 20's, which Leta suspects were really speak-easies. Leta's mother was more accepting of Leta's rebelliousness and was not the authoritarian figure that Leta remembers her father as being. Leta recalls that as a child she could never understand why her father seemed to get so upset about matters that she and her mother felt were quite insignificant. Leta's father owned a trucking firm and believed in discipline and hard work. He was also an inventor and later in life, one of his inventions for mending parts of certain manufacturing machines netted him a sizable income.

High school, Leta remembers, was a little better than elementary school, but only because of the social life. She

went to college, Leta recalls, because "that's what people did." Her father insisted that she get a teaching degree so that she would be employable and make use of her major in history. Leta also had strong minors in music, drama, and French. In her junior year Leta visited Washington, D.C. to do a semester on American Government in Action, and there she met her future husband.

After graduation from college, Leta married, much to the consternation of her father, who couldn't understand why he had paid so much money for Leta to get a college education if she was going to get married. Leta and her husband moved to Chicago, where he entered law school. Leta taught history for three months and then became pregnant. She was not to go back into the classroom for several years, because a second child was also born while Leta's husband was in law school and a third shortly after graduation.

These three months teaching history in Chicago were enough to convince Leta, however, that teaching in a traditional situation with kids being herded in and out the door six periods a day, everyday for months and years was not the way she could spend her life. "The kids were great," Leta told me, "it was the set-up I couldn't stand."

After her husband graduated from law school, the family moved back to his hometown, Winston-Salem, N.C., where he began to practice law. Leta became involved with several volunteer groups in the community associated with the arts.

These included the Little Theatre, Symphony Board, and teaching creative dramatics at the YMCA after school program. Later Leta began to take courses in drama at a local university and also found herself involved with a project sponsored by the John D. Rockefeller III Foundation, aimed at involving all students throughout the country in arts experiences. The idea behind this project was that the arts crossed and integrated all disciplines and were basic to all learning.

After being involved with this project in the local schools for two years, Leta was offered a job with the school system to become part of an arts team, which would continue to work on bringing integrated arts experiences into the school. This project was called Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC), and the arts team consisted of a drama, movement, music, and art teacher.

The ABC team has as its focus the concept of "the teacher as artist." Although Leta admits that this concept is better understood through experience than definition, the teacher-artist accepts that all teaching involves the aesthetic, which has to have "integrity and consistency." The aesthetic represents a "transposition to another form that represents experience." The standard for the aesthetic, whatever form it takes, is that "it must tell the truth." Kids are quick to see this, Leta notes, and often it is the non-academic students or students from lower socio-economic group who are the quickest to understand this. "Their

experience is often more real and not secondhand. They know immediately, the street-smart kids, when someone is not being straight with them - "when something's not real," Leta said. "Academic, middle-class kids tend to live more in terms of what they have been told."

"The teacher-artist is concerned with process, not product. She is concerned that kids have experiences that involve a quest for the meanings of truth and life." Leta noted that "if you want to develop whole human beings, and if education is not about that then I don't know what it's for, and, therefore, improve the world, you are into process over product."

If students are involved, for example, in the experience of settlers coming to the new world, it is not so important that the children have special costumes, or enunciate clearly all the time; there is no teacher director that tells the children exactly where to go or tells them what to say or how to react, Leta said. The students develop these directions for themselves out of their own understanding of the experience and their own inner reactions to the situations in which they find themselves.

It may appear that this drama has no form, but it is not formless. "The form," explains Leta, "may be the set up of a room, the materials, things like chairs and tables, pens and pencils, the situation itself." This organization, Leta observes, "frees kids to become what they are and even more

than they understood themselves to be." Leta admits that it took her a long time to understand that "the teacher carries the aesthetic, in this case the drama skills, within her; yet she never demands it of the children."

The importance of arts in education, Leta says, is that the arts provide a unifying force between the right brain and the left brain in terms of processing experience. In addition, the arts provide a "wonderful translation," Leta believes, between "the individual private self and the outward surface self." Leta explains that when a person is involved in the arts, not only is he or she relying on "inspiration and creativity," but that person is also involved in the process of thinking critically, making decisions and evaluations. On a deeper psychological level the arts bridge inner experience and "objective reality," says Leta. "In this way," Leta observes, "the arts act as a 'healing, spiritual force.'" Leta believes that this lack of expression of the inner, individual self is the "reason we're . . . so sick in this society. The whole inner self is kept secret," and the personality becomes fragmented.

Leta observes that it is considered in "very poor taste" in our society to show "too much individuality." Leta deplores the view of the arts held by most of the white culture in society. "White arts are for an elite," said Leta, "who sit on their hands. They sit back and are uninvolved." Leta wonders why these people go to arts

performances at all, because "the inner self doesn't have a relationship to what's going on." Leta points to black gospel singing in the churches as an example of an art form in which everyone gets involved. "There's wonderful art," said Leta. She points out that gospel singing is an art form which is "disciplined," and it also allows the whole community to take part. "The white elite art group looks over," Leta said, and exclaims, "Oh, how tacky!"

The white culture, Leta argues, which controls what happens in education and the schools, doesn't see the validity for examining inner experience because "inner experience has not been demonstrated to have a monetary value." American education reflects white middle and upper class standards, Leta believes, "It completely permeates everything in the educational system." Leta is convinced that if whites actually had an "authentic relationship" to the arts experience, the culture would change dramatically, because "they would not be able to resist what . . . had happened to them." The arts would then become an integral and vital part of the educational system.

In addition to instilling the arts as basic to the curriculum, I asked Leta what other ideas she had about what would constitute the "ideal" school. She quickly replied that the first thing she would insist upon is that every teaching situation instilled in the child "a need to know." "I wouldn't impose anything on kids," Leta said. She

observed that her own daughter in the first grade refused to learn to read because she couldn't understand why she needed to. Once teachers help create the need to know something, Leta believes, kids will learn. "I firmly believe," Leta said, "that there's not much we teach kids in the first six years of school that a smart kid can't learn in a few months."

The next thing Leta would do in this imaginary school, she said, is to "get rid of every skills oriented teacher that ever came around the block." These people could be hired as aides, Leta said. If a child needed to work on handwriting, for example, the aide could help. Leta recalls that once a group of students she was working with became concerned that the North Carolina Zoo wasn't being developed properly. The children wrote a long letter to the zoo officials expressing their concerns. The children realized this letter had to be very neat, so children took turns in writing the letter. Each child wrote a part of the letter until he "couldn't be neat anymore" and then another child took over. This was hard work for the kids, Leta recalls, and not very exciting, but the kids had a need for their handwriting to be neat. This skill became important to them.

This school would not be totally open and free, Leta observed, because she believes there must be some structure and focus for the learning experience. In teaching kindergarten children the concepts of "up," "down," "beside," and

"below," Leta recalls that she and the other members of the ABC team once set up a situation in which there was a castle and a queen in the throne room, which had a fire-breathing dragon in a dungeon beneath it. The queen could not sit on the throne because it was so hot. This group was considered a very undisciplined class, but the situation, in addition to requiring the students to learn spatial concepts, required them to find a solution to the problem and do certain things in certain ways to prevent the castle from collapsing and the dragon from escaping. The children acted out their fantasy, cooperated and solved the problem, dictated their story using the spatial concepts they had learned and were also able to read the story. While the fantasy was created out of the imagination of the children, the structure of the lesson was based on the queen's perilous situation set up by the teachers.

The teachers in Leta's school, she said, would have to be willing to take risks. The teacher may initiate the lesson but she is not in control of the "creative energy" generated by the students participating. She can't predict what the outcome will be. Sometimes the lesson will "go up in smoke" but that's "OK," Leta says. Human beings, she points out, are complex and different, and it's impossible to predict how a group of children will always react. That understanding, Leta believes, is part of the teacher's on-going process of learning.

Schools, Leta thinks, should be in the business of experimentation. She agrees, she says, with John Dewey's position that learning takes place when students are presented with a problem, given the opportunity to hypothesize about how best to solve the problem, given an opportunity to try out the solution and then see if it works or doesn't work. Either way it doesn't matter. It is the experience, itself, Leta believes, that makes the learning meaningful. Teachers, Leta points out, must know what children's former experiences are and provide them with new experiences and a new "need to know." Eventually the child can take on more complex problems. What the teacher cannot know, of course, is the inner experience of the child and how that experience will affect his approach to the problem.

During our interview Leta would often stop in the middle of a sentence, clap her hands together and exclaim, "Did I tell you about when we did Blackbeard the Pirate in N. C. history?" or "Have I told you about when we landed at Jamestown?" "That was such fun!" Leta's anecdotes would illustrate her points about the importance of the arts experiences in teaching or her perspective of the teacher as artist.

In illustrating the importance of setting up a student's "need to know" in a learning experience, Leta recalled that during a lesson in North Carolina history on Blackbeard the Pirate with a group of children labeled EMH, or Educably

Mentally Handicapped, that these children with only cardboard and other classroom materials actually designed cannons that fired "cannonballs." Blackbeard, when he came to inspect the ship, had issued orders that all cannons had to be in good working order on his return or everyone would walk the plank. The children were deeply involved in this experience and they took Blackbeard at his word. The students quickly devised a way to make their cardboard cannons fire.

In another situation, a group of English settlers confronted for the first time the American Indians. The settlers realized that they were encroaching on Indian territory and that they needed the Indians' help to survive. Their problem was that when they tried to negotiate with the Indians they realized that the Indians could not speak their language. The settlers regrouped and tried to devise ways to communicate their plight and their desire to be friends. After forty-five minutes, they returned to the Chief and communicated their intent. It seems that one of the children, whom Leta was later told was an EMH (Educably Mentally Handicapped) child, had devised a system of hand signals and non-verbal communication techniques through which the settlers could communicate.

In another situation, elementary students playing settlers were trying to convince an Indian Chief to let them cross his land and to give back a woman and her baby he had taken. All negotiations and pleading were to no avail. The

settlers asked the chief and his tribe to return the woman and just keep the baby. The Indians refused. Finally, a child playing the preacher looked at his Bible and Leta said, "I could see an idea spreading all over his face." The little preacher suggested to the chief that if he would let them move across his land and return the woman and child, the settlers would teach him to read. In exchange for "the white man's magic," the chief agreed. When the children were asked why they negotiated for the woman in exchange for the child, they replied that the "baby would never remember. The woman would never forget."

Leta struggles to find the right words to describe the quality or nature of these dramas. "The mystery of the whole thing is that when you take these tangible, concrete things, like chairs and tables, pens and pencils and whatever else . . . these concrete real things brought into proper alignment with proper thought and care can create . . . with these children . . . universal, creative energy." It's like, Leta says, the drama "takes on a life of its own." In this way the arts connect with the "spiritual side of human nature."

Leta says she has trouble with organized religion because she sees it as a "perversion and denial" of this natural, creative, spiritual experience. Except for the charismatics, people in church, like people attending arts performances, usually "sit on their hands." The charismatics, she observes, fail to use the "left brain to

discipline . . . inform, interpret," while those in the mainstream churches fail to get involved with the "real creative energy." Both approaches lack the unity found in the spiritual nature of the arts.

Leta recalled that she once met Dorothy Heathcote, an English drama teacher and some of her own colleagues in a local cafe. The subject of conversation was how as teachers they could help students tap into the "creative energy" that is available to everyone and is the "source of all things." This discussion proved so inspiring and moving that Leta describes it as a "religious experience," the way "one should feel in church."

Leta is no longer actively involved in the ABC program or in teaching and admits that she misses it. She is presently responsible for bringing arts projects into the schools. These projects include mime shows, opera, the local symphony, gospel groups, dance troupes and folk artists. She would like, in addition to her present job, to get involved with three or four teaching projects a year to keep her own creative energy going. Leta would also like to take some time off to do some further studies in aesthetics and teaching.

Leta's need for freedom and creative expression, which she now finds in the arts, was evident in her early dislike for school and the boredom and irrelevance she associated with it even as a child. Leta's mother's acceptance of her

inclination to be a "free spirit," words now used by Leta to describe her mother, further supported Leta's inclination towards exploring the arts as an avenue for creative expression. It is not surprising that Leta found her short period in the confines of a classroom teaching history so unpleasant that she never returned to a more traditional teaching role in public schools, choosing instead to join an arts team acting as resource personnel in the schools.

Leta's belief in the importance of the arts experience in "developing whole human beings," is evident in her conviction that the arts have the potential to heal a "sick" fragmented society, by bringing together the inner and outer self of the individual. She speaks of the integration of both right and left brain processes being involved in the arts experience, uniting both creativity and intuition as well as critical thinking. Leta is critical of the white culture that, she believes, tends to stand back from actual participation in the arts rather than getting involved with the "inner self." Leta speaks to the therapeutic values of the arts experience, emphasizing that it is the "process" and not the "product" that is the potent force for healing the psyche.

Leta's critique of religion is also embodied in an aesthetic perspective. She sees organized religion as being either distant and removed from inner experience, with participants not involved spiritually or, in the opposite

extreme, being charismatic and overly emotional with no connection to the critical or rational. While one group fails to connect with "real creative energy," the other fails to "interpret" and to "discipline" it. For Leta, her most profoundly religious experience stemmed from a conversation in a cafe about ways in which the arts can tap into the "creative energy that is part of every human being." Leta recalled that she felt during this intense and moving discussion a connectedness with "the source of all things," the way "one should feel in church."

In Leta's discussions of the white culture's elitist attitudes towards art, she pointed to black gospel singing as an example of an art form that involves everyone in the church and yet is "disciplined." Leta's perception of gospel singing, it appears, is not connected so much with religion as it is with aesthetics.

Leta's views on education again reflect her commitment to the arts as a potent force for individual change and growth. Through the arts, Leta believes, education can do more than "school" children; it can lead to growth and change, helping children to "become what they are and even more than they understood themselves to be." Since the teacher-artist is interested in process rather than product, she is not judgmental, Leta said, allowing students freedom to express their own understandings in relation to the situation at hand.

Leta became enthusiastic as she shared anecdotes about some of the activities that she and the other members of the arts team had developed with students. She reiterated how students, whether academic or mentally handicapped, were able to experience success in finding solutions to situational problems and how both students and teachers moved as a cohesive unit through the drama experience. Such cohesiveness removed the teacher/object relationship in the learning experience and both teacher and students learned and grew together according to Leta.

The opportunity for creative expression that Leta values in her work with the arts is, again, therapeutic and positive in terms of personal development. It does not, however, provide the impetus for the kind of growth and change that can be called transformational. Leta is critical of a white dominant culture that sets standards and expectations in public schools and feels that real involvement in the aesthetic experience can be "healing" for individuals within that culture. Such "healing," however, is personal in nature and is not a panacea that will change the values and social-political attitudes of that culture.

The episodes that Leta described in the drama experiences of children that she had worked with provided opportunity for problem solving and creative thinking but never addressed social and cultural attitudes that are often associated with the elitist, dominant culture that Leta

disclaims. Dramatic situations involving the colonization of America and encounters with native American Indians failed to confront issues of power, racism, imperialism and human dignity. Issues of ethics and moral action were left unexamined as students worked to find creative solutions to immediate problems of personal survival. Themes addressed in the particular dramas Leta described dealt with methods of finding means of manipulating and influencing others in order to attain goals for the group.

This is not to say that such drama does not have the potential to raise the consciousness of students and teachers involved in this experience, should it be directed towards more critical societal issues. Nor does this critique deny the importance of inner experience for students who, for example, are involved in situations of war or slavery, which have also been topics of examination for Leta and the art team and students with whom she has worked. The issue to be examined here is the significance such experiences have for personal and social transformation.

The experiences Leta described with her students involved innovative techniques for helping students simulate historical incidents, which required their doing more than the usual rote, mechanical reading and answering questions from textbooks. Students, as Leta pointed out, who are not academic, gain information from these experiences and come to feel a connection with historical figures as real beings who

actually had emotions of hope, fear, despair. Students work together rather than independently, building a sense of connection rather than competition.

While such techniques and strategies are an improvement over the traditional structured classroom with the teacher considered the authority on all knowledge, such a direction is not a radical one. What is provided is a more humanistic learning situation in which the value of the student, his experiences, feelings and ideas are treated with respect and in which learning is a less painful and more creative experience. What is learned, however, is basically what is learned in the more conventional classroom activity, with more opportunity for divergent thinking.

Leta's perspective regarding society and the dominant culture is liberal and egalitarian. She is critical of the elitist attitudes of this culture, its conformity, and demands for certain "prescribed behaviors." Her solution for affecting change within this group is to provide arts experience for children in the hope that such experiences will bring about desirable change. Leta's verification of the arts has brought her to a position in which she sees the arts as a tool which can be used to heal the ills of society.

While aesthetic experiences, such as those Leta describes, are valuable in helping students live a richer, fuller, and more meaningful life, they are not adequate in examining and confronting the socio-political forces that

create both an elitist, dominant class and an unjust society. Leta's aesthetic focus fails to address the political realities that shape such a society. It does not address the need and means of social reform that is inherent in a vision of personal and social transformation.

Analysis

Like the majority of teachers surveyed in Dan Lortie's study Schoolteacher (1975), Bob, Leta, and Sallie all came from basically conservative lower middle class or middle-class backgrounds. Jane was the exception, describing her family as liberal, politically and sociologically, and upper-middle class. Leta's mother was also described as a "free-spirit," in contrast to Leta's father. Leta was also the only teacher I interviewed who spoke about actually disliking school as she grew up. Bob recalled that he was fond of school and enjoyed the opportunities to read and learn that school provided. Like many of the teachers in the Lortie survey, Bob was inspired to enter teaching because of some "good teachers" he had in school. Jane also went into teaching because of the influence of a young English teacher she admired. Leta and Sallie were both urged by parents to get teaching degrees so that as women they could get jobs. The teachers in Lortie's study generally offered the same reasons for entering teaching as those given by Bob, Jane, Leta and Sallie; they generally liked school themselves, were inspired by teachers they had, or if they were women, they

found teaching easily accessible as a career. Aside from these basic similarities, I find little else in the statements made by Bob, Leta, Jane and Sallie that coincide with the more conventional and traditional attitudes of the teachers in Lortie's study.

In different degrees and in different areas the four teachers I interviewed are both alike and different. There are more areas of connection than philosophical disagreement. The overall focus for Bob, Jane, Leta and Sallie is on the importance of the development of the whole child as a person. All four voiced strong beliefs that education should center more intensively on the inner child - as opposed to the behaviors of the outer child in regards to academic achievement, test-taking skills and on-task behaviors. Bob spoke to the importance of having "spiritual teachers" to help students realize "the power of their lives." Sallie, from a humanistic perspective, repeatedly addressed the need for teachers to be sensitive to the child's emotional and psychological needs and her development as a human being. Jane addressed the need for school to explore the arts and experiences in nature and meditation with children at an early age to help them get in touch with their "spiritual natures." Leta emphasized the significance of the arts integrated throughout curriculum as a means to unite the inner and external self and right and left brain processes of learning. Leta spoke directly to the purpose of education as

being "to develop whole human beings." All four teachers speak in a language that is therapeutic, centering on the need for individual growth that is psychological, spiritual, and "healing."

It is clear that all four teachers are keenly aware of students as persons with whom the teacher must be in tune and connected. Bob called this experience being "profoundly with" the student, knowing at a deep level of understanding where the child is and being aware of his feelings, fears, desires, hurts and yearnings. Sallie spoke about her frequent desire to simply sit in the middle of her classes and listen to her students talk. Jane referred to the concept of some of her peers in student teaching who regarded students as "vessels to be filled" rather than being sensitive to their needs as human beings and "putting the student before the subject." Leta's focus on the artist as teacher concept deals directly with the notion that the inner experience of the child and what he brings to the lesson is the key to allowing "creative energy" to flow into the learning situation.

The views expressed by these teachers reflect a more democratic view of the relationship between teachers and students than is generally demonstrated in schools. Sallie recalled that her education courses repeatedly emphasized the necessity for the teacher to maintain a distance between herself and the student or "trouble" would follow. The

emphasis on student achievement as is reflected in state and national test scores is testimony to the general understanding in public schools that teachers are present to impart knowledge to students, which they should be able to give back accurately if the teacher is to be considered "effective." The endless list of rules and regulations imparted by schools and classroom teachers for students to follow reflects the idea that the inner child cannot be trusted; he must be controlled. This position stands in contrast to Leta's belief that students must be given freedom to experiment and explore and bring their own inner experience to bear on the learning situation, the outcome of which cannot be predicted or controlled. Emphasis is not placed on the product but the process of learning itself which must integrate both the inner and external self.

I sense that Leta, Bob, and Sallie have a basic trust in students as human beings. Sallie noted that it is her students who are "in control" in her class, adding that "I can't carry that ball all day." Leta believes that turning over control of the direction of the learning situation to the children actually results in the "mystery" which she says occurs when the learning situation "takes on a life of its own." Bob speaks to the need to help students see that their "experience and knowledge transcends institutions and structures" and the truth of their human potential. Jane did not speak directly to this issue, although her humanistic

position that children are not "vessels," perhaps, reflects this understanding.

Leta strongly believes that it is the arts that can pave the way towards integration and wholeness, requiring the inner and outer being to meet. Jane's experiments with music in her classroom are an attempt, she says, to help students get in touch with their inner feelings and, thus, momentarily step out of the cognitive world of academia. Jane believes that experiences in nature, as simple as taking a walk and looking at natural surroundings, can also be facilitative in helping individuals connect with the unity of the universe as they experience a blending of the self with the natural order.

Sallie and Bob do not address the importance of the arts in education as a means of connecting with the spiritual self. I might point out that neither Bob nor Sallie have any formal background in the arts. Bob, however, points to the importance of meditation in his own centering process and would, I believe, affirm the importance of such experiences for children, as does Jane. Meditation, both Bob and Jane indicate, can be helpful in moving the individual towards growth in self-knowledge and understanding. Both Jane and Bob practice meditation regularly.

Sallie is the only one of the three teachers I interviewed who did not address or articulate the need for education to attempt the development of spiritual awareness in

students. Bob, Jane and Leta address this position directly and see it as separate from the issue of religion. Sallie, I believe, has not explored or been exposed to the concept of the spiritual as addressing the world of inner exploration, the search for self-knowledge and integration and the creative expression of human potential. Her experiences have been restricted to more conservative understandings associated with the term "religious." Her interest in and empathy with children's needs for caring and reinforcement of their worthiness reflects to a degree, I believe, her connection with this understanding, even though she does not articulate such a position.

Bob's story reveals an awareness of the metaphysical side of human existence that he has experienced directly. This initiation with the world of the unseen exacted a powerful influence in his life. Such an experience provided for him a balance in his life that his previous rational, "scientific" mode of being had not recognized. Jane noted that although she has never had a dramatic mystical experience, her moments of awareness of the interconnection of her inner being with nature had provided opportunities for her to glimpse into the area that Bob discusses so intensely.

Bob's initial transformation was triggered, he pointed out, by a crisis in his life, the ending of an important relationship. Sallie noted that her divorce and subsequent therapy represented a turning point in her own life, result-

ing in her being a more open and warm individual with "permission to have emotions." For Jane, the most unsettling experience in her life was the awareness made possible for her by a professor that her introverted nature, her shyness, would hamper her as a teacher. This was a traumatic encounter for her, one that resulted in anxiety so great that she was led to therapy. Yet, this experience proved to be one that gave her great insight into herself and still provides for her a backdrop against which she daily evaluates her interaction with others, including her students.

Leta, during our interview, indicated that she could pinpoint no one particular turning point in her life which had prompted her to stop and re-evaluate her way of being and operating in the world, unless she added, it was "Mark's fall," which she said she had not really been able to sort out in terms of its meaning for her life. Mark, one of Leta's sons, suffered a devastating fall in a rock climbing accident. His body was shattered; he lay hours, helpless, as rescue operations were devised to remove him from the ledge onto which he had fallen. Mark, a healthy, athletic teenager at the time, spent six months in the hospital, underwent two operations during that period, others later, and spent a year in a wheelchair. Today, in his early twenties, Mark still occasionally struggles with lingering physical pain resulting from the accident.

Later in a phone conversation following our interview, Leta revealed that she had come to realize what Mark's fall had meant to her. "I've come to see," she said, "that life is tenuous. We can take nothing for granted." As a result, she said she had come to "treasure" each moment and relationship in life. Until the accident, Leta said, her life had been "manageable." Now she has come to accept, she said, that there are events in life that are beyond human control and, consequently, she has come to relish more than before the "good" times in each day.

Each of the four teacher/educators expressed concern with the goals and quality of education that are reflected in schools. Sallie feels that there is too much emphasis on skills work, covering the curriculum and preparing students for tests. She believes the competition for high marks, particularly among her more academic, middle-class students is detrimental to their sense of community among themselves. Jane echoed Sallie's sentiments, saying that teachers were too "fact-oriented." Leta also expressed disdain for teachers whose focus was on mastering skills, rather than "creating a need to know" among students and encouraging them to explore learning through inquiry and aesthetics. Bob's concern was not with the skills taught in schools but in the lack of provision for students to explore transpersonal areas of growth such as expanded awareness and the human potential for transcendence. All four educators agreed that schools

should address the need for students to become more "whole" and psychologically healthy.

These teachers believe that changes in instructional goals and strategies towards more humanistic, integrated approaches would result in changes in student perspectives, outlook and behavior. Attitudes of personalism and self-centeredness would be ameliorated if students were encouraged to think critically or provided experiences in the arts or meditation within the schools. If schools were to alter mechanistic practices, the teachers concur, there would be positive change in the consciousness of students.

Of the four teachers I interviewed, Jane was the only one who pointed to the influence of cultural mores on the personal and social disposition of her students, indicating that families and school reflected the values of competitiveness, materialism, and individualism. Sallie feels the government should "spend more money on children," but neither she, Leta or Bob addressed the impact of the political infrastructure on educational theory and practice. These teachers, except for Jane, fail to acknowledge that schools do not exist in a political and social vacuum. Leta does recognize the influence of the "dominant white culture" in setting standards and expectations of "prescribed behaviors" in school. Yet, none of the four teachers reveal that they have examined comprehensively the ways in which school practices are connected to social, political, and economic

determinants in the larger society. Such understandings are necessary if educators are to become agents and catalysts for transforming personal and social awareness. It is in the dialectic of the personal and spiritual with critical consciousness and social action that social justice and compassion take place.

All four teachers speak of the need for personal growth, but only Bob addresses the need for a type of personal transformation. Bob's experiences differ from the therapeutic experiences of Sallie and Jane who sought counseling as a means to develop a healthier, stronger ego. Sallie, as a result, became a "warmer" person who was able to interact with others in more expressive ways; Jane became less shy and introverted and more open to others. Bob's experiences, however, resulted in more than an integration of persona and shadow. Bob's experiences, which he describes as metaphysical, resulted in his viewing the world through a totally different lens. He moved, he said, to a different level of seeing and being, becoming aware of an "evolutionary energy," and other realities of time and space. His experiences have had a profound effect on his life, making him, he said, less concerned with ego and attachment and more aware of himself as part of an emerging universal consciousness.

In an ideology of education that addresses transformation, it is change as dramatic or profound as that which Bob describes in his orientation of seeing and being, that is

addressed. The goals of a transformative perspective are not simply those of making the educational system more humane, open, and flexible, so that students emerge better human beings. A transformative perspective urges the creation of a new paradigm of viewing oneself and others in society, not a modification of the old ways of seeing and being.

Bob speaks to the need for a transformation of consciousness in terms of transcendent experiences, but he does not extend his perspective to education as a reflection of society at large. Jane, Sallie, and Leta address issues of change in terms of personal growth and instructional strategies and even cultural disposition, but do not offer perspectives on education that are, in any sense, radical or transformational.

Bob sees hope for transformation in personal consciousness in his students whom he encounters in his workshops. People, Bob says, are "running out of where they are," and are ready to explore a new consciousness. There are conservative factions in the community that would work to counter significant, dramatic change in education, but there are many people, Bob feels, that are ready to explore such ideas.

Sallie, Jane and Leta do not acknowledge that they hold out hope for even an amelioration of educational practice in schools. Jane who always hoped the "educational system would collapse of itself," now feels that "we won't be that lucky."

While they attempt in their classes to encourage creative thought and critical reflection and to provide a more open, caring and democratic environment for their students than some of their colleagues, these teachers do not indicate that they feel that their individual efforts will effect any degree of change within the educational system.

All four teachers, however, continue to be aware of the need for growth in their own lives. They are persons in process. Bob indicated in his interview that he once was very certain about what his direction would be if he were Superintendent. Now he doesn't know. He believes that his present position was meant to provide him the opportunity to stand back, to reflect and wait for guidance from within before he is ready to take on such a responsibility. Leta revealed that she wants to do more study in aesthetics to deepen her understanding of the significance of the arts in education. Jane's involvement in a meditation group is an indication that she, too, is seeking a deeper understanding of self, a greater connection of the spiritual and "objective" realities.

Sallie did not speak specifically to this issue. Yet, during a phone conversation subsequent to her interview, she said that she had come to realize that she had been a better teacher than a parent and was even considering taking some time off from teaching to devote more time to her own children. I sense intuitively that Sallie is on the verge of a

breakthrough to a much deeper understanding of herself and her world. I sense a tension, a dissatisfaction, a restlessness that is characteristic of those, who in my experience are ready to step into a new level of awareness and knowledge. I have no empirical evidence to support such a statement, only a sense of the familiar, a connection with my own personal journey toward being and wholeness and my knowledge of similar journeys entered into by friends and acquaintances.

All four teachers in this study: Bob, Jane, Leta, and Sallie were at all times open and frank in their responses to my questions. They are people who are willing to take stands on issues and defend them, people who at the same time recognize their own weaknesses and uncertainties and state them. Bob admitted that as a result of his own journey into personal transformation and his having acquired deeper understanding of himself and others as human beings, he has come to see that he may not know "more but less" than he ever did. Yet, he continues to trust what he calls "the wisdom within" to continue to guide and direct his life towards a more centered way of being. Jane, despite her earlier desire to change the educational system, says that she has allowed the system to "mellow" her more than she would like to admit.

Sallie sees herself as a teacher who has been a source of understanding and acceptance to her students in the classroom but who has not always been as successful in dealing

with her own children. Leta, whose enthusiasm for teaching and living revealed itself throughout the interview in her voice and manner, shared with me that her son's fall, in addition to furthering her appreciation of seeking the best in each moment and taking nothing for granted, had also made her fearful and insecure about her family. She finds herself with a greater need for control, yet realizing that in life a person is forced to yield that control to life itself. Leta continues to struggle with these two issues.

All four teachers view education as having connections with life itself, with its meaning and direction. Education for Bob, Leta, Sallie and Jane is not concerned with schooling but Being, a result, I believe, of their viewing themselves as more than mechanistic, acculturated individuals moving unthinkingly towards old age and their eventual demise. All four of these teachers are people seeking to be in touch with themselves and others. They see their lives unfolding with purpose and they seek to find meaning, I believe, within those lives both personally and professionally.

The perceptions of transformation held by these teachers are revealed through the language of individual psychological and spiritual growth. The perspective of transformation that is the focus of this dissertation, however, involves numerous changes in both individual and social consciousness that are reflected not only in health and wholeness in individuals but in society at large. This society at large includes the

planet, itself, and all the inhabitants of that planet. Transformation, in this sense, involves compassion: healing, mending and re-creating.

All four teachers in this study are compassionate individuals. As teachers they fail, however, to address the need for a compassionate society, a compassionate system of economics and politics. These teachers do not speak to the inequities among students in school that are promoted by the larger society, itself, nor do they address the need for education to critically scrutinize the policies and practices that foster such inequities and to act as a vehicle for social reform. The roles they advocate for schools are humanistic and in Bob's case, transcendental, but not transformative.

This position is an uninformed one, I believe, and not a reflection of personal bias. These teachers are people who are caring and concerned about others, a theme that runs throughout their interviews. My own views on education as a vehicle for personal and social transformation were influenced by educators such as Freire and Giroux, whose work I did not encounter until graduate school. I, too, was a humanistic teacher, but my initial training and subsequent experience had not provided an opportunity for me to examine the dialectic between the personal and spiritual and the critical examination of the socio-economic and political powers that shape education. The integration of this perspective is

still an on-going process in my own development. I admit that while I intellectually experience these understandings, I have not totally internalized their meaning for my life and my educational perspective.

I am, like Bob, Leta, Sallie and Jan, still in the process of becoming. Profound, substantive change, I have come to learn, takes time. Illumination and "awakening" are only the beginnings of the journey in transformation. This journey is never complete. Each turn of the spiral into greater wisdom brings new revelations to be explored. The teachers I interviewed are involved in this spiraling process, each garnering and revealing his or her own understanding of "truth." They, like the rest of humanity, hold visions that are in places lucid and clear and in others hazy or limited. Each continues to search for a clearer focus and more penetrating grasp of truth and reality within his or her own transformative process.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

This dissertation has been an integration of reflections on my own personal and professional experience, interviews with four other educators, and a review of the writings of scholars whose works have offered insight into the inquiry. The focus of this dissertation has been on the nature of schools and teaching as related to the possibility for personal and social transformation.

In the first chapter of this study, I addressed the need for dramatic and immediate change in personal and social perspectives if the future of humankind is to be insured. Chapter 1 spoke to the concerns of leading scientists, psychologists, educators and spiritual leaders who call for sweeping and dramatic changes in human consciousness, and action to prevent further deteriorization of the ecosystem, exploitation of the lower classes, the spread of famine, intolerable living conditions for people throughout the world and the further escalation of the nuclear arms race. These writers and thinkers call for a re-examination of human values and an awareness of the interconnection and inter-

dependence of all human beings who share the planet that Matthew Fox and others have called the Global Village.

Believing, as do many of these writers, that education can play a part in initiating personal and social transformation, in Chapter 2 I examined the nature of schools and teaching. The view of public schools that emerged from the review of writings by Paulo Freire, William Pinar, Philip Jackson and Henry Giroux was characterized by mechanistic routine, conformity, competition and passivity. Don Lortie's sociological study of teachers indicated that teachers do not question the instructional practices that promote such behaviors. Teachers, themselves, according to Lortie, tend to be conservative, conforming and supportive of the status quo.

In Chapter 3 I examined my own beginnings in transformation as a person and a teacher. Having emerged from the same sort of background as the teachers in Lortie's study, I explored the influences that certain graduate school teachers and the writings of educators like Maxine Greene, M. C. Richards, psychologist Carl Jung and theologian Matthew Fox had on the development of my own personal and professional consciousness.

My inquiry into the views and perspectives of four other teachers on schools and teaching was the focus of Chapter 4. I sought to discover what forces had shaped and influenced their understandings of the educational process and if they

felt a need for education to act as a vehicle for personal transformation and social justice.

In the first section of this final chapter I will suggest areas for further study that arise out of this inquiry. In sections two and three I will reflect on the theoretical dimensions of this study and the conclusions I have drawn from the examination of present educational practices. In the last section I will share with the reader my own personal response to the totality of this dissertation. I will attempt to convey its meaning for me as an individual who has found herself caught up both personally and professionally in the transformational process.

Implications for Further Study

Within this inquiry there are issues that I believe warrant further investigation in order to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the problem of personal and social transformation. These issues are too broad to be treated with thoroughness and vigor within the scope of this study alone. They are presented here as possibilities for further inquiry and are not to be considered as an exhaustive listing.

One of these issues concerns the nature of change within the personal consciousness. What factors provide the framework within which a personal shift in consciousness, a shift in belief systems can occur? The teachers who were participants in this study indicated that personal crisis provided

in each of their lives the catalyst for a change in perspective and points of view. Are there other factors that lead individuals to adopt different ways of being and acting in the world besides that initiated by crisis?

In describing my own process of personal and professional transformation earlier in this study, I noted that certain teachers in my graduate program had a powerful impact on initiating my own quest towards centering and growth as both a spiritual and political being. My views on education were radically transformed through the influence of these teachers. Some of my peers experienced the same reaction to their influence. Others, however, left their classes somewhat disturbed in their perspectives, but for the most part generally unchanged by their encounter with these teachers.

The issue here is what made the difference in the reactions of these teachers to their instructors? What characteristics or personal qualities, what past experiences create within the individual the openness or vulnerability to change? Does it follow that certain kinds of individuals are more apt to be willing to explore more radical approaches to education than others? Can we identify such teachers?

If these teachers can be identified, to what degree can teacher-training courses directed towards social transformation rather than social replication be effective in helping teachers examine and overcome years of acculturation and complacency with the status quo? What should be the theore-

tical roots of a teacher training curriculum that is committed to education for liberation, improvement and social justice? Can such a high quality, effective undergraduate program be implemented within a university and can it endure?

While the mandate from the majority of Americans over the past few years has appeared to be a "return to the basics" in education, are there in America communities that would support an alternative approach to education? Certainly there must be progressive communities which would support a public school with a different social vision. Are there communities which already have such a school staffed by teachers with a transformational view? How effective are these schools? What is the possibility for the further establishment of such schools?

Another issue for further examination is the conditions that provide the seeding for social change. If it is true that certain personal characteristics or qualities or certain states of perception must be present before individual transformation can occur, it follows that there must be certain factors that have historically been associated with the inception of various broad social and political movements. What are the factors in society, then, that tend to implement change in social consciousness, that pave the way for large scale transformations in thought? Are there common denominators linking all social movements that lay the groundwork for change? Are these factors present in society and in the

education system within that society today? Are the times right for the beginnings of transformation in schools and teaching?

We do know that the times in which we live are times marked by stress and crisis, times in which the future survival of humankind and the planet itself are in jeopardy. This awareness of global crisis cannot be ignored in American education as if it were a passing and minor concern. The advent of Sputnik alone resulted in a major re-examination of American educational policy and practice as a reaction to the perceived need of education to play a significant role in the future defense and welfare of the nation. Surely the problems of starvation, the nuclear arms race, the deterioration of the world ecological system, increasing violence and the international suppression of human rights are issues that demand a response in education at least equal to that of the launching of a satellite. These are issues that threaten the survival of not just one nation, but the global community itself.

It has been my purpose in this dissertation to explore the potential of the teacher to act as a catalyst in initiating a transformation in personal and social consciousness that would address these life-threatening issues. The means of helping teachers become aware of the necessity for assuming such a role and empowering them with the zeal, confidence

and compassion to act in this role demands deeper and further examination.

It is my hope that at this point in this inquiry the reader shares with me the conviction that the complexities surrounding the issues of education for transformation demand not only further study but immediate active response. This response may take the form of educators seeking out and joining with other educators and members of the community to explore ways in which such transformation can take place. It may take the form of networking and the sharing of opinions and ideas. Whatever expression is undertaken, the issue here is one of immediacy. The times in which we live will not wait while action is impaired through hesitancy, fearfulness, or ignorance.

Reflections on Theoretical Dimensions

Earlier in this dissertation I reviewed the work of Paulo Freire, Philip Jackson, William Pinar and Matthew Fox. I also examined Don Lortie's study on the sociology of teaching and Henry Giroux's work on the politics of the hidden curriculum. I have found the contributions of all these writers helpful in shedding light on the nature of schools and teaching and the need for transformation within the educational system. At this point, I wish to re-examine the work of these scholars through the lens of the new understandings I have gained from this study.

Freire's work centers on the potential for liberation of people through education. For Freire education is itself a political act, providing a means for individuals to ask critical questions about society and the political ideology that shapes it. Freire believes that "banking" education serves to keep students submissive to oppression, as they become receptacles of information that is to be received, stored, and memorized. Liberation occurs when students learn to think critically and independently and share equally in the dialogue of education with their teachers.

Freire's work is admirable in that he has great faith in the power of education to transform the lives of people and great faith in the ability of people, given the opportunity, to critically assess the socio-political structures that impact on their lives. Freire's perspective is a cognitive, rational one. People must learn to think critically and ask the right questions so that the liberation and transformation of society can begin.

What Freire does not take into account in his work is the need for education to address the spiritual side of human nature. Freire overlooks the significance of the inner, divine nature of human beings as a force that urges individuals to desire and seek freedom and dignity in their lives. To ignore the spiritual nature of humankind is to act as if men and women consisted only of an intellect, minus a heart or soul to make them complete. Freire's view, in this sense,

is a mechanistic one, focusing on action stemming from the intellect and ignoring the forces of contemplation, imagination and wisdom in directing and transforming the lives of men and women.

Giroux, likewise, ignores the spiritual dimension of individuals as a source of power and catalyst for change. His theory of citizenship education is grounded in the political and social. He correctly dismisses the technical rationality that dominates American education with its assumptions that education can be value-free, linear, predictable, and empirically measured (1983). Giroux, like Freire, however, fails to address the spiritual consciousness in human beings that urges them to value the concepts of freedom, compassion, truth, beauty and imagination.

Jackson and Pinar both offer informative descriptions of life in public schools and the deleterious effects that the experience of schooling has on the young. Both writers convincingly reveal that schools are dehumanizing places in which to be, places in which individual expression and freedom are thwarted and conformity and suppression are promoted. The result is a loss of the sense of self, as individuals learn to concede to the authority of the "oppressors."

While the work of both Jackson and Pinar serve to make the reader painfully aware of the effects of the hidden curriculum in public schools, neither educator explores the political and social influences that shape this curriculum.

How and why this state of affairs came to be is left unexamined. No suggestions are given as to what steps can be taken towards changing a system that leads to "madness" in our children, a hollowness and robot-like nature in their development. These issues are critical ones that must be addressed if the "daily grind" that Jackson describes is to be reformed, or our children are to become whole, thinking and feeling individuals, rather than the automatons that Pinar describes.

Dan Lortie's work Schoolteacher (1975) provides a comprehensive, insightful look at the sociology of teachers, their backgrounds, early vocational influences, their attitudes and perceptions about educational theory and practice. As a group, Lortie's research reveals that teachers tend to be conservative, static, and supportive of the status quo. They do not question traditional teaching practices or speak to the possibility of instruction that might lead to a "new tomorrow." Their ideas for improving teaching centered on being given fewer clerical and extra curricular duties, more planning time, and having fewer classroom interruptions.

The significance of Lortie's work for this dissertation lies in the awareness that teachers lack the critical consciousness necessary for personal and social transformation. While they unquestioningly participate in and perpetuate the "daily grind" of schooling and, thus, become the

"oppressors" of which Pinar speaks, they, in turn, are also oppressed. They do not question the validity of the pedagogical practices which they have been trained to implement. They fail to reflect on how these practices have been shaped by forces outside the walls of the school or how these practices have served to influence their own perspectives and personal values in the past.

Lortie does not suggest ways that teachers might be liberated from their own acculturation or how they might develop a critical consciousness. These are issues, however, that warrant further consideration, particularly by those educators who see the need for the transformation of education and society.

One of these educators is Dominican priest Matthew Fox. I have found Fox's work to be integrated and comprehensive in the area of social transformation. Fox is critical of an educational system that is alienating and elitist. Education, Fox believes, should be an instrument for social change and, therefore, must itself be transformed.

This transformation cannot result, according to Fox, from the development of a critical consciousness alone. It can only occur in a dialectic with a spirituality that celebrates the shared divinity and connectedness of all human beings. Social transformation in Fox's view is not a process that can take place as an outgrowth of critical thinking and intellectual reasoning alone. Neither can it emerge simply

out of warm feeling for other human beings. Fox's vision incorporates both intellect and spirit into compassion, which Fox translates as social justice.

Fox's work raises several questions. First, from where will the impetus come for the education of both mind and spirit that Fox advocates? Fox suggests that schools and universities might begin each semester with seminars in which the topic for discussion would be how each discipline would incorporate the teaching of compassion into its curriculum. At the end of the semester students and teachers would share what contributions they had made in their field to compassion. Yet from what sources will the call to address the issue of compassion arise?

Second, how will schools overcome the opposition of the affluent and comfortable in society who benefit by maintaining present political and economic structures? There are those in society who may feel sympathy for the less fortunate, but who may not be willing to make the personal sacrifices that compassion demands in order for others to share in a better and more just life. How, then, will educational practice persuade individuals to forego personal self interests in the interests of the larger community?

Third, how is it possible to convince society at large that a transformation in education is required for world survival? In a society characterized by separation and individualism, how are the members of that society to be

convinced of their economic, ecological and political interdependence with all of the world's people?

While Fox advocates the transformation of the ladder motif in education into that of Sarah's circle of community and compassion, he does not suggest ways to overcome the barriers that prevent our reaching such a goal.

Fox possesses, however, what Meister Eckhardt insisted must characterize compassion, and that is a "radiant faith in human nature" (1979, p. 751). It is this faith in human nature and its divine origin that characterizes Fox's writings on creation-centered spirituality. Creation, Fox points out, is on-going. All human beings are receptacles for the creature energy of God. Fox cites the words of Meister Eckhardt:

> The seed of a pear tree
> grows into a pear tree
> and a hazel seed
> grows into a hazel tree;
>
> a seed of God
> grows into
> God (1983, p. 28)

Fox's belief in the innate divinity of men and women provides hope for the kind of transformation in education, economics, politics and social relationships that is needed to save a planet and a people in crisis. Fox does not offer pragmatic, quick-fix solutions for bringing down the barriers that thwart the development of a heightened personal and social consciousness. He offers instead the anticipation

that before it is too late and the lights of the Global Village called Earth have been extinguished, humankind will come to recognize that they are, indeed, co-creators with God. The result of this awareness will be a planet moved from the edge of annihilation to the celebration of compassion and community, the sharing of the earth's riches and resources - a celebration of renewed life.

Reflections on Educational Practice

The insights I have gained from this study, which involved not only four teachers but an analysis of my own personal and professional being, cannot be viewed as conclusions or sweeping generalizations due to the interpretive nature of this inquiry. I present them rather as possibilities for reflection.

First, there are teachers who have a humanistic concern for the welfare and personal growth of their students and believe that schools should hold the individuation of young people as a major focus.

Second, there are teachers who value personal growth in themselves and see themselves as people in process. Such a perspective may open these teachers to the examination of ideas and viewpoints that may be different from their immediate experience.

Third, personal crisis often heralds the beginning of a loosening or letting go of former ways of thinking and being. Each teacher I interviewed and my own experience reveal that

it is at such times that individuals are most open to re-examining formerly unquestioned ideas or positions, values and perspectives. It is at the level of personal crisis that dramatic shifts in personal consciousness may begin.

Fourth, some teachers often use innovative and creative teaching techniques that ameliorate the "daily grind" of classrooms and schools. They value teaching strategies that involve analytical thinking skills that help diffuse the banking practices in classrooms critiqued by Freire. These teachers, however, do not necessarily extend their focus on these skills to encourage students to critically evaluate the economic, social and political practices of the culture in which they live.

Fifth, transpersonal psychologists and educators like Thomas Roberts and Frances Clark (1976) and Ken Wilber (1981) speak to the importance of practices such as meditation in evolving a highly-developed spiritual consciousness. The teachers I interviewed who were involved in introverted meditative practice did not demonstrate that such practice lead to the development of what Matthew Fox (1979) calls compassion: the awareness of the need for active involvement in creating a more humane and just world.

Sixth, teachers often form their individual perspectives on education from family and cultural influences and psychological predispositions and idiosyncracies. While inherent values and personal propensities may account for differences

in instructional approaches, teachers still generally reflect the influences of acquired cultural values in their classroom instruction, resulting in a further perpetuation of the status quo. The teachers in this study, however, appear unaware that they are involved in this process. They appeared to lack an awareness of the political nature of schools.

Seventh, the teachers in this inquiry had not had exposure to more radical perspectives in education. They had not been encouraged as teachers to critically examine the roles they play in transmitting the culture of which they and their students are a part. This point is not surprising. Teachers generally are not exposed in their training to strikingly unconventional points of view in areas such as curriculum, religion, politics, and economics, nor are they encouraged to examine the ways in which these systems relate.

Eighth, in light of my own experience, it is clear that if a teacher is open to the critical examination of education and the teaching role as that of being other than transmitting conventional wisdom, such a teacher can begin to integrate a consciousness that views education as a potentially dynamic force for instigating both critical thought and spiritual growth. She can begin to visualize schools and teaching as vehicles for social reform rather than the verification of the status quo.

Ninth, the teachers I interviewed in this study do not see themselves as potential catalysts for social trans-

formation. They, in fact, reflect a sense of impotence to even change practices in their own schools.

In light of the study of middle class American society done by Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, and Tipton, (1985) these findings are not startling. Bellah and his associates in their book Habits of the Heart point out that Americans are restrained to a vocabulary of individualism, of personal growth and individual rights and freedoms. Bellah, et. al., point out that the primary American language of "self-understanding" actually limits the way in which people think (p. 290). Americans have no traditional cultural language of community to draw on, the authors point out and, therefore, have difficulty in articulating ideas of social justice, cooperation and responsibility to others beyond small circles of family and friends.

Freedom for middle class Americans, Bellah asserts, is freedom to be left alone to pursue individual rights, to be free from arbitrary authority in public and private life. If the social world is made up of individuals, each intent on being free of the demands of others, then it becomes difficult "to forge hands of attachment" to others whose needs may impinge on those freedoms (p. 23). The researchers in Habits of the Heart discovered that although there are Americans who seek both democratic and personal freedom for others, these Americans have difficulty in even visualizing what a just and equitable social order would be like.

The American ideal of freedom for the individual the writers observed, leaves American citizens with a "fear" of acknowledging the vast, powerful and complex interdependent structures in society dominated by giant corporations and the state. In addition, a tradition of individualism does not give Americans the resources for thinking or talking about the sharing of economic resources, of "distributive justice." Americans are not sure what a really just society would be like, the authors observe, or how it could come about.

It is not unusual, then, that the teachers interviewed in this dissertation had similar difficulty in articulating the connection of educational practice with the complex social, economic and political realities of the larger society. A sense of interconnectedness, of community, does not appear to be a part of the American consciousness. This consciousness is characterized, instead, by fragmentation, separation, and individualism, according to Bellah and his associates. Thus, we have teachers who speak to the value of personal growth and individuation in students, but who find it difficult to utilize the rhetoric of civic and social justice and responsibility.

In light of the understandings I have gained from this inquiry, the central question to be addressed at this point is the likelihood of there actually being a transformation of schools and teachers. Having explored the nature of schools and teaching and the complex view of social and political

realities that give form to education, the possibility of immediate, radical change appears more problematic to me now than when I began this inquiry.

First, in order for schools to become vehicles for personal and social transformation, it is necessary for teachers themselves to possess such a consciousness. While teachers may be caring and humanistic, creative in their teaching approaches, and even unconventional in some of their viewpoints on the purpose and direction of education for personal and spiritual growth, these characteristics do not constitute the kind of transformational consciousness that can provide for dramatic structural changes in the school. Such a consciousness, as I pointed out in the first chapter of this dissertation, requires an awareness of the political and social realities reflected in the schools and the ways in which the schools perpetuate those realities.

This consciousness requires a dramatic shift from individualism and personalism to an awareness of the need for community. A transformational consciousness reveals itself in active participation in righting injustice in the larger society. For the teacher, this participation involves encouraging the young with whom they come in contact to critically evaluate the forces in their environment that shape their lives and the lives of others. The result of such examination should move beyond intellectual discussion of inequities and evil in the world to active involvement in

correcting injustice, healing and making whole the global community.

Second, should such teachers be found, it is difficult to assess the degree of struggle such educators would encounter within the educational system. It is clear that schools reflect the values and goals of the culture within which they operate. Consequently, it is doubtful that cultural authority would allow, on a large scale, the kind of critical questioning of the status quo that transformational education would promote.

It is necessary that there be dramatic shifts in perspective within individuals in the larger society in order for enlightened teachers to be allowed to function effectively as catalysts for change within the schools. Just as blacks in the civil rights movement in this country were joined by whites with a similar passion for racial equality, and women were supported by their male counterparts in the feminists movement, it is necessary that there be a marriage of the goals of the teacher and members of the larger society in efforts to bring about personal and social transformation.

It is out of the combined forces of passion and purpose that political action often arises. In such cases, as with civil rights and the ecology movement, it is political action that further serves to raise and extend the consciousness of individuals who had previously stood on the fringe or outside such movements. Ideas which once appeared strange and

inconceivable begin to gradually gain acceptance from larger groups of individuals once consciousness is translated into policy.

Not only is change, then, a complex process, it is also a gradual and tedious one. Humankind resists change in its quest for security and tradition. The unknown and the untried are frightening prospects. There is power in the confidence that following a charted and well trodden path brings. There are no surprises to throw the individual into uncertainty and trepidation at the prospect of making new decisions and undertaking novel changes in direction.

History, however, reveals that great transformations in thought and action do occur despite resistance and obstruction. The complex factors that are inherent in cultural transformation or even personal metanoia are not within the scope of this inquiry. What is significant for this study is the awareness that there have always been social leaders who have emerged to point the way to new and more evolved ways of seeing and being. Such prophets or visionaries have of necessity been marked with the courage and perseverance to maintain their quest for justice and the common good despite what may appear to be insurmountable obstacles along the way.

Educators, then, who are committed to teaching as a prophetic vocation would of necessity be required to also develop courage and patience. Such an undertaking would not be for the faint-hearted or those seeking to provide a

"quick-fix" solution to injustice, violence and dehumanization in the world. The prophet, by definition, must, of course, have vision. She must, however, not only be able to see the possibility of a world transformed by love and justice; she must also be able to direct her energies passionately and tenaciously into turning that vision into a reality.

Personal Reflections

It is my belief that this vision of compassion and social justice can emerge only from an evolving consciousness that manifests as agape, the Christian notion of love that seeks nothing in return for its giving. "Agape," says psychologist Sam Keen, "allows us to look beneath appearances, beneath any benefit we might gain by loving another, to be moved by the essential being of the other" (1983, p. 201). Keen observes that it is this radical ability to empathize with other beings that was so developed in the 19th century Indian mystic Ramakrishna that when he saw a servant boy being whipped, welts appeared on his own body. Agape love is synonymous with the active compassion described by Meister Eckhart and Matthew Fox. It is the sense and knowledge that all beings are connected in a mystical pattern of unity through the divine.

To what extent individuals can be moved in the direction of agape love lies in the willingness of human beings to transcend the illusive boundaries of self to risk self-

interests and ego and to embrace all others as part of divine creation. This action is not to be confused with the perspectives of many New Age spiritualists committed to working towards the realization of self, of achieving personal enlightenment to the neglect of a commitment to better the lives of all people. Agape is seen more clearly in the actions of the Buddhists Bodhisattva, the enlightened person who on entering the outskirts of Nirvana, turns to see others behind, still struggling in the desert. The Bodhisattva then returns to the world to help others find the way. He recognizes his bonding with all other beings and realizes he cannot enter Nirvana as long as one person remains outside.

The prophet/teacher has a similar commitment. It is not necessary that she be "enlightened" in terms of mystical perfection, but that she herself be consciously involved in the process of centering and becoming, in acting justly and compassionately. It is through her action and being that others may come to share her vision of a world in which all human beings are recognized as family.

It is important to note that agape love assumes that all members of this extended family are accepted as they are. All are worthy by divine birthright of compassion and justice. Such unconditional love does not set particular prescribed standards of behavior, attitude, or appearance before persons are deemed lovable; they are loved at whatever

stage of spiritual or intellectual development; they are loved "in spite of" not "because of."

For me, one of the most important understandings I have come to acknowledge within my own transformational journey is the importance of extending the same compassion and unconditional love to the self that we are expected to extend to others in our human family. Jesus' words concerning the importance of loving our neighbors as ourselves have special significance here. If we cannot come to accept and love ourselves as we are, how much more difficult must it be to accept the weaknesses and failings of those outside ourselves?

The transformational journey, after all, is not a linear one, with the individual suddenly "awakened" and moving in a straight path from a starting line to a finishing point. Such a metaphor encourages evaluation based on position and perceived achievement. The transformational journey involves scaling hills and entering valleys, arriving at plateaus, and sometimes remapping and changing directions. The process of growth, as Matthew Fox reminds us, is concerned with creating and re-creating. Creativity always involves inspiration, struggle and pleasure. It is an on-going process, not a final destination.

For me, this dissertation has been part of my own transformational journey. Through it I have come to understand at much deeper levels than the intellectual, the

critical importance of the growth of both compassion and unconditional love in righting injustice, healing ourselves and others and the planet on which we live. I have struggled to balance my perception of the need for inner, spiritual growth in transformatiton with the necessity for social and political action, coming to understand more fully the meaning of Meister Eckhart's words: "Mysticism ends in politics."

At times I have been dismayed that others with whom I have shared discussions of my work have not reacted with the same zeal and enthusiasm for the hope of a world moved forward through education and the commitment of dedicated, visionary teachers. Some have found such ideas to be too idealistic, radical or utopian; others have reacted with indignation. I have even been accused of not being a good patriot. A few have been puzzled; others have revealed to me that they believe that things in the world are unfolding as they should and as they are destined to be.

Nevertheless, my ideas and hopes have also been reinforced and encouraged by those I meet who are actively working in movements to end the arms race, to provide services for abused children and battered women, to bring to public attention the rights of animals, to prevent further exploitation of the earth and its resources, to find ways to provide shelter, food, and clothing for the poor and to support legislation to improve the living conditions of those who are yet to share in the abundance of a wealthy nation.

I am further inspired by the words of George Bernard Shaw: "Others look at things as they are and ask 'why'? I look at things as they could be and ask 'why not?'" I invite the reader to share with me the exploration of Shaw's "Why not?"

The prophet has always questioned things as they are and dedicated himself or herself to bringing about a better world, despite all obstacles in the path of achieving the prophetic vision. I believe that the crisis of the times invites the emergence of new prophets and visionaries in education as well as in other disciplines who will set their sights on bringing about a new creation for humankind. Whatever the area of service, whether education, religion, medicine, politics or economics, I believe that these individuals are beginning now and will continue in the future to work towards moving the world a bit further towards achieving that goal. We are after all "seeds of God," in the process of coming to understand what it actually means to be divine.

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