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Contemplative Pedagogy and Revitalization of Teacher Education

The prevailing conception and practice of education perpetuates a civilization saturated with a deep sense of ontological disconnect and axiological crisis in all dimensions of human life. We examine the disconnect from body, senses, and world in the practice of education. We explore the possibilities in the burgeoning contemplative education movement for reconnection offered by holistic, experiential approaches to learning, in particular, contemplative practices that manifest the arts of somatic, sensuous, relational, and contextual awareness.

La conception et la pratique dominantes en éducation perpétuent une civilisation saturée d'un profond sentiment de détachement ontologique et une crise axiologique dans toutes les dimensions de la vie humaine. Nous nous penchons sur la pratique pédagogique pour y examiner le détachement du corps, des sens et du monde. Nous étudions les possibilités offertes par le mouvement contemplatif qui prend de l'ampleur dans le milieu de l'éducation et qui vise une reconnexion par le biais d'approches holistiques et expérimentales à l'enseignement, notamment des pratiques contemplatives reposant sur les arts de la sensibilisation somatique, sensuelle, relationnelle et contextuelle.

Preamble

We are contemplative educators, each steeped in varied traditions of contemplative philosophy and practice (Buddhism, Daoism, Raja [Ashtanga] Yoga), but we are all working to integrate the contemplative consciousness into the various contexts and locations of adult and higher education in which we teach. We have come together to examine and challenge the prevailing under-

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standing of what education is today: its aims, goals, and *modus operandi*. From the outset, we state that our concerns and criticisms about conventional schooling from kindergarten to university are inspired and informed by our knowledge and practices in our respective contemplative traditions. Our aim in the present work, however, is not to proselytize the reader to any one contemplative tradition. Our aim is to contribute our reflections on what we have learned from our own participation in contemplative traditions to the task of reconceptualizing and reprioritizing the pedagogical intent and content. But why the suggested need to animate the task of reconceptualizing and reprioritizing? What is the matter with education today?

Prolegomenon

Is there a sense that education today is dominated by a certain mood and mode of consciousness that precariously holds up the colossal edifice of modern industrial civilization? What does this edifice look like? What is this dominant mode of consciousness? First of all, we are disconnected from our own bodies. We are not saying this for shock value. We treat our (and others') bodies as if they were objects we can push around, punish and reward, neglect, or manipulate to get certain results, be they the docile student body, drug-treated patient body, surgically improved glamorous body, or muscular athletic body. Consider the prevalent medical model in which the body is seen as an object to be treated with medication. Or the pervasive underlying objectifying of the self as a product to be beautified, for example, or used to sell products that we should all desire. Alienated from our own fleshy reality, most of us are not finely attuned to what goes on in the body, and lack intuitive, that is, intimate carnal knowledge. Hence we mostly think in terms of what we can do to our bodies for certain results. Many of us even think: "This is my body. I can do whatever what I want to it." This is the fundamental level of objectification that our dominant civilization, with its millennial legacy of mind-body and intellect-matter dualism, has culturally inscribed into us.

At the next level, we have the perceptual and sensuous disconnect whereby we perceive the world to be categorically separate from oneself. An unconscious sense of "that's not me" or otherness pervades the self when it looks out at the world through conceptual and ideological lenses, psychologically called *projections*. That is, if we notice much of what really is there at all. Again, this sense of disconnect is the legacy of a civilization entrenched in subject-object dualism, equating the human self with the subject *I* and relegating the world to the realm of the object or *thing*. It follows from this unfortunate psycho-ontology that we humans are entitled to treat the world as our resources and consumable goods: "We can do whatever damn thing we want to the world!" Lacking in such objectified consciousness is a sense of interbeing—the sense that we, rocks, rivers, trees, toads, and humans are one flowing, interpenetrating stream of being that embraces and connects every being and its associated sensibilities of belongingness, compassion, care, love, and gratitude. The third level of disconnect is the human-to-human: interpersonal intersubjectivity that is a form of interbeing, but channeled specifically toward fellow humans. Disconnect in the interpersonal dimension manifests in humans as not knowing how to connect with each other as heart-full and soul-full beings having intrinsic worth. When people relate to each other (mostly) out of the in-

strumental interest of gaining some ends—be they good grades, work performance evaluations, or recognition and acceptance—intersubjectivity is missing. Human relationships become, even if professionally or interpersonally “nice” and “smooth,” fundamentally instrumental. Civilizational life today evolves around these three axes of disconnect and is in danger of undermining the very phenomenon of life on this planet, not to mention the quality of human life endowed with generous experiences of freedom, peace, love, joy, and compassion.

Educating the Alienated Consciousness

From Charles Scott's Fieldnotes

A number of my undergraduate university students, most of whom come from other countries and cultures, express their appreciation of the classes I teach and the pedagogical approach I take: teaching and learning as dialogue à la Buber. They point out the significance to them of listening, of being heard. But more than that, they affirm the significance of being seen: being seen wholly as unique individuals, and affirmed as such. “This class has been the first time I have been actually recognized as a human being with questions, concerns, ideas, hopes and dreams; I have been affirmed as someone who is both unique and special,” said one student. This affirmation is a process Buber (1965) calls “confirmation.” When a teacher attends to the student, and the student’s being and presence is confirmed, relational forms of knowing become possible. The key to this ability to listen to the other and to see the other fully as Thou is the capacity Buber calls “becoming aware”: developing a deep awareness of and sensitivity to the other (Buber, 1947/2002). In turning to the other, you allow the other to “step forth and [become] a presence” (p. 25). More than mere listening, becoming aware involves the development of all our sensual or somatic sensitivities, as well as our rational, affective, and intuitional ways of developing knowledge. In becoming aware, you feel that the person or thing or event before you presents meaning, addresses you, and you reach out to establish contact.

The students feel closer contacts with their teachers and with other students in the classroom have been lacking, ones that can develop into meaningful relationships where, as Buber (1947/2002, p. 242) says, “deep calls unto deep”; they are longing for the opportunities to develop these deeper relationships in and through which their existential and spiritual questions, issues, and dilemmas can be explored and answered. As well, the students appreciate the opportunity to focus on developing their own philosophical orientations: understanding themselves, others, and the world as a whole in an integrated fashion. They sometimes mention they have never previously had such opportunities, pointing to a lack of focus on both subjectivity and intersubjectivity, and they are keen to take a more philosophical, inward turn, finding that it leads naturally to an increased concern for others and for their surrounding environments, physical or sociocultural. Another student’s feedback reads: “Lots of student-to-student interaction and open dialogue. The strongest point of the course was the community that was created in our groups.” Yet another writes: “Dialogue!!!! It was confusing at first, b/c we were unsure where and when to do it, but once that got clarified, it was great!” Yet another writes: “Thanks for inspiring me this past semester—words can’t describe how meaningful this course has been to me.”

From Beatrice Donald's Fieldnotes:

I work with practicing therapists in a supervisory role, individually and in groups. I also teach in workshops therapists who are learning how to further their professional expertise. The student interns I teach are learning how to adapt their classroom learning to the reality of psychotherapy practice. My observation is that in all these groups there exists a need to some degree to treat, to cure, to teach those coming to them for help how to feel better. Here we see the damaging effects of the traditional educational experience of conceptualizing in terms of dualities, pathologizing and objectifying clients ("I'm well, you're not; you are damaged and I must help you find a way out"). These are not conscious or deliberately negative conceptualizations. Those who enter the profession of psychotherapy want to help others know themselves better, want to make the world a better, more peaceful and compassionate place. Ironically, we want to create greater self-understanding and integration in others yet are often not taught with conviction both the necessity for engaging in our own process of self-reflection (with or without the help of a therapist) and the influence of this on our relationships with our clients (and others). This lack and avoidance of self-reflection as a requirement in the education of therapists means that they can be disconnected from their deep selves, unfamiliar with their longings, unresolved pain and losses, and unable to articulate their strengths and experience their creativity. Yet these are the substance and process of clients' experiences, and are what drives them courageously to enter the profession. Therapists who have not faced the problems in themselves that clients want to resolve in the therapeutic relationship cannot be of help and therapeutic impasses result. Intern therapists have little experience to fall back on. They can be disabled by their anxiety and lack of confidence, not knowing what to expect from their interactions with clients, not knowing whether they will be up to the task (to cure), not knowing how to be with someone wanting help. More experienced therapists who are not practicing looking inward will simply run out of steam, lose interest, or complain that the therapy is not going anywhere, tending to further pathologize the client. Lacking the knowledge of how to practice listening for their own way of being in the world, both new and experienced therapists are left in a vacuum asking themselves, where do I go from here? What next? And they are listening for content rather than the underlying process, feeling an urgent need and responsibility for solving the problem for the client. In effect, the educational experience that emphasizes content over process, learning facts over integrating knowledge, and performance over experience, has been thoroughly inculcated and is acted out in the so-called therapy, unconsciously, but nevertheless, unfortunately effectively. I should think that all that I am saying here in the context of teaching therapists aptly applies to teaching schoolteachers.

As an example, an essential component in the education of therapists training in the expressive mode of Sandplay¹ is learning how to see beyond the apparent reality of the picture. The capaciousness of the client's experience lies embedded in the objects and relationships in the picture the client has created in the sand while an unconscious process unfolds. A particular figure or grouping may be identified by a client as specifically something or someone, but these verbal and concrete expressions invite the therapist beyond them into the real world of the client that is unconsciously expressed and is complex and indefinite. Buddhist and Western philosophers and writers have used the metaphor of the finger pointing to the moon to illustrate the relationship between language (the finger) and the complex reality of the meaning inherent in it (the moon). Our conventional paradigm of teaching and learning with its emphasis on

explicit and discrete information gathering conditions students to look for meaning in the finger—the explicit and discrete information presented to them through words—rather than in the complex reality embodied in people and their experiences. In Sandplay training, for example, the conditioning is so thorough that much repetitive observation and practice looking at pictures and seeing beyond the figures is necessary before the symbolic psychological dimension becomes visible to the observer therapist.

As the above narratives indicate, our usual satisfaction with a limited awareness and knowing begins with teaching driven by the banking model of education (Freire, 2006) in which the student is an object to be filled with new knowledge, which is premised on the belief that explicit information is all there is to knowing. The inevitable result of this model is that students become alienated from their own embodied knowing and rhythms of learning. The student's intersubjective experience, a gold mine of opportunity for learning, securely anchored in meaning, is passed over in the race to teach curriculum content. In the end, teacher and student are caught in a malaise of disconnection from awareness of the vitality in their own realities and the realities implicit in their surroundings.

Much of education today, from kindergarten to postsecondary, is in the service of learning content material. Learning content material is a necessary part of learning anything. However, just as even the best food becomes poison when over-consumed, so is learning the content material when the purpose of any education is so single-mindedly focused on it that we lose sight of the larger vision of education. This larger vision of education has been entertained in diverse historical and cultural contexts—from Plato's philosopher king to the Confucian noble person (君子), from the Daoist sage to the Buddhist enlightened being, and the contemporary ideal of eco-citizens—in terms of what it is to be ideal or exemplary human beings who manifest wisdom, love, and compassion. Of necessity these ideal models of humanity have a certain working knowledge and information base in whatever subject or domain, but this is not the most important or central part of becoming educated. The aim is the cultivation of human beings whose distinguishing characteristics are wisdom that grounds our being, for example, in *the way* (道) that cannot be discursively codified; in generosity of heart and spirit that manifest as boundless love and compassion (characteristics of *bodhichitta*, enlightened heartmind); and in "primordial self-confidence," as one contemporary Buddhist teacher and scholar Reginald Ray calls it. It is these kinds of educational visions and aims that we by and large have lost sight of, or are only dimly aware of, today. The result is an education that is perhaps proficient in producing knowledgeable and technically competent people who yet are existentially insecure, lacking "primordial confidence," perpetually anxious, and prone to insatiableness, dis-ease or discontent. Here we are not implying that the ancients in Lao Tze's or the historical Buddha's time were free from existential insecurity and led lives of contentment. The fact that these philosophers and sages were advocating such human ideals back then indicates that the same existential challenge confronted the ancients. Today we are no less challenged by the same difficulty; however, the larger visions of education that many of our historical teachers placed before us are largely missing in the current practice of education, which is single-mindedly focused on equipping students with quanta of information

and skills, however useful, so that they can be successful in their jobs and careers. Instructing students to become proficient in knowledge and skills acquisition is not the same as educating them.

In this article we are articulating what is often missing in our conventional practice of education in terms of states or types of consciousness. We are claiming that the kind of education focused on knowledge/information and technical skill acquisition, as in K-12 and postsecondary schooling, shapes and entrenches an alienated or objectified consciousness. The hallmark of this consciousness is the sense of alienation stemming from the threefold disconnect: the somatic, the perceptual, and the intersubjective. Education that does not allow and help people to fully inhabit their bodies, senses, and feelings but in fact prevents them, even if unwittingly, from such inhabitation creates people with objectified consciousness; that is, the consciousness that experiences the self and the world that surrounds the self in terms of objectified *otherness*, or objects. In this way, the subject (the self) and object (not self) duality becomes the normalized mode of consciousness. Our claim is that the way we educate students from kindergarten to university tends not to encourage them to inhabit deeply and continually in their body, sense, feeling, and for that matter, even in their thought. Their attention is continually drawn out of and away from their embodied and inhabited experience and is attached to abstract and discursive knowledge (information, fact, theories, ideas). The situation here is like not allowing a person to go outside, explore, and experience the lay of the land himself or herself, but insisting on having the person only look at a map. It is when a person goes out and interacts with the landscape, experiencing the land intimately through his or her sense perception, thoughts, and feelings that he or she comes to know the land *as if* it is part of him or her. In fact, through exploration and experience, he or she and the land become one epistemic unit of intersubjectivity. This form of knowing is known as *knowing by participation* or participatory knowledge (Skolimowski 1994).

Intersubjectivity—the capacity and ability to sense and feel everything in terms of the bond and strength of intimate relationship—is radically diminished in the objectified consciousness that sets up the duality between the self and the world/other. The objectified consciousness approaches knowing not by participation, but by abstraction and conceptualization. Another way of speaking of intersubjectivity is the dialogical consciousness: the consciousness that forms through a continual dialogue with whatever the self comes in contact with. The dialogical consciousness's primary modes of knowing are somatic, intuitive, and intersubjective: embodied, direct, or relational forms of knowing; for example, knowing when one is hungry is a form of somatic knowing. One does not consult the watch to know that one is hungry. A mother whose consciousness is dialogical in her contact and interaction with her baby knows through attention to somatic, intersubjective cues and a developing intuitive sense when her baby is hungry, tired, needs to eliminate, and so on. What is going on in the baby has become part of the signal and sensing system of the mother. The baby and mother form one epistemic flow unit. There is a continual flow of signals and resonance of receptions between the mother and the baby. This is the clearest example of intersubjectivity.

Alas, conventional schooling at any level drastically impedes formation of intersubjectivity or dialogical consciousness by continually preventing students from intimately inhabiting or indwelling their own experience, and not allowing students to feel deeply, observe intensely, and relate to each other as soulful and heartfelt beings. Instead, they are frequently interrupted from whatever they are feeling, sensing, and musing and often are not given any opportunity to indwell deeply in their own being and becoming. Teachers demand students' attention: bells demand an absolute obedience to the exigencies of time; textbooks equally demand single-minded attention to volumes of information, and so on. As well, there is a constant imposition of what to think and perceive in the form of curriculum materials and expected outcomes. What would be the long-term effect of this kind of education on the formation of person's *house of being*?

On the contrary, we consider what would happen when we are allowed to indwell our own being, moment by moment as we explore the art of awareness below. For now, we posit the understanding that it is through indwelling our own being that we overcome and heal the wound of disconnect: the alienated states of being or consciousness. The healing occurs through the experiences of intersubjectivity or interbeing, for such experience is in and of itself wholesome, meaning that we become whole and not existentially alienated. Security, ease, contentment, and joy arise of their own accord through the experience of interbeing. We use the secular vocabulary to describe this process of returning the attention to where it originally belongs, namely the sensing organism, but in a nonsecular context we would use the word *spiritual* to talk about the same thing. Using the spiritualist vocabulary, Hadot (1995), the French classicist and philosopher, explains what spiritual exercises were to the ancient Greco-Romans who signed up in various schools of philosophy such as the Epicurean, the Stoics, the Sceptics, and so on: "Thus, all spiritual exercises are, fundamentally, *a return to the self*, in which the self is liberated from the state of alienation into which it has been plunged by worries, passions, and desires" (p. 103).

Perhaps it is not an overstatement to say that the typical schooling experience today is precisely the opposite. Students are regularly plunged into worries about grades, job future, greed, and anxiety over competition, and all sorts of stress, which all have the effect of taking the self away from itself, preventing indwelling experience. Can we blame them for being perpetually anxious about exactly what they have to study and know to do well on exams? We have created a system of education that creates an alienated consciousness not easily capable of intersubjectivity and prey to instrumentality: "Tell us exactly what to study for exam!"

The Contemplative Education Movement

Recent interest in contemplative practices in educational circles can be seen as a challenge to the conventional education that, as explained above, creates an alienated consciousness saddled with an instrumentalist *modus operandi*. The movement began to emerge in the late 1960s with publications such as Leonard's (1968) *Education and Ecstasy* and Murphy's (1969) article in the first issue of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology*, "Education and Transcendence," where he noted a "widespread interest in various psychophysical

disciplines which evoke transcendent experience” (p. 21). Since then, and especially in the last decade, there has been a steady, increasing interest in applying contemplative practices in various educational settings, along with a concomitant interest in exploring and further developing supporting theoretical frameworks. Miller (1994a, 1994b) has written about the value of contemplative practices in education and his own efforts to implement them at the graduate level. Hart (2004) reviewed some of the benefits of contemplative practices for education (for a review of contemplative programs in higher education, see Duerr, Zajonc, & Dana, 2006). The Center for the Contemplative Mind in Society is well established, offering an abundance of material for educators and fellowships for the development of contemplative programs in postsecondary education. In 2006 the *Teachers College Record* devoted an entire issue to contemplation and education. But as Zajonc (2006) points out in that issue, significantly (because it speaks to establishing the validity and reliability of such approaches), contemplative orientations and practices have been applied in educational settings for well over a 1,000 years, often (but not always) in monastic settings in the East and West, as well as in Aboriginal cultures, where the philosophical foundations and practices were developed rigorously and comprehensively. Hart (2004) traces the history in the West of the dominance of

a largely Aristotelian emphasis in logic, the natural sciences, and theology beginning at least by the 12th and 13th centuries and consolidated in the reformation or scientific revolution. The Industrial Revolution and the modern Western penchant for efficiency, speed, and productivity as well as the race to keep up with increasing information, have continued to elbow the contemplative to the sidelines. (p. 28)

We can learn from the developments in these traditions that have stood the test of time and can add our own modernist and postmodernist perspectives to these practices in developing more integral approaches that serve both universal and local needs and conditions.

Below we summarize the tenets of the contemplative education outlined by Zajonc (2003).

1. Experience is not to be explained away in terms of “primary qualities”; that is, as having only critical-rational-computational value. We cannot neglect the “synthetic capacity for perceptive judgment” (p. 55). Experience is also made of hidden qualities to be discovered through contemplation and contemplative insight.
2. Cognition is always participatory.
3. The ultimate goal of cognition is direct perception or intuition, which requires the cultivation of an ability to perceive what would remain hidden without them.
4. The three elements above are as valid for spiritual experience and insight as they are for sense-based experience and insight.
5. When we act, it can be on the basis of moral judgment grounded in an empathetic connection to a lived world (in contrast to action governed by a calculus of utility or cost-benefit analysis).

As we can see above, the primary interest of contemplative education is in the formation of frames of reference, or as we prefer to call it, *containers* for

other kinds of consciousness. Knowing that the kind of knowledge content we have is vitally dependent on the shape of the container—that is, the knowing person—contemplative education’s primary interest is in shaping supple (non-discursive) and complex (nonlinear) consciousness. To do this, educators need new pedagogical tools such as contemplative methodologies that can inspire discovery of hidden dimensions of reality.

Hart (2004) characterizes contemplation as another way of knowing that has been “recognized across time, culture, and disciplines as essential to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom” (p. 29). Contemplative approaches include the capacity for knowing through silence, looking inward, pondering deeply, beholding, witnessing the contents of our consciousness, and so on. These cultivate what he calls “inner technology of knowing” and thereby a “technology of learning and pedagogy without any imposition of religious doctrine” (p. 30).

Siegel (1999), interpersonal neurobiologist and researcher in the neuroscience of mindfulness, turns our attention to the influence of the subjective attitude of the mindful educator on the student. He describes the educator’s powerful influence on the learner’s mind.

As teachers we are in a unique position to offer to our students not just our capacity to impart knowledge and skills, but our essence as people ... we can create an awareness in our students that their minds matter. Who they are, their state of mind, the meaning of the material to them—each of these makes a difference in how they will learn. This encourages the students to reflect on their relationship with the learning. (p. 276)

Siegel notes the spread of contemplative practices outside education, in medicine, and in spirituality. Today many examples of contemplative practices are being steadily integrated into classrooms. For example, there are many examples now of how contemplative practices are becoming integrated as courses or as programs in postsecondary and secondary education. Some public schools in British Columbia are teaching such contemplative practices as secularized versions of mindfulness that originated with the historical Buddha.

We are interested in supporting the contemplative education movement and making our contribution to it. In the following section, we offer a threefold program of what we playfully call *becoming interbeing* that systematically addresses the threefold disconnect: the somatic, the sensible, and the interpersonal. As explained above, the key to healing the disconnect is indwelling, or becoming aware of, what has been alienated and objectified. It is the act of becoming aware itself that heals the disconnect. Hence our promulgation of the art of awareness.

A note on the scholarship side of the art of awareness that we are promulgating: As the reader will see, each of the three strands of the art of awareness weaves together numerous spiritual-philosophical-cultural fibers drawn from diverse traditions, schools, and sources of contemplative inquiry and practices. When it comes to the art of awareness, we are no purists. Our eclectic and even syncretic stance and practice may be disagreeable to some readers who may dismiss us as postmodernists and relativists. It might be said that we are applying a postmodern perspective to the wisdom traditions. Wilber (2006), for example, noted that a major failing of the wisdom traditions is that they

succumb to what philosophers call the myth of the given. This is a monological, noncontextual privileging of consciousness itself: the idea that consciousness itself reveals reality. Such a perspective fails to recognize the significance of context, intersubjectivity, and the roles sociocultural and historical forces play in determining behavior and consciousness itself. As well, some of the traditions have also ignored, or have actively campaigned against or have conflicted views about, the role of the body in developing awareness. We would ground awareness and its development in a recognition of us as multidimensional beings who have bodies, minds, and spirits. We would further assert that the need for awareness necessarily includes the need to be aware of context, relationships, and sociocultural and historical forces. In any case, we are interested not in contemplative or spiritual tradition or school per se, but the contemplative human consciousness and how it can be cultivated and nourished through a multitude of means and ways. Possibilities are many, and we limit our discussion to practices with which we are experienced.

The Art of Awareness

Indwelling the Body: The Somatic Awareness

The West has had its full share of denigrating the body. (Culturally, the East is not much better, although it has given birth to such body-honoring philosophies as Buddhism and Daoism.) The body, compared with the mind or intellect, is the lesser thing. Not only that, it is often portrayed as gross—neither holy nor clean. With this kind of perception affecting the whole culture, it is no wonder that we are not encouraged to indwell our body more deeply. We may find our babies cute for playing with their toes, but we would not give a similar or more serious validation to older ones who may be exploring and engaging with their body dynamics and sensations. We would say that they should have better things to do with their time. We may even say that they are being morbid for taking interest in being bodies. Yet in truth, our fundamental or elemental dimension of being on this planet is being body. But what does *being body* mean?

Being body is not the same as having a body. The latter indicates objectification of the body, meaning the *owner* of the body is outside or beside the body, which describes conditions of disembodiment. Knowing something from its inside is different from knowing it from outside. To know the body from inside, *intimately*, is to be continually immersed in and registering the shimmering stream of tactile sensations emanating from within the body. Only then does the body stop being a physical object we conceptualize as a thing, becoming instead a living reality of energy flow that continually in-forms the person, moment by moment. Johnson (2000), trained in Buddhist and tantric meditations of Tibet and Northern India as well as Sufi ecstatic movements, gives an illuminating phenomenological description of the shift from having to being body.

The formerly hard and numb feeling of the body beings to shimmer.... Where once everything was solid and compacted, hardened and dried, now experience turns fluid and expansive. Previously we were an object moving through the container or physical space of the world. Now we become the space and container itself through which the objects of the world, composed of

the contents of our sensory fields, pass and move. This open dimension of being is completely functional and yet essentially devoid of the claustrophobic compression of self with its catalogue of fears and isolations. (p. 133)

In full embodiment, one experiences lightness and radiance of being. For example, walking is a joy, for one experiences the uplifting energy pulling oneself upright toward the sky, and downward-pulling energy that securely holds one to the ground. Poised delicately between these two pulls, one experiences the miracle of standing upright and of moving, balanced and resilient. So is the case with every other posture and pose. In full embodiment, reports Johnson, "We become completely filled and saturated with the world of our immediate experience ... by the contents of our sensory fields, filled so full that we enter into a natural condition of literal fulfillment" (pp. 133-134). Intersubjectivity or interbeing is the natural experience of being body, for in embodiment, the world and we are experienced as one continual stream of sensing-knowing. The eyes that see the world and the world that is seen by the eyes are two coupling ends of one interbeing circuitry. Again, Johnson puts it well: "Everywhere we look, we are nowhere to be found, and everywhere we look, we are there." In full embodiment, there is no room for existential insecurity.

Indwelling the Senses and Emotions: The Perceptual and Sensuous Awareness

Our senses offer intimate, contemplative ways of knowing and connecting with the world and of developing I-Thou relationships. Buber (1957b) the great modern Hasidic mystic, writes: "I am enormously concerned with this world, this precious fullness of all that I see, hear, taste. I cannot wish away any part of its reality. I can only wish that I might heighten this reality" (p. 28). Buber's (1957a) dialogical philosophy of the I-Thou relationship epistemically rests in what he termed *devotio*, a sacramental way of knowing and defining something through its relationships with others. The beholder "transposes himself into the station of the beheld," experiencing its particularities through a "deep community between the two" (p. 81). The classic Buberian reference is his consideration of a tree in *I and Thou*. Buber (1958) notes that he can see the tree objectively as a scientist or casual observer might. The tree as It. But he can also "become bound up in relation to it" in loving attention (p. 23), now seeing an ontological wholeness, a presence, through relationality. The relationship is sacramental in confirming the unique essence of its members, and is developed through sensuous sensitivity.

The arts and artistic practices can provide a powerful means of developing our sensory and somatic awareness. Attention is the essential ingredient: the other—be it a person, an animal, a tree, or a stone—demands one's full presence and engagement, the "primary word out of [a person's] being" that allows the art to be created and to convey meaning (Buber, 1958, p. 24). Buber (1965) writes that the artist's encounter is a bodily "meeting with the world" (p. 151) propelled by *devotio*; a "loving art" reveals the "secret shape" of the subject. The artist not only sees, but also "feels [the subject's] outlines with his limbs; a heart beats against his heart" (1957b, p. 29). In these contemplative practices there is, as Lilburn (1999) suggests, a growing familiarity, an increasing sense of feeling at home, a loving dwelling in or with a place, a river, stone,

cityscape, and their inhabitants. We go into what Lingis (1994) calls the depths of the organism and the world. Historian Smith (2004) concludes her study of artisans in the 15th-17th centuries: "In this intellectual revolution from the bottom up, these artisans transformed the contemplative tradition of natural philosophy into an active one" (p. 239). The following four artists illustrate how artistic practices serve as contemplative approaches, working with and through the senses.

Barthes (1980) writes in *Camera Lucida* that photography serves not merely as a study or a question but as a "wound" or "punctum," the feature or features of the photograph or the subject that "shoot out of it like an arrow, and pierce me" (p. 26). The punctum can "arouse sympathy and a kind of tenderness" (p. 43); as well, it has a "power of expansion," such that our relation to the Other can expand our awareness; one receives it "right here in my eyes" (p. 43) with the repeated, insistent gaze. Through the sensuous encounter one is taken to a "subtle *beyond*—as if the image launched desire beyond what it permits us to see" (p. 59). From a singular, isolated meaning to a larger, common, connected one. From *eidolons* to *eidos*. In taking photographs of his mother, Barthes felt that he was performing a "painful labor; straining toward the essence of her identity" (pp. 65-66). "I exclaimed: 'There she is! She's really there! At last, there she is!' ... I believe that by enlarging the detail 'in series' (each shot engendering smaller details than at the preceding stage), I will finally reach my mother's very being" (p. 99).

Zen artist Franck (1973) agrees art is a way of getting "into intimate touch" with the world. Eventually, looking becomes seeing. "The experiment [in seeing] is successful if you *succeed* in feeling you have become that leaf or that daisy, regardless of what appears on the paper" (p. xvii). As Looi (2004), a revered contemporary Zen monk and teacher and founder of the Mountains and Rivers Order, points out, Taoist and Zen Buddhist teachers used the arts to convey their spiritual teachings; the art itself was to "point toward the nature of reality" (p. 4), offering a new epistemological outlook. The artistic practices were meant to open the creative process of seeing, designed as disciplined, somatic, intellectual, and intuitive practices. Art was not meant simply to represent Suchness (*Tathata*), but to serve as a means to it.

Thomas Merton, renowned Catholic writer, social activist, student of comparative religion, and a keen proponent of interfaith understanding, also claimed that awareness and not interpretation was the key to his work (Lipsey, 2006; Merton, 1968), stressing a sensuous appreciation of things: "Drink it all in. Everything—the redwood forests, the sea, the sky, the waves, the birds, the sea lions. It is in all this that you will find your answers. Here is where everything connects" (Merton, in Steindl-Rast, 1969, p. 10). By engaging the senses, he was confident that "connections would be made," revealing a "hidden wholeness" (Merton & Griffin, 1970, p. 4). He felt *Sunyata*, Emptiness, a key discipline in working through the body, allowing us to see the fullness inherent in everything. "Waste. Emptiness. Total poverty of the Creator: yet from this poverty springs *everything*. The waste is inexhaustible. Infinite Zero. Everything comes from this desert" (Merton, 1977, p. 452). Franck (1993) defined his work as an effort "to live in radical openness to pure experiencing in kitchen, bedroom,

subway, newspaper, that is: to everyday life, inside as well as around oneself" (p. 10).

Through our somatic-sensuous engagements with the world—attentive, devoted, and empty—we come into interbeing. These contemplative engagements are developed through regular and committed practice: everyday, everywhere relational engagements with the world and that which is other, mediated by the body.

Indwelling the Interpersonal Relationship: The Dialogical Awareness

The terrible and terrifying disconnect of the interpersonal and dialogical is symbolized globally and personally in too many ways. Worst are those found in images of war, in hatred engendered in young children trained by adults to become suicide bombers, in poverty, illiteracy, consumerism, and in narcissistic demands for power and control. How can we understand, and how can we heal the manifestations of relational disconnections that impoverish so many emotionally, spiritually, physically?

To begin to understand the problem, we must go to the beginning, to the initial bonding or attachment relationship between mother and child, and the young child's experiences of contingent communication or affect attunement² with the mother through her body, facial expression, listening, prosody of voice, and gaze (Schoore, 2003). Attachment research has shown that the attachment system in the human being is as important genetically as feeding or mating (Wallin, 2007), and because of this can evoke the most powerful responses. Many of the most intense emotions arise during the formation, the maintenance, the disruption, and the renewal of attachment relationships. The formation of a bond is described as falling in love, maintaining a bond as loving someone, and losing a partner as grieving over someone. Similarly, threat of loss arouses anxiety, and actual loss gives rise to sorrow; while each of these situations is likely to arouse anger. The unchallenged maintenance of a bond is experienced as a source of joy (Cassidy, 1999).

If the young child perceives the caregiver as a haven of safety available to respond to the child, whether he or she is seeking proximity or exploring, the experience positively organizes the child's relational expectations and emotional responses. These early, preverbal, implicit memories stored in the brain's amygdala³ of how important people will respond becomes generalized to the child's expectations of other intimate relationships, and is predictive of positive and negative later mental health (Badenoch, 2008; Schoore, 2003; Siegel, 1999). If the caregiver is not experienced in the dialogical relationship as safe (sensitive to affective signals), and reliably available because of depression, unresolved trauma, or more subtle pathological disturbances, the affective-nervous system's dialogic dysregulation creates fertile ground for relational problems later on. Traumas experienced in the family system or community also precipitate bodily, nervous system safety-seeking responses. The fight/flight readiness to react or the freeze response when neither fighting nor fleeing are viable pathways to safety can become chronically embedded ways of being that infect and harm relationships and limit learning and knowing oneself and others unless or until the traumatized individual has long-term corrective experiences. Wars that have become a way of life through generations, or relationships grounded in dysfunctional communication, are difficult to end or

correct, because of the unconscious need to successfully complete and regulate the traumatic experiences of disconnect through the repetition compulsion.⁴

In the new world of globalization and migration, the classroom has become a receptacle for a mosaic of minds shaped by history, ethnicity, personality, prejudice, opinion—diversity that may enrich the educator-student experience and may also push to the surface underlying dialogic malfunctions. Sometimes the school is the safe haven, or sadly, it may be a source of trauma. The educator's responsibility for creating an optimal learning environment, where dialogue in relationship is encouraged and facilitated, is both essential and highly demanding. Indwelling interpersonal relationship requires that educators engage in the Art of Awareness. We must find ways to reflect on relational connection and disconnection in ourselves and on our feelings, beliefs, and perceptions in relationship with others.

Mindfulness (*sati* in Pali, the language of the historical Buddha) training and Loving-kindness (*metta* in Pali) meditation processes (Bai & Marisse, 2005; Gunaratana, 2002; Salzberg & Goldstein, 2001) are practices that enhance and support self-knowledge, self-regulation, and freedom to co-create with others internal states and interpersonal relationships that are coherent and emotionally regulated. Mindfulness and loving-kindness are activities that intensify awareness, presence, and compassion, and deepen emotional and spiritual experience (Gunaratana). They are fundamentally important processes that are always accessible for self-exploration and self-care.

Mindfulness training consolidates awareness by disengaging it from the "monkey mind"—the constantly moving, sporadic events in the mind—and practicing anchoring it to awareness of steady, rhythmic breathing. This trains the educator to become internally coherent, aware of the subtle energies that are part of creating the possibility for contingent communication and resonance that establishes dialogic relationship and lays the foundation for creative thinking and interbeing.

Coda: Revitalization of Teacher Education Through the Art of Awareness

Time has come to end the hegemony of the banking model of education and prioritization of information-gathering and processing through curriculum. However nicely and caringly we may treat students in this kind of education, still fundamentally we are treating them as learning "machines" that are in the service of obtaining products (grades, awards, status, jobs, security, social approval) as opposed to validating their intrinsic beingness and inherent worthiness. No wonder, then, that people who are "produced" through such a mold of education in turn see and relate to the world (other people, the environment) primarily instrumentally and proceed to turn the forest into a lumberyard and people into *human resources*. If this civilization is to survive and not destroy the world, it needs to shift out of the instrumentalist mindset that perpetuates the epistemological, axiological, and ontological disconnect or alienation that this article addresses. Moreover, if this civilization is to thrive, it needs to move into an education that prioritizes embodied, sensuous, aesthetic, intuitive, and relational ways of knowing and being, thereby fundamentally validating the beingness, not the products and performance, of human beings. In short, education will have to become the art of awareness in all its fullness and richness. For so long education has functioned to create an instrumentalist

mind suited for the industrialization and commodification of the natural and social world. This must not go on. We will—if we do not already—face a holocaust of the Earth and humanity.

The vision of what a *true* (no, we are not afraid to use this word, our sympathy to postmodernism notwithstanding) *civilization* is like has been around for eons, although throughout human history, more often than not it remained as just a vision. For example, First Nations communities saw themselves as communities, as people living in and through a web of relationships, not only with other people, but also and particularly with nature. We end this article by leaving the reader with a strong vision of a true civilization. Luther Standing Bear writes: “The man who sat on the ground in his tipi meditating on life and its meaning, accepting the kinship of all creatures and acknowledging unity with the universe of things was infusing into his being the true essence of civilization” (McLuhan, 1972, p. 99).

Notes

1. Sandplay is an expressive therapy developed by the Swiss Jungian analyst Dora Kalff. Clients create a picture in a sand tray of specific dimensions (28.5 x 19.5 x 3 inches deep) using figures they have chosen from hundreds (a “universe in miniature”). The picture is a concrete representation or meeting place of conscious and unconscious psychological processes experienced by the client in the moment.
2. As described by Siegel (1999), affect attunement between parent and child is dependent on the individual’s sensitivity to signals. Parental sensitivity to signals is the essence of secure attachments. In childhood, this kind of collaborative communication allows for the creation of brain connections that are vital for the development of the child’s capacity for self-regulation and resilient mental health.
3. The amygdala is an almond-shaped structure associated with meaning-making processes and instructions on when to pay attention in the interests of safety. It is also the location of implicit memory, the form of memory available to us during approximately the first 12-18 months of life, when the hippocampus is mature enough to come on line for storing conscious memory.
4. Schore (2009) describes how traumatic experience becomes structure-bound as a “frozen whole” or experience pattern with a fixed, unchangeable, repetitive structure that the person experiences over and over again.

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