

“TO DWELL WITH A BOUNDLESS HEART”: ON THE INTEGRATED CURRICULUM AND THE RECOVERY OF THE EARTH

DAVID W. JARDINE, *The University of Calgary*

I like to walk alone on country paths, rice plants and wild grasses on both sides, putting each foot down on the earth in mindfulness, knowing that I walk on the wondrous earth. In such moments, existence is . . . miraculous and mysterious. People usually consider walking on water or in thin air a miracle. But I think the real miracle is . . . to walk on earth. Every day we are engaged in a miracle which we don't even recognize: a blue sky, white clouds, green leaves, the black, curious eyes of a child. All is a miracle.¹

I began teaching my undergraduate early childhood education class this year by handing my students a blank piece of paper and instructing them to write down as many possible ways the paper could be used to demonstrate, illustrate, or teach features of the various curriculum areas. Their ideas began as expected, with possibilities such as writing on it, painting or drawing on it, reading from it, folding it and making shapes, questions of where paper comes from, how it is made and used, and so on. But in the midst of this exercise came a striking advent for this class. Once they moved to questions of how the paper was made, one student suggested that you could talk about trees and still remain “linked up” with the paper, still remain “on topic.” Once this shift of focus occurred, what began was a giddy onrush of sun and soil and water and logging and chainsaws and gasoline and refineries. Because of this serendipitous turn of attention, suddenly and unexpectedly, everything came to be co-present with the paper, everything seemed to nestle around it. Some topics seemed close to the paper, others distant, at the ends of long and tenuous tendrils of interconnection. Some connections were obvious and immediate, some connections were stretched, but nothing was absent altogether.

One striking feature of this class was that we seemed to go beyond a mere mental exercise to glimpsing something about the world and our expe-

¹Thich Nhat Hahn, *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1986), p. 12.

rience of the world, a previously unnoticed interconnectedness of things hidden beneath the surface, analytic assumptions of difference and separateness that are so commonplace and that guide much curricular thinking.

With the interdependence of all things or "interbeing" . . . cause and effect are no longer perceived as linear, but as a net, not a two-dimensional one, but a system of countless nets interwoven in all directions in a multidimensional space.²

All things in the world are linked together, one way or the other. Not a single thing comes into being without some relationship to every other thing.³

Even the very tiniest thing, to the extent that it "is," displays in its act of being the whole web of circuminsessional interpenetration that links all things together.⁴

As we proceeded with reflections on this exercise, we realized that any object could have been used for this demonstration, any object could have been drawn into the center in a way that all other things organize themselves around this center. With any object, everything else seems to come forward as implicated in this object, but no special object in this implication has a privileged status as center.

The universe is a dynamic fabric of interdependent events in which none is the fundamental entity.⁵

While a piece of blank paper lends itself to curricular matters that are proximal to it (e.g., writing, drawing, questions of how it is made), pulling out this piece of paper tugs at the whole fabric of things, without exception. Paradoxically put, then, every object is a unique center around which all others can be gathered, at the same time, that very object rests on the periphery of all others, proximal to some, distant to others.

To say *that a thing is not itself* means that, while continuing to be itself, it is in the home-ground of everything else. Figuratively speaking, its roots reach across into the ground of all other things and help to hold them up and keep them standing. It serves as a constitutive element of their being so that they can be what they are, and thus provides an ingredient of their being. *That a thing is itself* means that all other things, while continuing to be themselves, are in the home-ground of that thing, that precisely when a thing is on its own home-ground, everything else is there too, that the roots of everything spread across into its home-ground. This way that everything has of being on the home-ground of everything else, without ceasing to be on its own home-ground, means that the being of each thing is held up, kept standing, and made to be what it is by means of the being of all other things, or, put the other way around, that each thing holds up the being of every other thing, keeps it standing, and makes it what it is.⁶

²Thich Nhat Hahn, *The Sun in My Heart* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1988), p. 64.

³Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 149.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵Thich Nhat Hahn, *The Sun in My Heart* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1988), p. 70.

⁶Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 149.

No singular center will resolve this paradox, that a thing is, so to speak, not itself (i.e., it is only in relation to all other things and therefore summons up all those things that it is not in order to be itself) while being itself. If it were not for trees and sun and sky and water, there would be no paper, and to fully understand what this piece of paper is in an integral way requires bringing forth this paradoxical, interweaving indebtedness. The name for this paradoxical, interweaving indebtedness is the Earth.

From here, the class moved on to a discussion of the question of the nature and assumption of an integrated curriculum and the appropriateness of such a curriculum for early childhood education.

THE RECOVERY OF THE EARTH

The notion of the *integrated curriculum* is becoming common currency in early childhood education in Canada, and the articulation of this concept across grades K–6 is beginning in some circles. What seems to be missing in many current formulations of this notion is any deep sense of the difference it makes in our lives and the lives of children. Is it simply a new slogan that will become exhausted and empty, as have so many others in the consumptive flurry in education for the newest and the latest? Or does it speak of something new, something vital and generative, in the field of education? I believe that it is potentially the latter.

But this potential is difficult to assess and address. The exercise my students did in the class was a momentarily enjoyable one, but it is also one whose giddy insight is difficult to sustain. My students did report that they glimpsed something about the notion of integration in the curriculum, but it was almost impossible to sustain this glimpse and cash it out as something practicable. It was difficult to lay out in front of us as a set of propositions or formulae, not because of the complexity of the task or its arduous nature, but because what we were glimpsing was precisely not an object for our perusal or an objective set of relationships that we can set before us. Rather, we were glimpsing the way in which the Earth is our abode, our dwelling, and how our lives as teachers are an integral part of this dwelling.

The notion of an integrated curriculum became a painful one for some students as they began to confront the fossilized residues and assumptions of their own schooling and, more pointedly, as they began practice teaching in situations of profound disintegration. The seemingly innocent and playful exercise we conducted did not make matters easier or clearer, nor did it make questions of applicability simpler and more straightforward. It made things worse. Underlying this difficulty are questions regarding images of our lives and the lives of our children that both sustain and ground the notion of the integrated curriculum. Something archaic and delicate and difficult needs to be recovered for the integrated curriculum to have any deep sense.

The unnoticeable law of the earth preserves the earth in the sufficiency of the emerging and perishing of all things in the allotted sphere of the possible which everything

follows, and yet nothing knows. The birch tree never oversteps its possibility. It is [human] will which . . . drives the earth beyond the . . . sphere of its possibility into such things which are no longer a possibility and are thus the impossible. It is one thing to just use the earth, another to receive the blessing of the earth and to become at home in the law of this reception in order to shepherd the mystery . . . and watch over the inviolability of the possible.⁷

If we begin to unearth the notion of the integrated curriculum, it begins to disrupt our deeply held beliefs and images of understanding, self-understanding, and mutual understanding, pointing to a sense of interrelatedness, interdependency, or interconnectedness that is belied by our analytic, definitional, and frequently disintegrative approaches to educational phenomena. It also belies the desire to finalize, control, master, and foreclose on vital curricular issues. It puts into question desires we may have, as educational theorists and practitioners, to get the curriculum "right," "straightened out," once and for all, for such desires require a basically disintegrative, analytic act aimed at rendering education a closed question, aimed at rendering human life lifelessly objective under the glare of knowledge-as-stasis.

Integration leads to glimpses of a truly lived curriculum, a true *curriculum vitae*, one that exudes the generativity, movement, liveliness and difficulty that lies at the heart of living our lives, as educators, in the presence of new life in our midst, in the presence of children.⁸ A truly integrated curriculum involves the ambiguous and difficult ways in which our lives are intertwined with children—the irresolvable paradox of children "being part of us but also apart from us"⁹—and the ways in which our lives together with children are interwoven with the life of the Earth. It is this *integer*, this *whole*, this *integrity* that the integrated curriculum voices.

Near the roots of the notion of the integrated curriculum is a strikingly simple image of education:

The essence of education is natality, the fact that human beings are *born* into the world.¹⁰

To preserve the world against the mortality of its creators and inhabitants, it must be constantly set right anew. The problem is simply to educate in such a way that setting right remains actually possible, even though it can, of course, never be assured.¹¹

Education, in this image, has to do with our fundamental orientation to natality and, therefore, our fundamental orientation and openness to the future. Although education often means the ceaseless proliferation of longer and longer lists,

⁷Martin Heidegger, "Overcoming Metaphysics," in *The End of Philosophy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 109.

⁸David G. Smith, "Children and the Gods of War," *Journal of Educational Thought* 22 (October 1988): 173–177.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 175.

¹⁰Hannah Arendt, "The Crisis in Education," in *Between Past and Future* (London: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 174.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 192.

guides, schedules, and agenda, at its heart, it cannot be caught in the *stasis* that such a tendency requires and desires in the end. Rather, education is *ek-static*, a movement beyond what already is, a reaching out to the new life around us in a way that keeps open the possibility "that the people of this precious Earth . . . may live."¹²

The integrated curriculum is, at its roots, more than a matter of the interrelations between curriculum areas or subject matters. It is an ecological and spiritual matter, involving images of our place and the place of our children on "this precious Earth." It raises the question of how we are to understand that we are people of this precious Earth, caught up in its potentialities and possibilities. It raises the question of how the deep and moist interweavings and integrity of the Earth are both an original constraint on our lives, but also an original blessing, an original freedom; overstepping the boundary pushes the Earth beyond what is possible for it to sustain.¹³ In the end, the integrated curriculum requires a deep reflection on our desires to disintegrate children's curricular experiences in the name of manageability, ease of instructional design or territorial notions of the separateness and uniqueness of subject-matter specializations.

As an ecological and spiritual matter, the notion of the integrated curriculum involves disturbing, even horrifying, questions as to whether we can continue to take for granted this basic natality that springs from this original blessing of the Earth and that lies at the heart of education. We could never and cannot now assure our children an Earth on which life can go on, an Earth on which "setting-right is actually possible," for such assurances are literally beyond us. The horror is that degenerative, disintegrative, and consumptive images of human life and the bringing forth of human life (*educāre*) may be assuring the opposite. The true horror is that this assurance is precisely not beyond us, even if we choose to ignore it and live, educate, and proliferate educational theories, research, and practices as if the Earth does not matter, as if, therefore, the continuation of human life were not an educational concern.¹⁴

Ignoring the ecological and spiritual consequences and character of the integrated curriculum plunges education into a peculiar paradox, an impossibility. We are able to diligently pursue ways to teach the mathematics, science, social studies, and language arts curriculums without ever considering whether such diligence, such curriculums, and such teaching work consistently with the continued existence of an Earth on which such knowledge may be brought forth. *Educāre*—"bringing forth"—is understood, so to speak, "from the neck

¹²Mathew Fox, *Original Blessing* (San Francisco: Bear and Company, 1986), p. 9.

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴B. Devall and G. Sessions, *Deep Ecology. Living as if the Earth Does Matter* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1985).

up," as if it just happened in the head, as if it were just a matter of effective teaching and affected learning, requiring no real place, no real space to occur.

Such a strangulated approach to education forgets that it is not accumulated curricular knowledge that we most deeply offer our children in educating them. It is not their epistemic excellence or their mastery of requisite skills or their grade-point average, but literally their ability to live, their ability to be on an Earth that will sustain their lives. If we begin to take the roots of the integrated curriculum seriously and begin to heed what it requires of us as educators, we must educate and we must understand the curriculum in ways that will sustain the possibility that all our efforts, and all the efforts of our children, and all these matters of so much concern in educational theory and practice will not be made suddenly trivial. A thorough grounding in mathematics is of little use if that knowledge is understood in such a way that there is no longer any real ground that is safe to walk. Mathematics must become earthen in how it is understood, how it is taught, and how it is grounded. Tampering with the indigenous sense and operational character of mathematics is not necessary, but we must recognize that actually producing, sustaining, savoring, and passing on such knowledge requires something more than this sense and character—it requires an Earth.

We can, as Wittgenstein put it, draw a boundary around, for example, the mathematics curriculum (and it is, on occasion, completely appropriate to do so), but we cannot give it a boundary that could prevent it from intertwining with our lives and the life of the Earth.¹⁵ We cannot sensibly aspire to well-bound and defined and circumscribed images of knowledge and of being educated if those images belie the existence of the actual breath required to pronounce that aspiration. No matter how careful we are in drawing our boundaries, mathematics interweaves with the fabric of the Earth. My love of mathematics, then, must remain Earth-bound—it must remain a love not only of its indigenous and articulate beauty but of the actual conditions under which I and the children I teach may live to do it. It is this love and understanding of mathematics that I must pass on to the children I teach. Within an integrated curriculum, to sensibly say that I "teach mathematics" means that I teach a love of the Earth on which teaching and learning and savoring mathematics is actually possible.

Admittedly, this paradox always seems to be overstated and rather hysterical. But here the integrated curriculum begins to hit home as something that goes beyond precious notions of the relations between curricular subject areas and impotent epistemological notions of relevance to the child's life. It is concerned with the knowledge—perhaps we must say the wisdom, even if we find such notions vaguely embarrassing, antiquated, unrigorous, or unclear—that we must pass on to our children so that life on Earth can go on. It is

¹⁵Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Cambridge, England: Basil Blackwell, 1968), p. 142.

concerned with an image of knowledge that our children can live with, with relevance to the child's life. It is precisely not a specialized curricular topic such as ecological studies or environmental studies, for such specialization unwittingly pretends that the Earth is not underfoot, no matter what. The Earth and its continued existence is not a specialized topic among others as if these others were exempt. The integrated curriculum, understood as an ecological and spiritual matter, throws back in our face any such presumptions of being exempt.

The curriculum as an integrated curriculum cannot be considered with what Whitehead called "the celibacy of the intellect," as if we and our children are ghostly, objective purveyors of the Earth, and not fully human, full of *humus*, fully embedded in the life of the Earth, fully indebted.¹⁶ Although such intellectual celibacy produces beautiful and seductive educational edifices—new theories, new guidelines, more and more complex educational agenda, and longer and longer lists of strategic teacher-intervention procedures—we cannot live with such edifications unless they are somehow brought down to Earth, grounded, not only in an epistemological sense, but in a moist, fleshy sense of given earthliness, given *humus*, made human. We may have to forfeit some of our precious clarity and distinctness (my students faced this problem in our class—things became more difficult, blurred, but also richer and more "down to earth" than the theories they are often inundated with). We may have to admit that the continued existence of our lives and the lives of our children contain an Earthen darkness and difficulty—an Earthen life—that we have so far fantasized out of curricular existence. The integrated curriculum, understood out from under these celibate fantasies, requires a recovery of the delicate, interweaving, and intertwining *humus* of a *curriculum vitae*; it requires a recovery of the Earth.

THE LANGUAGE OF CURRICULAR DISCOURSE AND TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

One of the difficulties in writing (and, I suspect, reading) this paper should be explicitly admitted. Attempting to write about the integrated curriculum as an ecological and spiritual matter is at once a struggle with the language of curricular theorizing itself. The language and tenor of educational theory and practice has, in many circles, taken on the interests, hopes, terminology, techniques, hesitancy, carefulness, and canons of objectivity of scientific discourse. The forms of educational theorizing that do not take on such language and tenor often fall prey to all-too-easy caricatures of its alternative—subjectivism, anthropomorphism, individualism, experientialism, narrative, personal accounts, and unrigorous and undisciplined swooning.

¹⁶Mathew Fox, *Original Blessing* (San Francisco: Bear and Company, 1986), p. 23

I would rather simply announce that I am sidestepping this lover's quarrel, but I cannot, because the language of an integral alternative is not readily available. The integrated curriculum requires a whole language, but it cannot be caught in the all-too-frequent "profligacy of self-annunciation" that infects some proponents and popular conceptions of whole language theory.¹⁷

One of the claims of an ecological understanding is that life on Earth involves a multitude of different interweaving and intersecting voices, of which the human voice is but one among many (and, of special interest in education, of which the adult's voice is but one of these). Living with the richness and difficulty of this multitude of voices and speaking out from the midst of it is part of the phenomenon of the integrated curriculum. The struggle with curricular language—including the problem of overheated prose evident here and elsewhere—is not an accident that we must first rectify before inquiry begins, but it is precisely what must be recovered in the recovery of the Earth. The integrated curriculum does not require or allow the reduction of this multitude of voices to a single voice (univocity, evident in the desire to reduce all voices to a unique, single center, evident in literalism), but neither does it require or allow closing off different voices in their difference (equivocality, evident in the bound character of separate curriculum guides, specializations, etc.). The question of how life on "this precious Earth" can go on is a question of how the conversation between different voices can go on.

Such a conversation requires more than just speaking or brazen self-annunciation. It requires listening, attending, attuning to other voices. It requires more than the numbing and light headed enthusiasm and "positiveness" that often accompanies teaching at the early grades. It may require attending to "the negatives, that is, the silences, the blockages, the unspeakables of life."¹⁸ It may require, in a developmentally appropriate way, that we tell our children the truth. It may require that we listen to our children or to the voice of the Earth, even if listening is difficult, perhaps painful, perhaps disruptive of the clear and distinct boundaries we have set for ourselves and our children.

But then a sort of playful simplicity to language can come from considering the conversational or dialogical nature of the integrated curriculum in early childhood education. As potential educators of young children, my students have the excuse to reexperience the world. The children they will be teaching are in the process of learning what they, as adults, now take for granted, and as teachers, they can allow their experience of the world to become new again. They can begin to have anew a conversation with the Earth, to notice anew what has gone unnoticed under the rubric of familiarity and ordinariness.

¹⁷David G. Smith, "On Being Critical about Language: The Critical Theory Tradition and Implications for Language Education," *Reading—Canada* 6 (No. 4): 247

¹⁸*ibid.*

I expect that some of my students have been schooled to believe that understanding the young child's experience and curriculum must be something esoteric, unfamiliar, unordinary. Some were expecting long, involved lists of peculiar theoretical characteristics and articulations. If the integrated curriculum is to be understood as an ecological and spiritual matter, however, it must cash itself out right here, in the regenerativity and reengagement of the simplest of events, right here at our fingertips. This water ring on the table left by my glass is just an incidental event, ignorable, worthy of indifference. But it is also an occasion to become enchanted again. It embodies whole realms of experience, vast complexities and interrelations to be explored—heat, cold, water, water vapor, humidifiers, evaporation, condensation, clouds, rain, snow, and, I suspect, that piece of paper with which we began. The discovery of such an example is not the result of a vast reservoir of theoretical experience but a sort of attendance and attunement to the minutiae of our lives and a forfeiture of our schooled tendency to deaden language and experience by taking the boundaries we have drawn too literally, as closed boundaries that know no play, no interplay with what is around them. It is not just a piece of information about water rings in this instance. It is, rather, a sort of dispossession, a letting go rather than a grasping; deeply understanding the integrated curriculum becomes a matter of "self-transcendence."¹⁹

The struggle my students confronted in our play with the piece of paper was, in part, a struggle with language. Some students adamantly began this exercise with declarations like "Come on, it's just a piece of paper," demonstrating how familiarity can breed contempt and a sort of ungenerative *stasis*, a desire to hold on to the boundaries already laid out. They could not easily become conversant with this paper, because they believed, in essence, that the last word had already been said, that there was nothing really left to say—"it's just a piece of paper." The danger is, of course that boundaries are meant to keep others (other meanings, other interpretations, other understandings) out. And it is precisely *others* who we are dealing with in educating young children.

The danger with holding on to boundaries is that it can cash itself out as a contempt for children, a contempt for their difference. If we begin a career in education with the belief that there is really nothing left to say, that the conversation is closed, that the boundaries have already been given to things, that we already understand, we begin unwittingly with the degenerative belief that the heart of education—the basic fact of natality—is simply a mistake to be corrected through our efforts, that the difference of children is a problem to be solved. I suspect we have all lived in classrooms where such deadline[s] hold[s] sway.

¹⁹Philip Phenix, "Transcendence and Curriculum," in *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists*, ed. William Pinar (Berkeley: McCutchan, 1975), pp. 323–337.

The importance of a trivial example such as this water ring is that young children have already experienced a "sweating glass" of ice water, a steamed up window, a scraped windshield in the winter. The interweaving possibilities and potentialities of the Earth are right at their fingertips already. The integrated curriculum, then, acknowledges that the child's experience of the world is already fully interwoven with our lives and with the life of the Earth, already integral. It requires that instruction begins with and savors this "already" and that student teachers develop a deep love for the generativity and liveliness of language itself. The contemptuous, deadened familiarity with the world, with which some student teachers begin their education, can lead them to believe that such playfulness and generativity is simply a violation of boundaries that must be corrected (perhaps for this reason is so much of teacher education apparently fixated on issues of discipline and management). What must happen in a turn to an integrated curriculum is that such familiarity must be deeply disrupted. This disruption must occur, but not to turn away from the familiar to some unearthly discourse. Rather, the disruption allows us to begin to recover a deep sense of the familial, a deep sense of our inviolable kinship with children and with the Earth.

The integrated curriculum resists the degenerative tendency in education. It does not require an image of education as involving no discipline. It does not involve education-as-chaos any more than believing that the Earth itself is chaotic without our concerted, authoritative intervention. Rather, it involves learning to live with, and learning to take educational advantage of, the discipline and organization originating from things themselves and originating from children's spontaneous interest in the world, their *inter esse*, their "being in the middle of things." Once children's "interests" are understood as having a certain inviolable integrity, and once the teacher has savored and explored the contours and textures of what is being taught (i.e., once the teacher deeply understands the material), taking educational advantage of such interests by drawing children into these contours and textures will help prevent the discipline problems that come from misunderstanding children and not deeply understanding the material. The teacher, in such an instance, becomes a facilitator, a provocateur, and, one hopes, a joyous *example* of a loving interest in children and in the contours and textures of the Earth.

Clearly and admittedly, this sounds naive, for the teacher is responsible for classroom discipline and children's education. An integrated curriculum certainly requires responsibility, but responsibility must be linked with *precisely* such a loving interest in the Earth, including a loving interest in children. Our adult responsibility for and authority "over" children is at once a responsibility to the Earth on which we dwell *with* children. Teaching is, in part, introducing children to the authority of the Earth itself, an authority to which even our authority as adults is secondary. This is simply another way of saying that no matter how loud our declarations or brazen our "authority," water runs downhill, human blood is warm, $2 + 2 = 4$, and this piece of paper

requires sun and sky and water. In an integrated curriculum, then, it is this deeper authority that requires our obedience and the obedience of children. And obedience, in the face of the archaic authority of the Earth, loses its moralistic character and can be finally heard again in its origin, *audire*: to listen, to attend, to be attuned.

It is as if young people ask for, above all else, not only a genuine responsiveness from their elders, but also a certain direct authenticity, a sense of that deep human resonance so easily suppressed under the smooth human-relations jargon teachers typically learn in college. Young people want to know whether, under the cool and calm of efficient teaching and excellent time-on-task ratios, life itself has a chance, or whether the surface is all there is.²⁰

CONCLUDING REMARKS I: "TO DWELL WITH A BOUNDLESS HEART"

The title of this paper voices how we might understand ourselves, not as an exception to this interweaving indebtedness and interrelatedness to the Earth, but as an instance of it. To dwell with a boundless heart is to understand "the self in its original countenance" as delicately interwoven in this earthly fabric in which we found woven all things, including the children we teach.²¹ We can draw boundaries around ourselves (and it is often appropriate to do so), but we cannot give ourselves boundaries without believing in the impossible—that our lives can go on, that we can be, without an ongoing conversation with "this precious Earth," one that includes our knowledge of it, but also includes our breathing of it.

The self is here at the home-ground of all things. It is itself a home-ground where everything becomes manifest as what it is, where all things are assembled together into a "world." This must be a standpoint where one sees one's own self in all things, in living things, in hills and rivers, towns and hamlets, tiles and stones, and loves these things "as oneself."²²

In a sense, then, this interrelatedness of things underlying the integrated curriculum requires seeing every action as an action on behalf of all, everything speaking on behalf of all things. This concluding remark ends with a vignette.

Following a recent heavy oil spill off the coast of Washington State, my six-year-old son and I were watching the C.B.C. news. We saw film footage of an oil-covered duck struggling up on to a beach on the west coast of Vancouver Island. With each panicked lunge, its wing tips remained adhered to the

²⁰David G. Smith, "On Being Critical about Language: The Critical Theory Tradition and Implications for Language Education," *Reading—Canada* 6 (No. 4): 175.

²¹Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), pp. 91, 162.

²²*Ibid.*, pp. 280–281.

slickened beach. Pictures of dead water fowl being shoveled up and put into green garbage bags followed.

We have all seen these scenes before, perhaps all too often. I have often felt rage or sadness, or I have simply turned the damn thing off. But when my son turned to me and asked me to help him understand what he was seeing, I felt something new. I felt humiliated.

Even though it is all too easy to overromanticize and anthropomorphize this point, I suddenly felt my own humanness as rooted in the same soil as this creature, my own "bumusness." In trying to understand this event and trying to help my son understand, I felt a sudden humility in the attempt, as if our understanding, our conversation, had to be brought down to Earth, humiliated in the proper sense. My son and I had to face our own indebtedness to this creature, to this oil, to this water, to this sand, to these scenes, to the power of these broadcast images, linking us to the production of this power, to its use, to the demands for it, to our demands for powering fuels, and then back to this oil, to this water, to this sand, to these scenes.

Watching and attempting to face these images, to make sense of them, produced the need for the very fuel that was now killing this creature. It was as if it was undergoing the pain on our behalf. To tell my son of oil tankers and accidents and clean-up efforts no longer seemed like the whole truth. The story seemed like a disintegrated curriculum-guide version of the truth, where the pain and indebtedness are laid out anonymously before us to either peruse or ignore at our leisure. I had to try to tell him that we cannot "turn the damn thing off" by just switching off power to the television set. Not facing these images, turning them off, does not dispell our debt.

This realization became all the more difficult when my son and I watched a movie later that day, and a particular speech, in another context, in another place and time, hit too close to home, making the early scenes of ducks and oil and death, the earlier thoughts of indebtedness and humiliation, even more unforgettable:

I am asking you to fight—to fight against their anger, not to provoke it. We will not strike a blow, but we will receive them and through out pain we will make them see their injustice. It will hurt, but we cannot lose. They may torture me, break my bones, even kill me. But eventually, even in my death, they will see their injustice and they will stop.²³

Clearly, in quoting this speech of Mahatma Gandhi, I am guilty of a sort of gross anthropomorphism, but evoking the roots of the integrated curriculum as an ecological and spiritual matter requires a deeper, different response than those I have become accustomed to as an educational theorist. It requires a language of implication, of debt, of interrelation, a language that does not

²³From Mahatma Gandhi speech in *Gandhi*, produced and directed by Richard Attenborough, screenplay by John Briley, 188 min., 1982, Columbia Pictures.

allow indifference, that does not allow us to "turn the damn thing off." Perhaps the language that allows us to call this unfortunate incident a separate event, discrete from curricular matters in the business of education—perhaps that is the truly anthropocentric language, believing as it does that the boundaries it draws it actually gives.

Nearing the finish of this paper, news of the oil spill in Alaska . . .

CONCLUDING REMARKS II: *THIS PIECE OF PAPER*

It is too easy to become swept up in the happy interrelations of sun and sky and clouds and rain that nestle in this piece of paper. This piece of paper, this very one that I am writing on, this very one that you are now reading, may be the one the bleaching of which produced the dioxin that may have already given Eric, my six-year-old son, cancer.

Overstatement? Yes, perhaps. But as a colleague once said to me, we will be responsible to our children for the questions that we do not ask. This—considering the life of my son, Eric, and what I will say when the questions come—is the real topic and the real cost of the work I do. It is the real sense in which the curriculum becomes a *curriculum vitae*, having to do with the course of our lives as they are actually lived.

We in education may be especially responsible for the questions we do not ask, standing as we do at the cusp of the emergence of new life in our midst, able to bring forth these questions, but perhaps unwilling to speak our real indebtedness to "this precious Earth" without embarrassment. The integrated curriculum has, at its roots, the potential to open up these questions we may have thus far refused to ask. Turning away from these questions may involve abandoning our children to an all-too-certain future.

DAVID W. JARDINE is Assistant Professor, Faculty of Education, The University of Calgary, 2500 University Drive, N.W., Calgary, Alberta T2N 1N4, Canada.

Martin, David S., Allan Glatthorn, Marilyn Winters, and Philip Saif. *Curriculum Leadership: Case Studies for Program Practitioners*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1989. 89 pp. \$12.95.

This book presents 22 cases based on actual events related to curriculum decision making, implementation, personnel, programs for special populations, and evaluation. The case studies are detailed for classroom analysis and discussion.

Copyright © 1990 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.