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# JCT

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Consciousness is an essential entity of human beings. Any quest for liberating persons from arbitrary domination by others calls for a basic change in attitudes, values, morals, and perspectives, as well as change in social and economic structures. We in our roles as curriculum teachers and workers can only expect to have influence in the realm of consciousness. This is both a necessary and significant contribution....

What we must do, if we are concerned about these matters, is to become somewhat more humble, but continue to work for what we believe to be right. We must, as Erich Fromm says, keep up our hope, which he defines as the willingness to keep working for what we believe in with the full realization that we may never see it come to fruition in our lifetime.

James B. Macdonald

1925 - 1983

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Cover: *Homework* (1874)  
Winslow Homer, 1836-1910  
watercolor

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## Preface

Preface

### Editor's Note

We are honored to publish this issue commemorating the work and life of James B. Macdonald. He was enormously important, a fact that the writers in this volume document.

Thanks especially to Bernice Wolfson, Janet Miller and Esther Zaret, whose advice and organizational labor made possible both this issue and the commemorative afternoon at the 1984 Bergamo conference. Thanks as well to Mrs. James B. Macdonald (Susan Colberg Macdonald), who graced that event by her presence. Susan accepted the Editors' Plaque, awarded posthumously to Jim in acknowledgment of his distinguished contribution to curriculum studies. Mrs. Macdonald then presented the first annual James B. Macdonald Prize to Professor Susan Stinson, whose fine essay appears in these pages.

Concluding this special issue are Professor Burke's informative and affectionate essay on Macdonald's professional life and Professor Earls' letter in memory of him.

We miss you Jim.

W. P.

I'm not sure who originated the idea of holding a session about James B. Macdonald's life and work at the 1984 Conference on Curriculum Theory and Practice, but I certainly was pleased with the idea. Nor do I know exactly how I came to be the one selected to plan the session, but I was excited by the opportunity to try to arrange a significant event to commemorate Jim's life and work.

I knew Jim for over 25 years. He arrived at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee during my second year there. His first contribution was to move many of us into experimental research. Esther Zaret and I, among others, participated in the study of a Research Oriented Teacher Education Program (USOE)<sup>1</sup> which Jim directed. This participation was the first of a long series of opportunities I had to work and discuss ideas with him.

Jim was director of the laboratory school and I spent part of my time there as a consultant to the primary grade teachers; he engaged us in many discussions about teaching and learning.

Later, Jim, Normand Bernier, and I team taught two undergraduate courses. This was an experience that involved much discussion and negotiation. We emerged still friends.

Jim consistently stimulated my thinking in the various joint activities we pursued: "A Case Against Behavioral Objectives"<sup>2</sup> and, with Esther Zaret, *Reschooling Society*.<sup>3</sup>

Over a number of years Jim and I worked together with other faculty in creating and implementing an experimental undergraduate teacher education program called The Institute in Education. This experience with Jim, other faculty and students, was a movement of the 60's, designed for individual self-direction. It was an experience filled with emotion, conflict, negotiation, excitement and discussion. As director of the program for a while, I became its defender in many situations. Jim's help was critical to the continued acceptance of the program. Of course, the program changed and so did we all.

Jim's world view continued to move away from a strong reliance on empirical research toward a view highly critical of the unexpressed assumptions and technological emphasis in education and educational research.

For Jim, thinking about curriculum theory and its relation to other fields was a way of life. Writing was a way of thinking about curriculum theory. Discussions with Jim helped me to clarify meanings and create new relationships. We were engaged in just such activity, Jim, Esther Zaret and I, up until the summer before his death.

When I reflect on Jim's life and work, as I knew him, I see him constantly reading, thinking, and writing his thoughts. He was an explorer-- at the edge of his own thinking. He was a persistent questioner--open to new ideas. Dialogue with Jim was stimulating because he listened, and he responded with his broad vision of curriculum. He was always aware of the complexities and ambiguities of curriculum theory--and of life.

Jim was complex, as human beings are. He was sometimes moody, often playful, and usually caring. We shared special interests in dance and in the lives of children in schools.

In the papers included here, the writers have acknowledged how Jim's life and work have influenced theirs; how his thinking has stimulated their thinking; and how his caring has been important to them. I have used this preface to include my own acknowledgements.

As the papers were delivered and we heard each other, we were all moved, and grateful for the effort that produced a many-sided view of our friend, teacher, and colleague--whom we all loved.

The pages that follow are the papers as they were delivered at the Conference on Curriculum Theory and Practice at Bergamo on November 2, 1984, to commemorate the life and work of James B. Macdonald. We decided not to change or edit the speeches for publication purposes, so, except for some minor editorial corrections, you can read the words as they were delivered. For those of you who were not in attendance, the cold pages--even with their excellent language

--cannot recapture the sound and feeling of the speakers, the tension, the tears and the laughter.

But the ideas and images are here and some of the feeling comes through. For those of us who participated in this celebration of Jim's life and work, these pages will evoke what we experienced together that day. As Dwayne Huebner wrote me later, "It really was a wonderfully strange situation. Jim seemed to be present even while we were celebrating his absence among us. But I guess that is a consequence of how close we have all been to him, or how close he was to us. For it was his interest in each of us that held us all together. I shall miss him, or rather I do miss him. No educational gathering will ever be the same."

Bernice J. Wolfson  
University of Alabama at Birmingham

#### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> U.S.O.E. Project 1091 "A Research Oriented Student Teaching Experience" 1965
- <sup>2</sup> "A Case Against Behavioral Objectives," *Elementary School Journal*, Vol. 71, No. 3, Dec. 1970.
- <sup>3</sup> "Reschooling Society: A Conceptual Model." Washington, D.C.: ASCD, 1973.



Blackboard (1877)  
Winslow Homer  
watercolor

# Essays

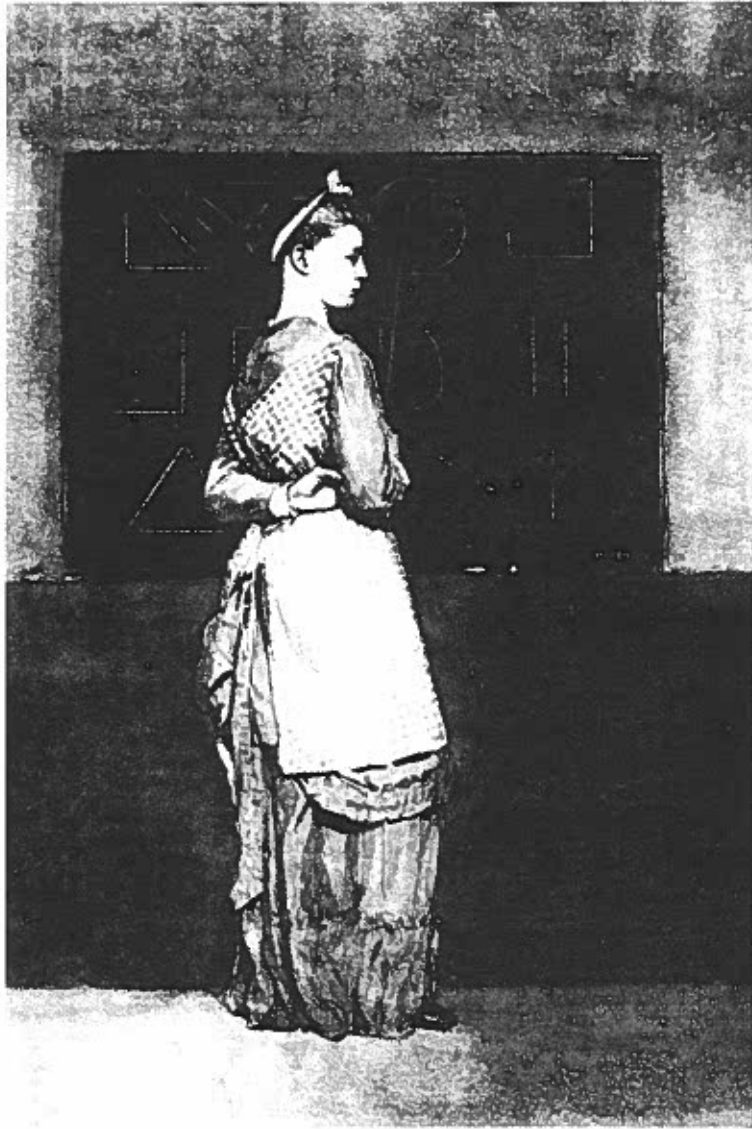
THERE IS A RIVER:  
JAMES B. MACDONALD AND  
CURRICULAR TRADITION

Michael W. Apple  
The University of Wisconsin, Madison

It would not have been possible for us to engage in the kind of curriculum work we do if past members of the field had not struggled mightily to keep alive certain traditions. This may seem to be a relatively trite statement, but its implications are striking. It implies that there can never be the solitary curriculum theorist, pursuing "meaningful questions" by her or himself. Extant curriculum theory is by necessity not only a conversation with oneself and one's peers, but in a very real way a continuing dialogue with one's predecessors. The past is always with us. It shapes our discourse. It gives us our questions, questions that may be answered or rejected, but that are there nonetheless.

These points signify something else. Not only are we constantly in conversation with past members of the field, but we stand on their shoulders. I do not mean to slight the work of the many people in this room when I say that we are all footnotes to our curricular mothers and fathers. Just as Western philosophy has been labeled a series of footnotes to Plato, so too are even the most creative political, phenomenological, empirical, or conceptual analyses done by us today merely extensions of the visions of others. We see things more clearly only because we have added our sight to theirs. Without them, we would be nearly blind.

This sense of how reliant we in curriculum are on those



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This sense of how reliant we in curriculum are on those

who came before is not a sign of personal weakness. It is a recognition of our very strength. The intergenerational movement of firmly held beliefs, of the critical nature of particular questions, of a positive vision of what education can become—the very fact that all these things *are* intergenerational—secures for us a sheltered place even for only a moment. We can withstand both reactionary tendencies and those who would deny us our collective memories in large part because we know others have taken a stand in the past.

While these points are significant for the curriculum field at large, in many ways they carry even more weight for me. Given where I am, it is impossible for me not to recognize the utter importance of past figures in the field. I write this sitting in a chair in which Virgil Herrick sat, at a desk on which Virgil Herrick wrote, illuminated by the lamp that had always been on that desk. Herrick was Macdonald's and Huebner's major professor, their "mentor,"<sup>1</sup> when they did their doctoral work at the University of Wisconsin, a position I now hold but whose shoes I can never totally fill. Thus, Macdonald and Huebner stood on Herrick's shoulders. I stand on Jim's and Dwayne's.

I want to stress these points about the intergenerational mobility of particular traditions for they bear in important ways on the issue of what has been called the reconceptualist movement. There has actually been no reconceptualization of the field. Instead, we here are the successors of an exceptionally long line of people, from Dewey, Bode, Counts, and Rugg to a larger number of lesser known people, each of whom contributed to keeping alive what Vincent Harding has called in another context that vast river of hope and struggle.<sup>2</sup> And it has been a struggle, as some of you know from personal experience. It was this struggle, kept alive by an enduring recognition of its power and its rootedness in our collective past, that was so evident to anyone who grew up in the field in the mid-sixties with Herrick's progeny.

Macdonald himself understood the issue clearly. He often saw each and every one of his points as having long and

valued precedents in the various tributaries of that river. Speaking about the debates over discipline-centered curriculum, for example, he put it this way:

There is, indeed, nothing in recent curriculum development which alters in any fundamental way the historically available thought in the field of curriculum. Indeed there is much in the present process and direction of change that violates long lasting values and/or developmental procedures that have been hard won from experience over the years.<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of key words here: process, values, experience. These served as organizing concepts for much of Jim's work as I came to know him. It is not to slight him, but to honor the river in which he swam and helped keep on course, to note that these too are aspects of that intergenerational movement that works through all of us. If we briefly turn to Herrick, this will become clearer.

A major priority in Herrick's theoretical work was the struggle to "cut through the shell of specific instances and [reveal] the underlying assumptions" behind all of our curriculum deliberations.<sup>4</sup> What were the value choices and logic that lay behind our practical concerns? What is the relationship between content and process? How do we integrate "emotions and valuing operations" with "intelligence and ideas"? How do classroom interactions work? What are the basic concepts we need in order to think intelligently about curriculum? What are the components of any serious curriculum and how do they relate together in some meaningful way?<sup>5</sup>

Reading Herrick, one is struck by the insistence on rigorous theoretical work, a sense of the importance of empirical research that is linked as well to a recognition of the restrictions of the "old classical concepts of the scientific method," a mind that was truly synthetic, and the centrality both of values and of the teaching/learning situation in creating curriculum designs. On the same pages



over substance and the self was being submerged in anonymity, the major role which schools should play was clear. They must be reorganized around an ethic (and I choose that word deliberately) of humanization. They can and must "[buttress] the person from the massive dehumanization of the broader society" until she or he can "develop a reasonable sense of integrity and self worth, a coherent set of values and personal goals with which survival in our modern age as a human being is at least possible."<sup>12</sup>

Alongside these very evident humanistic and moral concerns, however, is the basis of something that was to become even more evident during my association with Jim throughout the decade of the seventies. This was a clearer sense of oppression. What was wrong with schools was not only "dehumanization." It was their almost total use for economic purposes, "as training grounds for the production of [economic] role players" and for "national security."<sup>13</sup> As Jim worked through his own political position on this, so too did those of us who studied with Jim and Dwayne during the sixties. Yet in many ways, it was the efforts of a small group of Herrick's students and their students working together on one project that helped all of us, in different ways, to clarify where we stood on the relationship between curriculum as a theory and practice and the social sources of oppression.

I refer here to one specific project, the joint writing of the 1975 ASCD yearbook, *Schools in Search of Meaning*<sup>14</sup> There were five of us on the committee to produce the volume—Jim Macdonald, Dwayne Huebner, Esther Zaret, Steve Mann, and myself, to be later followed by one of Dwayne's students, Bill Burton.

For more than two years we struggled with the questions and answers that the river provided. Some of its currents were helpful; some were less so. Yet it was not only a struggle in and with what curriculum's past had made available. It was a profoundly personal struggle as well, for it required that each of the participants examine some very closely held values. Jim's struggle was evident, for not only was he

intellectually and politically challenged to come to terms with more structural accounts of how our economy and society influenced the schools, but it was in the very question of the central place of values itself that he loved to swim. At times, we all thought we might drown. Yet some inner resources—probably related to the strength of curriculum's past and those broad shoulders that had formed generations of insightful "progressively inclined" curriculum work even before Herrick—kept us at it.

The political controversy within the committee was intense. In many ways, it was a battle over which set of beliefs should provide the guiding problematic for our work. Should political considerations concerning an oppressive society serve as the theme, with humanistic arguments and values being put in the service of the larger political aims? Or should it be the opposite, should humanism be in the driver's seat with politics added on to help us raise the issue of why this society was not humane? In essence, it was a question of humanized Marxism or a partly Marxified humanism.

Of course, these positions are stereotypical. We all stood on both sides of this at one time or another. But there were clear tendencies and the debates over them continued unabated for nearly two years, sometimes showing convergence on a number of points and at other times signifying some quite important differences in emphasis. Yet, even given some major disagreements, at no time did any one of us lose respect for each other. At no time were arguments not considered at length and in depth. We argued and argued and argued. We sent long letters, and responses to each other's letters, and responses to responses, all in an attempt to create a document that we hoped would create the same sense of urgency in the reader as we felt about the current state of inequality in education and the larger society.

I bring this up for two reasons. First, and not unimportant, we were engaged in a profoundly curricular task. How could we create the conditions in our own joint environment so that we could teach each other something of importance,

without losing individual autonomy? How could we write a document that allowed the same thing for the reader? We were more successful at the former than the latter, for *Schools in Search of Meaning* stands as a very flawed document. Second, and here I want to bring us to the most significant part, we were all reshaped by this process. Much of this is due to Jim's immense patience and his own sensitivity to the inevitable tensions between broad social concerns and a commitment to the individual.

As co-chair of the committee with Esther (whose own contributions, along with Dwayne's, must not be slighted in any way), Jim kept us sane. When it seemed that we would forget about schools and the pedagogic, curricular, and evaluative practices that went on inside them and instead focus only on the external systems of economic, political, and ideological power relations, he constantly brought us back. What does this mean for teachers, for students, for curriculum? When the more structural concerns of the Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches that, say, Steve and I were apt to bring to bear on our deliberations left the group nearly paralyzed as educators, Jim again would raise the issue of the person. He could not accept that people had little or no autonomy. His constant intuitive prodding actually prefigured the theories of resistance to domination now so popular today. This intuitive prodding by Jim, and by Dwayne and Esther as well, forced us all to clarify what we were about. In a major way, I cannot now engage in my own work today without hearing these same questions.

In a time of rightist reaction, when greed and selfishness are again in vogue, when the public good is transformed into the private gain, and when schools are once again tools of, in the words of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, "rearmament," the act of listening to these questions and remembering these concerns helps us to shape our anger and our commitments in such a way that we will not lose the person in the process.

In the midst of the river, I stand on Jim's and others' shoulders, and I struggle to hear their words every day, to

keep them from being muted by the clarion calls of the economically mean and the pedagogically senseless. In the words of Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, "Tradition!" It is a tradition I am proud to call my own. Let us hope that we too are strong enough to let those who come after us continue it, with the compassion and openness that always characterized James B. Macdonald.

Yet, even given my respect for Macdonald (or perhaps because of it), we do not need hagiographic treatises on Jim, though just thinking about his influence on us may lead to that. What we need, instead, is to *use* his work, to hone it, but not as an unreconstructed guide to present and future curriculum work. Rather, we need to see it as a major link to our own curricular past that has been in danger of being devalued. This is not the past of Bobbitt, Charters, and Snedden, but a vital and living tradition that places ourselves as political and moral actors at the center of curriculum debate. This tradition worked through Macdonald and it works through us here. It is what we reconstruct as it constructs us. It helps provide us with a sense of meaning and purpose, of being part of a long line of real people who fought real battles to enable us all to take the positions we wish to avow today. The way to honor James B. Macdonald is to continue to take that tradition as seriously as it demands. Dehumanization, domination, and exploitation are still all around us and the battle against them is even more important today. The river continues.

\* \* \* \*

#### NOTES

I would like to thank Rima D. Apple for her perceptive suggestions on my remarks here.

1. James B. Macdonald, Dan Andersen, and Frank B. May, editors. *Strategies of Curriculum Development: The Work of Virgil E. Herrick*. (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1965), p. vi.

2. Vincent Harding, *There Is A River* (New York: Vintage, 1981).
3. James B. Macdonald, "Language, Meaning and Motivation: An Introduction," in James B. Macdonald and Robert R. Leeper, editors. *Language and Meaning* (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1966), p. 3.
4. Macdonald, Andersen, and May, editors. *Strategies of Curriculum Development*, p. vi.
5. Virgil Herrick, "Problems of the Curriculum Theorist," in Macdonald Andersen, and May, editors. *Strategies of Curriculum Development*, pp. 10-11.
6. This is especially evident in "Problems of the Curriculum Theorist."
7. Macdonald, "Language, Meaning and Motivation," p. 5.
8. *Ibid*, pp. 5-6.
9. James B. Macdonald, "The Person in the Curriculum," in Helen F. Robison, editor. *Precedents and Promise in the Curriculum Field* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966), p. 40.
10. *Ibid*, p. 39
11. *Ibid*.
12. *Ibid*, pp. 52-53.
13. *Ibid*, p. 51
14. James B. Macdonald and Esther Zaret, editors. *Schools in Search of Meaning* (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1975).

# THE WORK OF JAMES B. MACDONALD: THEORY FIERCE WITH REALITY

Madeleine R. Grumet  
University of Rochester

When Bernice Wolfson asked me if I would prepare a paper for this session honoring the work of James Macdonald, I said yes. We were standing in one of those meeting rooms; it must have been at AERA, not, admittedly, a setting conducive to reflection. But it would not have mattered if she had presented her invitation as we sat on rocks above a still pond, or as we walked under a canopy of russet leaves. Anywhere, the same reply, unmediated by doubt, anxiety, even modesty. Since then I have remembered the immediate acquiescence and wondered at it. As I have thought about the paper, that wonder has become heavy with worry. And the work has been to rescue the wonder from the worry that weighs it down and to return it to its own light. Here is what I have been successively wondering/worrying about: How is it possible to have a sense of knowing this man whom I did not really know? I was not a student of Macdonald's. I was not a peer. I did not go to graduate school with him, work on any research with him, work at any institutions with him. I am not now and have never been a member of ASCD. In all the usual senses of knowing that comes from familiarity, shared places, people, I did not know him. I knew him only through this work we do. I saw him almost always in rooms like this, a meal or two in restaurants with too many people at the table to hear any one speak other than the one sitting next to you. I don't think he ever sat next to me. Although Joan Stone and I both remember a conversation with him in a taxicab in Toronto coming back from one of those meals...I did go to Greensboro once. Not really more contact there. One

2. Vincent Harding, *There Is A River* (New York: Vintage, 1981).
3. James B. Macdonald, "Language, Meaning and Motivation: An Introduction," in James B. Macdonald and Robert R. Leeper, editors. *Language and Meaning* (Washington: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1966), p. 3.
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11. *Ibid*.
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conversation in a cafeteria place, formica tables, before I left. So what I am left with are moments and images. I remember how he looked at the first conference in Rochester, drawing his circles and arrows on the portable blackboard. I remember his face as we sat around a table at the University of Virginia. I remember a few words we exchanged about our lives in the dining room at Airlie, standing on that walkway where the coffee was, looking at the dawdlers sitting over their coffee and then going on to the sessions of the morning. And I remember him sitting in the front row in a meeting room in New York, responding to a paper I had just given. These are beads that glow in the string of this relation. Worry beads, as I turn them over and over, searching for detail that will account for the feeling that I knew this man. I worry that these reminiscences offend those of you who worked with him, lived with him and knew him so well, and I ask you to extend a tolerance to my portrayal of him that I rarely extend to others in a situation such as this. For I am always impatient with someone else's portrait of someone I have loved. They didn't get the light right; the eyes were never so sad, the hand so tense. I do not have a secret store of images out of which I can construct this portrait. I have laid them all before you. I cannot lay claim to a secret knowledge, a special intimacy. In fact I knew Jim only as we all knew him, someone in the field, through this work. And the wonder of it is that despite the banality of the discourse, greetings shared in restaurants and meeting rooms, dreams exchanged in journal articles, I cannot yet take the card with his number out of my telephone file nor feel quite the same hope about this work.

So I read and reread the essays, what we call "the work," and the texts both provide and withhold the presence that wound us like a skein into a community. "When is Macdonald speaking?" we asked each other. We made sure to come early enough or to stay late enough to hear him. We left the coffee shops and meetings, gave up running and sightseeing. We left our own unfinished presentations, unfinished. We waited for his speaking and gathered to

hear him. His speaking was our ceremony; his vision, our magic. He was our wizard.

For him, curriculum theory, like fantasy, was the creation of a world, a microcosm of the "Good society, the good life, the good person" (Macdonald, 1976, p. 11). He called it the study of how to have a learning environment. While that homely phrase meant fluorescent lighting to some or terrariums to others, Macdonald explored it as if it were the universe. And in this journey he recapitulated the mission of the "theoros" of ancient times who was sent as a delegate from one city state to another to observe religious spectacles. These ceremonies were organized to bring the order of the heavens into the design of human community and into the character and experience of the individual citizen. And for Macdonald the learning environment held the mystery of religion, the rules and strategies of politics and the creativity of the individual. He was not naive about the inevitable conflicts and contradictions that arise between these domains, but maintained that to stand with the pupil was to stand between meaning systems, rather than being immersed by the person or by the culture (Macdonald, 1964, p. 43). Where Dewey had been willing to name the space between the logic of curriculum and the psychologic of the child, as a provisional ground for pedagogy that would disappear as learning literally took place, Macdonald refused to relinquish the middle ground. Always in the middle: between the Marxists and the Existentialists, between social democracy and religion, between the rational and the intuited, between the technical and the aesthetic, between the word and the image, talk and action. To be in between is to make oneself marginal, always approaching the human community but never able to lose oneself in it. Sometimes wizards must be lonely. Like Merlin, Tiresias, wizards carry messages between the possible and the actual, forever restless, often disappointed. Wizards, you see, are never content merely to know. Unlike prophets, prediction doesn't satisfy them. Unwilling to ally themselves with a certain future, they refuse to turn toward the light while

Thebes dies and Camelot collapses. They are comic, rather than tragic heroes, forsaking the mountain peaks for more domestic haunts, Oedipus' chambers, Arthur's table. They bring their utopian visions into kitchens and classrooms. We are not awestruck in their presence, frozen and fascinated by the spectacle of their powers. They meddle in the middle and stir us up. We scurry about the business of making a world, and when we sing and dance as we go about it, we make it big on Broadway.

Jim was such a wiz. Although I joined his audience all girded up in my Eastern, urban, Jewish agnosticism, his words brought shamans, fakirs, brought spirit into the world I called my work. Jim's versions of transcendence were not religious masks worn to hide fascism and oppression, nor were they exotic advertisements for idealism. They did not carry us away from the place where we lived but reminded us of the rich resources hidden in the tacit, dream-like regions of our experience. His call for transcendence was compatible with his hospitality to Gramsci's "organic intellectuals," immersed in the everyday life of oppressed workers. His demand in "Curriculum, Consciousness and Social Change" that we focus directly on the quality of lived everyday life in our working situations led to this response from me in '78.

Who is Gramsci's organic intellectual whom we must summon to immerse himself in everyday life? Who among us doesn't have one third of a tuna noodle casserole growing green on the second shelf of the refrigerator? I have paid baby-sitters and changed planes in Chicago, dragging my body and briefcase from one frozen campus to another to hear Jim Macdonald talk about transcendence. And I attend to his notions of emancipatory knowledge and pedagogy because they seem, as I watch him and listen to him speak, intrinsic to his personal and professional life and because he extends these visions to me in a manner that invites my understanding and participation. And I am drawn

to Macdonald's visions of possibility and freedom because I am also able to entertain another more homely vision of Jim Macdonald laboriously fishing out an edible noodle from the aforementioned casserole, one that has yet to grow the green beard that marks the maturity of its fellows, and I imagine him, relishing his victory, however modest, of hunger, patience and skill over waste and decay.

It was Jim's particular grace to be able to invite both transcendence and curriculum design to the same discourse. And so his work encompassed "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education," published in Bill Pinar's collection, *Heightened Consciousness* and "The Quality of Everyday Life in Schools," published in the 1975 ASCD Yearbook that Jim edited with Esther Zaret. Roping both romance and realism around his thought and securing it to the top of the car, he hit the road, and I am grateful to Melva Burke for noting his itinerary. Wisconsin to San Francisco and back again, teaching in Illinois, then in Minnesota, a year in Texas, two years in New York, back again to Milwaukee and Madison, then to North Carolina. Like Frost, he knew that "earth's the right place for love," that life was grounded. The places where "the good society, the good life and the good person" could flourish were not to be vague utopias. They had specificity; they were San Francisco, Milwaukee, Austin and Greensboro: the places where he and we lived. That is why he became irritated with us when we followed routes that led us too far from home. He rebuked us for wandering off into the overdeterminations of history and structuralism: "It is especially interesting to see Marxist analysis in this pattern" he wrote in 1976. "This form of analysis is usually a sweeping structural critique which then fails to state its value and prescribe its remedy. As I understand it, Marx was clear that the role of the intellect was to change the world, not simple to analyze it." And he lost patience with us when we dawdled in Cartesian doubt: "The existential position may be equally ludicrous,

since it is very difficult to understand how freedom, choice and authentic being get translated into some sort of general objective analysis of the human condition without being in bad faith" (1976, p. 15). And it was not just us kids whom he rounded up, bringing us back to the middle, to ourselves and to each other. Even Habermas, whom he greatly admired, was chided for approaching hermeneutics as a social science and forgetting that interpretation was a way of being in the world that expresses an aesthetic and religious stance as well as a social one (1981, p. 135).

He, too, read the Germans, the French, the Italians, but he didn't lose his passport when he travelled abroad. His years in the middle centered him - and us. And that was the metaphor he drew from Mary Caroline Richards, and the circle was his icon. His vision of religious socialism articulated in "Value Bases and Issues for Curriculum" is, he tells us, a sign that he is rather parochial, rather American, and his pretended apology is actually a celebration of the particular forms that brought goodness into his life. If Oz is, as Michael Hearn says it is, "America made more fertile, more equitable, more companionable, and because it is magic, more wonderful," (Hearn, 1983, p. 283) that is a hope for this country Jim never relinquished. With one of Baum's fantastic characters, the Shaggy Man in *Tik Tok of Oz*, he might have said: "There's lots of magic in all of Nature and you may as well see it in the United States where you and I once lived, as you can here" (cited in Wagenknecht, 1983, p. 152). Like Baum's Wizard he was realistic about the collective humbug we call our knowledge, and he enjoyed Whitehead's remark that categorized his own contributions to knowledge as muddle-headed and Bertrand Russell's as simple-minded, preferring the expressiveness of the former to the instrumentalism of the latter.

Curriculum theory, Macdonald claimed, was not primarily instrumental, but expressive, a distinction that the Wizard of Emerald City understood as well (1981, p. 137). Wagenknecht points out that the Lion, the Tin Man and the Scarecrow already possess what it is that they are searching

for. "Yet because they lack the name, the fact that they are in actual possession of the thing itself wholly eludes them" (1983, p. 154). It seems to me we came to Jim like these American innocents came to Oz Diggs, the Wizard from Omaha, Nebraska. Often, he too was inaccessible and then we projected on to him all the power that we were afraid to admit was already ours. But he listened to us, he read our work, and he gave us names for what we were doing: "prescribing and guiding practical activity," "developing an empirically testable set of relationships and principles," "developing and criticizing conceptual schema for curriculum" (1975a, p. 6). He brought us names from Castaneda, from Gramsci, from Myrdal, from Polanyi, Koestler and Heisenberg. And because he had named us smart, brave and loving, sometimes we acted as if we were.

Perhaps the sense that I knew him came from the sense that I was known by him. I remember his acknowledgment. It came at a time when the others would only name me as Bill's student. And it came as a response to work that I was doing in theatre, in autobiography, that did not conform to the work of the boys. The magic of our Wizard, like that of Oz, was not the fabled power of the patriarch. In a paper that he wrote with Susan Colberg Macdonald, he disclaimed the trappings of masculinity: "extremes of competition, mastery and achievement orientation, exploitation of others and the environment, power preoccupation, and economic and military domination of other less agentic cultures" (1981, p. 300) as the Wizard of Oz also finally relinquishes the imagery of his intimidation: the decapitated head, the lovely lady, the Beast and the Ball of Fire. Jim's magic could really work in a world where wise women like Ozma and the Good Witch Glinda made the rules.

He was of all of us the most attentive to the work of his colleagues. Tenure, reputation, publications, grants, the lucre, the capital of our work did not seem to distract him. He met us when we asked him to. He read our papers, and sent us his, funny fuzzy type, printed on both sides of the page.

And when he wrote about liberation, about theory and practice and about schooling, he wrote himself into being. Rodriguez tells us that "by finding public words to describe one's feelings, one can describe oneself to oneself. One names what was previously only darkly felt" (Rodriguez, 1982, p. 187). His demand that we be present in our work was realized in the voice that he brought to his own writing and speaking. His essays gathered the moments of his solitude together and gave it words "fierce with reality."<sup>1</sup>

We were not always grateful. Sometimes we grumbled about his wizardry, confusing humbug and wisdom, and complaining that he had dispatched us once again on another mission, we would leave the conference dragging our suitcases, muttering that he had merely told us what we already knew. But he knew that instrumentalism was humbug and that we had to make our own way to the world we wanted. The Wizard of Oz couldn't get Dorothy back to Kansas, and Jim could not bring us home either. And even though we know that home is a place for us to make, it is hard not to feel stranded as Dorothy did when the rope broke loose and the Wizard left without her.

#### NOTES

1. The phrase "fierce with reality" which serves as the title for this essay was cited by Janet Varner Gunn in *Autobiography: the Poetics of Experience*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press) 1982:

You need only claim the events of your life to make yourself yours. When you truly possess all you have been and done, which may take some time, you are fierce with reality.

Florida Scott-Maxwell  
The Measure of My Days

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# THE REDEMPTION OF SCHOOLING: THE WORK OF JAMES MACDONALD

Dwayne Huebner  
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Jim loved life. He threw himself into it with gusto. My image of that gusto is a memory of Jim on a warm summer day at the University of Wisconsin. He and Sue were walking from the education building to her dorm. The day was inviting, Lake Mendota was inviting. With no hesitation and great delight he jumped from the pier into the lake. He didn't bother with a swimming suit nor a birthday suit. That was the way Jim saw people and events. If they looked inviting, if they offered a way to become more deeply immersed in the world, then he jumped in without a second thought. Jim did this with people. He threw himself into their midst without fear, without hesitation, without bothering to change his persona, or to strip from one set of clothes to another.

Because he loved life, he knew what was important. His hierarchy of values for education was clear. Schools were important to Jim. He believed that they could be improved. But he recognized that teachers were more important than schools. Schools could be improved only if others had confidence in teachers. However, in the final analysis, education was about children and young people.

Jim loved children. That is one of several reasons he became an elementary school teacher. It was this love that made him aware of the limits of the curriculum, the limits of teachers, and the limits of schooling. He loved kids enough not to give up on teachers, curriculum, or schools. He spent his life redeeming them—bringing teachers, curriculum, and schools to the point where they would serve children rather than entrap them. This was his work.

The well-being of children and youth took priority over the welfare of teachers. The well-being of children and youth

took priority over the present structures of schools. He knew that educators must be clear about their values. Children, youth, and teachers are more valuable than technical details and institutional structures. If educators knew that, and acted accordingly, then schools could be redeemed. They could become places of education in the best sense of that word.

Jim's commitment to the redemption of schools surpassed that of most of his colleagues. That commitment governed his work—his work with students, teachers, colleagues, and his intellectual work.

Because of that commitment he gave freely of his time. The moist eyes and choked voices of all of us who worked with him during these past thirty years attest to that. He gave willingly and graciously to the many students with whom he worked, helping them clarify their ideas and their values. He gave his time willingly to teachers and school staffs. Being out in the world of schools was a source of joy for him. He brought his faith and confidence to bear to the work, frustrations, problems of teachers and other educators. His commitments energized ASCD, AERA, and local and state groups. He knew that if others shared his faith in schools and in teachers, then the young people in this world would have a better deal. If others cared, as he cared, young people would recognize and realize more of their potential. After all, that is what schools and teachers were all about.

He enjoyed giving his time to his intellectual work. In the eyes of our future colleagues, it is this work that will be remembered as his effort to redeem schooling. Early in his academic career, Jim made a fundamental decision. Although trained as a researcher and an empiricist, able to work with observation data and statistics, he recognized that the process of *SEARCH* took priority over the process of *RE-SEARCH*. Research made no sense unless the underlying ideas and assumptions had power and legitimacy. It did not take him long in his academic career to recognize the limitations of existing empirical work in education. He

noticed the blindness of many educators to the ideas in other disciplines and other domains of life. These informed the world beyond schools. Why shouldn't they inform and shape schools? So Jim threw himself into the world of ideas in much the same way that he threw himself into Lake Mendota - with gusto, enthusiasm, with the love of thrashing about, and the joy of doing it with others.

To understand Jim's intellectual work, we must understand the period during which he started his professional career. Jim began his work before interest developed in the history of curriculum. In fact, it was the next generation of curricular scholars, the students of Jim and of his colleagues and peers, who attended to the history of the field. They did so, in part because of the questions that Jim was asking. His work might have taken a different tack if the historical work had started seriously before the 1950s. Theory, not history, was the spirit of his time. Jim's professional career began in an historical situation in which optimism reigned. The desire was to find a technology, or some other means, by which that optimism could shape educational programs. Because optimism shaped our efforts, our search for understanding was a search for vehicles that provided prediction and control. Jim's contributions must be seen against that backdrop. Fortunately, his intellectual interests and competencies were equal to his concern for children and schools. His concern for children could not be contained within the existing taken-for-granted understandings. He, too, ran up against the limits of current ways of doing and thinking in his teaching. He knew that the limitations of schools were not simply the breakdown in good will or know-how. The limits were there, in part because school people had taken hold of only a limited portion of the great intellectual traditions which have and could shape our consciousness. Educators were acting out of a very limited bank of the cultural wealth of the world. His work must be seen as an effort to bring together curriculum workers and teachers and these rich traditions of reflection, imagination, and criticism. In a sense, all of us are here

because Jim helped open the door of the curriculum workers' room. Because of him the rest of the world and its riches would flood our work room with light. Our work could be illumined by the light that shines from the intellectual and critical imaginative work of others. That we are free to explore, to search rather than research, is a result of Jim's courage, of his commitment to the redemption of schooling.

To understand Jim's intellectual work, it is necessary to understand the nature of theory, as, I think, he understood it. One who engages in theory is one who stands back to look at something. It is to be a spectator, one who can remove himself from the course of events to see what is going on. This is not an act of alienation and removal from the fight. It is an act of love. One cannot commit oneself to another, to people or institutions, if one is in bondage to other institutions or people. To have a view of the world which is derived from other people in other times can be a bondage to those times and people. Jim knew that from the bottom of his heart. Much curriculum theorizing before Jim's time was technical or rule-governing material. It was derived from those who sought control and power. It was created to enable educators to act, to build programs of education and instruction. It was not necessarily created to see more clearly, to love more dearly. Jim, sensing problems with what was going on, felt it necessary to see practice in a broader perspective. He stood back and looked in order to see the ground within which practice occurred, to identify our bondage. In so doing, he generated alternatives for action, to further our commitments to children and youth. Of course, others also did this. Yet their work appeared more entangled in the ground, rather than rising above it so we could see more clearly what we valued.

Jim's contribution was to help all of us see more clearly, by suggesting other perspectives from which to view our work and our commitments. In an early paper, "Structures in Curriculum", Jim stated that theory "is based upon the assumption that there is a set of phenomena in curriculum which may be similar but is not identical to any other set

of known phenomena, and that these phenomena can be identified, described, and related to each other."<sup>1</sup> From such theory, such spectator positions, the curriculum worker obtains power to recognize limitations and possibilities of particular places. By his reflective work, Jim sought to provide curriculum workers with descriptions of what they do, to propose alternatives and thus more power to embody their values in the world. It was this need for curriculum workers to be more self conscious about their work in our society which led to his interest in theory, and hence to our interest in theory. Theory was not merely an escape into the esoteric. It was part of the necessary work for the redemption of schools.

His standing back started much of the current explorations within curriculum. Perhaps some of us fell into the trap of esoteric theorizing removed from the work of redeeming schools. Jim kept his eye on the educational ball. His exploring (his *re-SEARCHING*) was always two-dimensional. He kept before us the educational work to be done, while he searched other disciplines. He kept in better tension than most of us, the commitment to young people, teachers and schools, and his excitement and enjoyment of the intellectual search.

In one of the papers near the end of his career, he stated clearly his position about theory. He used Whitehead's distinction between simple-minded and muddle-headed people. He admitted that he was more muddle-headed, like Whitehead. He recognized that his work was metaphorical in intent. He did not see himself providing a map of reality so it could be followed to get to some predetermined place. He was more meditative in his intent, more contemplative. He wanted to deal with the whole, the unity, not parts that could be separated and put back together. This did not mean that he was less concerned with practice. The relationship between theory and practice was not one of applying theory to practice. Theory was a mirror for one's self as a practitioner, a magic mirror. Theory is not a mirror that reflects back what you are,

but what you might be and how you might see the world anew with deeper penetration of its structures and qualities. For him, the theory-practice relationship is a hermeneutical process. Theorizing is an act of creation--creating oneself and thereby eventually recreating the world. As Jim said, "...there is a mystery to be probed, curiosity to be satisfied, confusion and ambiguity to be faced and lived with."<sup>2</sup>

In the long run, then, theorizing was a religious activity for Jim. It was an act of faith that kept one in touch with the sources of life. Five years earlier, he made explicit this grounding. In his "Values Bases and Issues for Curriculum", he argued that all curriculum workers should make explicit their values concerning the good life, which was the base of all of their proposals anyway. As you may recall he argued that curriculum work was extremely important, and that under no circumstances was it moribund. He claimed that the school was a microcosm of the rest of the world. To give up on schools and the curriculum was to give up on the rest of the world. Obviously he would not do that for he enjoyed the world too much. Nor would he expect or want his friends or colleagues to do so. He stated in that paper that the ground of his work, and for him the ground of the school and curricular activity, was a religious ground, for "religious impulse and spirit...pervades human history and activity."<sup>3</sup> A similar concern and interest appeared three years before as he used Jung and James to explore the possibilities of a "Transcendental Developmental Education."<sup>4</sup> His concern for the internal dialectic and wholeness acknowledged that the person is more than can be known. Faith in that internal unknown, whether unconscious or preconscious, is a necessary part of the educational venture.

Jim's love of life and of those who peopled this world with him has left us a heritage of work, and a tradition that shines forth on schools. The light of his work and of the tradition that many of you carry on shows the schools as they are, but also as they might be. Jim knew that they could be redeemed, made right. And they can be if our images are embedded in hope, carried with courage, made public with poetic power,

and given freely and gracefully to young people, their parents, and their teachers. Can we carry on Jim's work?

### FOOTNOTES

1. "Structures in Curriculum," *Conference on Curriculum Leadership*, ed. by Frank M. Himmelman, Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1966.
2. "How Literal is Curriculum Theory?" *Theory Into Practice* Vol. XXI, No. 1 Winter 1982.
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4. "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education," *Heightened Consciousness, Cultural Revolution, and Curriculum Theory* ed. by Wm. Pinar. Berkeley, California: McCutchan Publishing Corporation, 1974.

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### TOMORROW THE SHADOW ON THE WALL WILL BE THAT OF ANOTHER

Alex Molnar

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee

I didn't want to make this presentation when I was asked to and I don't want to make it now. I don't want to do it because I don't want to put a period at the end of Jim Macdonald's sentence. I don't want to admit that tomorrow is here and that the shadow on the wall is of another, not of Jim Macdonald.

I agreed to talk with you about Jim because one of the things he helped me to learn was that at times it is necessary to do things you don't want to because they are important. Honoring Jim Macdonald is important. So here I stand before you.

Others have and will honor the work of Jim Macdonald. I want to honor the man. I think it is important not to lose sight of the man who produced the work because knowing a little bit about the man will help make his work more meaningful and alive. And because it is important to remember that Jim's writing, like all human work, is an artifact, an artifact of a human being struggling to define his humanity. Jim Macdonald, the man, will be well honored by remembering his humanity.

I've taken the title of this presentation from the Foreward of *The Night Country* by Loren Eiseley, a book both Jim Macdonald and I read, enjoyed and discussed. I would like to begin my presentation with a quote from that book:

Many years ago, when the first cement sidewalks were being laid in our neighborhood, we children took the paw of our dog, Mickey, and impressed it into a kind of immortality even as he modestly floundered and

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Essays

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objected. Some time ago after a lapse of many decades, I stood and looked at the walk, now crumbling at the edges from the feet of many passers.

No one knows where Mickey the Friendly lies; no one knows how many times the dust that clothed that beautiful and loving spirit has moved with the thistle-down across the yards where Mickey used to play. Here is his only legacy to the future--that dabbled paw mark whose secret is remembered briefly in the heart of an aging professor....<sup>1</sup>

I met Jim Macdonald in 1970. I was 24 and considered myself a hot-shot. I had a handful of offers to do my doctoral studies at various universities around the country but I was willing to turn them down if I could find one university which would be willing to accept myself, along with three friends who wanted to set up an experimental teacher education program. After corresponding with a number of universities, some of which replied with expressions of shock and even indignation that four graduate students would be so arrogant as to propose to earn their doctorates while they were establishing an experimental teacher education program from which the faculty might learn something, we discovered the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee which had newly adopted a Ph.D. in Urban Education. Jim Macdonald was the first director of that doctoral program. I remember my first conversation with Jim: it was a long distance telephone conversation about the possibility of myself and my three colleagues coming to Milwaukee to earn our doctorates (parenthetically I might add that we all subsequently did earn our doctorates at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee). Jim was interested and enthusiastic about the possibilities. What a refreshing change from the rather distant and stuffy responses to which I had grown accustomed. In the course of that conversation Jim explained to me that he had been in Chicago the evening before with some other professors to see the then current play *Hair*. I asked him how the play had been. He said that

he had enjoyed it very much; unfortunately he had made the mistake of going with a group of other professors, because all *they* had wanted to do afterwards was analyze the play. We both got a good laugh out of that and I suppose that was the beginning of our friendship. Oh, it's not that Jim wasn't all of the things one tends to think of when thinking of a university professor; I can remember, for example, some wonderfully exciting conversations with Jim about William James and his work, particularly, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. It's just that the relationship I developed with Jim as a student was a warm, personal bond that encompassed a challenging intellectual exchange. It wasn't only a relationship of two intellects searching for the truth as it were. For example, the second time I ever rode on an airplane in my life, it was Jim Macdonald who bought me the ticket. Destination: St. Louis to attend my first ASCD Convention in 1971. I slept on the floor in his hotel room during that convention. I was with Jim Macdonald the first time that I saw the Pacific Ocean. That was in California at the ASCD Convention in 1975. I remember Jim leased a car and we went riding along with some students of mine who had come along for the convention, and we drove down the coast to Malibu and at some point stopped and walked out on to the beach. It was an overcast misty day and I could see these enormous waves coming in and I was very excited by the sight of it all, and I just took off my shoes and wanted to get my feet wet in the Pacific Ocean, and once I got my feet wet, I just wanted to wade in a little farther, until finally I just dove into the waves and swam around with all my clothes on. When I waded out of the water, Macdonald was standing on the beach laughing at me and he took me back to the car like a mother hen, and wrapped me up in a blanket. And what were the words of advice of this scholar to me at that time? They were: "Alex, you better be very careful to keep nice and warm right now because, if you don't, you know that cold goes right into your bones and, if it does, you're going to look like a dog shitting razor blades."

Jim sometimes worried about the fact that his relationship with students, at least those with whom he wanted to work closely, was *too* personal. I remember his agonizing out loud about that to me. He said, "Alex, you know when Dwayne Huebner has a doctoral student, he makes that doctoral student work, he has a definite program, there are tasks for that doctoral student to accomplish. But when I have a doctoral student, one that I care about, one that I want to work with, well I can't really find it in myself to make them *do* anything. It seems to me that my job is just to get obstacles out of their way because I trust them to be all that they can be." And Jim did trust us. But he worried about it, too. Though I guess he needn't have. I remember three years ago when I visited Steve Mann, whom many of you probably know as John S. Mann, who was one of Jim's most loved students some years ago (Steve, by the way, is now a machinist working in Springfield, Massachusetts). One of the last things that Steve said to me before I left was to please tell Jim that he hadn't dropped out; that he was doing some of the most important educational work of his life as a labor organizer. Jim never shared Steve's revolutionary politics; however, such was the impact that Jim, by virtue of his love and his trust, could have on a student. Although Jim would never accept this description as true, I have the idea that a number of us have felt for some years that Jim Macdonald is always looking over our shoulders, either smiling or frowning.

Jim wasn't incapable of expressing anger. I remember once I gave a presentation at a meeting that Jim attended and I thought I had been witty and clever and erudite and the audience had received what I had to say very well indeed. Afterwards, when I went up to Jim and I asked him how he liked it, he looked at me rather scornfully and his only comment was "*They* loved it."

I remember as a doctoral student I didn't see Jim upset or angry or anything but supportive when I told him that I wanted to try and write my dissertation in the same style that Tom Wolfe wrote *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test*,

or when, for example, I tore up what I believed to be the incredible inanity of some ideas on instructional theory we were discussing. The only time I remember Jim getting really angry at me when I was a doctoral student is when he thought that perhaps I wanted to try and hustle a special deal in the program rather than commit myself to really getting as much from my studies as I should have. Jim was tolerant but he demanded sincerity. This warm fuzzy gentleman had a very strong sense of what was right and what was wrong, and there was really no doubt in the minds of anybody who worked with him about that:

....The mark of Mickey's paw is dearer to me than many more impressive monuments—perhaps because, in a sense, we both wanted to be something other than what we were. Mickey, I know, wanted very much to be a genuine human being. If permitted, he would sit up to the table and put his paws together before his plate, like the rest of the children. If anyone mocked him at such a time by pretending to have paws and resting his chin on the table as Mickey had to do, Mickey would growl and lift his lip. He knew very well he was being mocked for not being human.

The reminder that he was only a poor dog with paws annoyed Mickey. He knew basically a lot more than he ever had the opportunity to express. Though people refused to take Mickey's ambition seriously, the frustration never affected his temperament. Being of a philosophic cast of mind, he knew that children were less severe in their classifications. And if Mickey found the social restrictions too onerous to enable him quite to achieve recognition inside the house, outside he came very close to being a small boy. In fact, he was taken into a secret order we had founded whose club house was an old piano box in the back yard. We children never let the fact that Mickey walked on four legs blind us to his other virtues....<sup>2</sup>

So what, then, are my memories of Jim Macdonald and what's important and what isn't? Is it the memory of sharing a \$6 a-night-fleabag room across from Disneyland, drinking Jim Beam from a bottle and arguing over whether Mahatma Ghandi or Mao Tse Tung was the greater revolutionary leader? Jim held out for Ghandi and I held out for Mao. In retrospect, I suppose in some ways our arguments reflected the tensions that were going on over the writing and editing of *Schools in Search of Meaning*, the 1975 ASCD Yearbook, which Jim was co-editing with Esther Zaret.

Was it my mother telling me that Jim Macdonald had called her up and told her she had to do everything she could to push me to finish my dissertation—because he was worried that the divorce I was going through would make me decide to walk away from it?

Was it Jim and me laughing about the cover of a Frank Zappa album called *Weasles Ripped My Flesh*?

Was it staying out all night in New Orleans to celebrate his 50th birthday and singing through the French Quarter on the way back to our hotel?

Was it Jim, when pushed and pushed and *pushed* by me to explain the basis by which he could make the statement that something was "right" or something was "wrong", finally looking up in exasperation and saying, "Alex, you just *know* when it's wrong." And no amount of further questioning by me could make him elaborate further than the simple declarative sentence, "You *know* when it's wrong."

Was it Jim when he met my second wife, Barbara, telling me that this time I'd done the right thing, and that he knew the type of woman that Barbara was and he was very happy for me.

I suppose for the first five or six years that I knew Jim Macdonald, he was just old Jim. And he never stopped being "just old Jim." We had that kind of relationship. It's just that, as a student of Jim's, the weight of his trust has been growing heavier with each successive year. I notice it as I get angry at myself when I haven't done as well as I

might in writing an article or explaining a position, or in accepting the humanity of someone with whom I disagree, or in being open to new ideas. Jim Macdonald could think about the most outrageous propositions. Not as a fool, not gullibly, but simply as propositions to be considered. Jim Macdonald could entertain the thought that he may have lived many times before and said to me that maybe the principle source of my discontent and general orneriness was the fact that I was a relatively young spirit who "probably didn't go back any further than the French Revolution." Jim, on the other hand, at times said that in his judgment he went back at least as far as the Crusades, and went on to explain that once, when interviewing a candidate for some position or other, even though that person had excellent credentials, he "knew" the moment this person walked in the room that that person was "the enemy." Jim suspected that this probably went back to his earlier life as a Crusader; he guessed this person had probably been a Saracen. I suppose it sounds corny in the retelling but there it is.

The tolerance and the open-mindedness of this obviously very, very talented and intelligent man helped me learn to be more tolerant and more open-minded, a lesson that I suppose needs to be learned again and again by all of us.

...Now the moral of all this is that Mickey tried hard to be a human being. And as I stood after the lapse of years and looked at the faint impression of his paw, it struck me that every ruined civilization is, in a sense, the mark of men trying to be human, trying to transcend themselves. Like Mickey, none of them has quite made it, but they have each left a figurative paw mark—the Shang bronzes, the dreaming stone faces on Easter Island, the Parthenon, the Sphinx or perhaps only rusted stilettos, chain mail or a dolmen on some sea-pounded headland.<sup>3</sup>

And so it was with Jim. How would I characterize Jim Macdonald? I would characterize Jim Macdonald as a man



who never ceased trying to define himself as a human being; who never ceased trying to understand what the implications of his humanity were and where those implications should lead him. That was perhaps Jim's greatest gift and challenge to his students: the unshakeable sense that throughout life, over and over again, we need to attempt to define our humanity, to understand our commitments, and to learn how to act on them.

#### NOTES

1. Eiseley, Loren. *The Night Country*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), p. 79.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 80
3. *Ibid.*, p. 80

#### A PRAYERFUL ACT: THE WORK OF JAMES B. MACDONALD

William F. Pinar  
Louisiana State University

It will be hard for the curriculum field at large to see the importance of what James B. Macdonald has done. The field "at large" has tried not to see this work at all. It has not understood it, except for a primitive awareness that Macdonald's work was critical of mainstream curriculum theory and practice. Perhaps if peace ever comes to curriculum studies, it can see, that the field has been reconceived during the period that roughly coincides with Jim's career. That coinciding, of course, is no coincidence; Jim was "a" if not "the" major theoretician of that movement. Acknowledging this fact among ourselves, many of whom have participated in the movement to recast curriculum studies, is a first and essential step toward a general appreciation of the work of James B. Macdonald.

Of course Jim and his work are appreciated. He is famous; even among those who found his work unacceptable, he is well-known. Certainly *we* appreciate him; privately, and as today signifies, publicly. But, I think, not enough. A close re-reading of his major essays yields a large fact; Jim's work *was* and *is* more important than many, perhaps most, of us realized. As I faced this fact, I wanted an explanation. The first place I looked for one was the academic system itself, competitive and alienating, even among those of us whose bonds with each other are in part the fight against just such competition and alienation. But this was not a place to stay very long; I do not think it is the essential stinginess of our system that accounts for our failure to see the extent of his importance clearly while he lived. I look more to the psychology of the Reconceptualist movement itself, a major

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characteristic of which was a rejection of tradition, a flight from tradition, read from a gender point of view, a flight from the fathers. This psychological feature was unavoidable I suppose; in some sense it provided the fuel (although not the conceptual vehicles) for the effort to redo curriculum studies. A flight from the fathers is hasty, and the generational solidarity (even if this was more intellectual than chronological) that allowed this journey to be less frightening functioned to blur the sight of parents still among us. Jim was very much among us.

He was present at the founding of *JCT*. He was among the few fathers and mothers of the Reconceptualization to name themselves affiliated with this journal which began with as much visibility as it had good looks. Beginning with his "Transcendental/Developmental Ideology" paper presented at the 1973 Rochester conference, Jim presented many of his most important papers at these meetings. More importantly, his papers provided many of the concepts which thematized our repudiation of the American curriculum tradition, and our efforts to build a new, wiser one. Now some of you don't remember Jim's work as a source for yours; I didn't. But reread his papers. You will see that they either anticipated or coincided with the appearance of thematically similar ones. In fact it is necessary to conclude that "he got here first," and that most of us provided detail to *his* foundation. So you see now why I begin by suggesting that his work is more important than even we - his friends and admirers already - have realized.

"He got here first." In "An Example of Disciplined Curriculum Thinking" (presented at the 1967 Ohio State University Curriculum Theory Conference at which Dwayne Huebner also spoke, the proceedings of which were published by *Theory Into Practice* in an issue edited by Paul Klohr, who, like Jim, was one of the few parents present at *JCT*'s beginning) Macdonald delineates between "framework" and "engineering" theorists at work in curriculum studies. Framework theorists interpret curriculum issues by means of "aesthetic rationality" a concept he borrows from

Marcuse. "Aesthetic rationality" suggests our "capacity to cope rationally with the world on an intuitive basis--to return to the world for insights which will enable (one) to transcend his present systems of thought and move to new paradigms or fresh perspectives." The danger created by the engineering theorists, who exemplify "technological rationality," Macdonald saw clearly, in 1967:

The danger of our present 'systems' approach to human behavior is that, as we gain greater control over ourselves, the systems concept will become so *useful* in *solving our problems of efficiency and effectiveness* that we shall be in grave danger of losing contact with reality through aesthetic rationality.

Schooling will be reduced to objectification of this systematic process [efficiency and effectiveness]. This process is already demonstrable in other aspects of our society. It is especially obvious in the realm of our national economic security policies.

Here is the outline for the political critique of the 1970's, in place by 1967. By that year Macdonald had identified the broad categories of sources from which the field would develop. Those sources were intuitive and political. The field could not be value free:

The central question is whether theory and theorizing are neutral or committed.

Is there any legitimate goal for theory other than explanation, prediction, and control?

As well, this paper is pivotal insofar as it represents the transition from his earlier interests in systems theory (the model at the end of this 1967 paper is systemic) to an emerging interest in developing a new paradigm or framework for thinking about curriculum. While his model is systemic, its value-base is post-systemic:

The major value embodied in this approach is a commitment to freedom. As Becker so ably documents, man's history and biography may be interpreted as quests for freedom from the conditionness of physical, biological, social, and personal limitations. Curriculum theory, in this instance, is aimed at constructing a basic framework in light of the moral, constructing a basic commitment to freedom.

This position, intertwined in a vision of freedom and morality, is developed in the paper Macdonald read at the 1973 Rochester meeting. In this paper, "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education," Jim begins by citing the limitations of the influences of developmental models in curriculum and educational theory generally. Referring to Freire, he noted two very recent theoretical movements:

We still do not generally recognize this radical thrust in curriculum thinking, but the growing edge of writing in the past five or ten years leans toward a resurgence of romanticism and a renewal of past reconstructionist terms of the radical tradition. Neither... is the same as its predecessor, and I shall try to use historical perspective to validate both assertions.

Also:

...radical ideology claims that liberal developmental ideology and romantic ideology are embedded in the present system. That is, the emphasis upon the individual and his unfolding or developing necessitates acceptance [which could be provisional and transitory] of the social structures as status quo in order to identify in any empirical manner the development of the individual. Thus developmental theory is culture and society bound, and it is bound to the kind of a system

that structures human relations in hierarchical dominance and submission patterns and alienates the person from his own activity in work and from other people.

Like the developmental/psychological view, radical tradition is flawed also:

Yet I find this historical [radical] view limiting in its materialistic focus, and I suspect that it is grounded fundamentally in the Industrial Revolution and reflects the same linear rationality and conceptualizing that characterizes the rise of science and technology... The world today is not the same, and a different reading of history is needed to help make sense of our contemporary world.

The radical-political perspective as a home for curriculum thinking does not adequately allow for the tacit dimension of culture: it is a hierarchical historical science that has outlived its usefulness both in terms of the emerging structure of the environment and of the psyches of people today.

Macdonald the visionary surfaces:

...today's technology is yesterday's magic.  
...technology is in effect an externalization of the hidden consciousness of human potential. Technology ...is a necessary development for human beings in that it is the means of externalizing the potential that lies within. Humanity will eventually transcend technology turning inward, the only viable alternative that allows a human being to continue to experience oneself in the world as a creative and vital element. Out of this will come the rediscovery of human potential.

Political and economic analysis cannot, to borrow Sartre's word, "totalize" culture, society, and history; rather it is:

a radical social adjunct to a conceptual culture.

Now we are facing the opening of the doors of perception in human experience, not as the minor mystical phenomena that have appeared throughout history, but as a large-scale movement of consciousness, on the part of our young. A multimedia world is perceptual, not linear, in the utilization of concepts, but patterned concepts are received upon impact as perceptual experience. The psychological attitude born in this culture is a psychology of individuation, not individualism or socialism.

Thus the conscious attitude of integration is one of acceptance, of ceasing to do violence to one's own nature by repressing or overdeveloping any part of it. This Jung called a 'religious' attitude, although not necessarily related to any recognizable creed.

Other theoreticians might have stopped at this point. First, we have a rather full curricular view here, one which is rooted in the historical world, and in the internal history of curriculum discourse. It contains within it the major theoretical elements of the field's relatively short fifty-year history, and it has made them over in a view of complexity, vision, and moral power. Second, as Melva Burke chronicles, Jim's career spans what we might tentatively call the four theoretical moments of the field: "scientific" thinking, personal humanism, socio-political humanism, and transcendental thought. Like the image the verb "span" suggests, Macdonald's theoretical development built itself across fads, resting on carefully laid foundations, always with the other shore in sight. A lesser person might have stopped with this landmark 1974 paper, but Jim was certainly no lesser person. He continued to detail this 1974 view, and extend his conceptual bridge further toward its destination.

This he did in a paper entitled "Curriculum, Consciousness, and Social Change" published in 1981, in which the political import of his theoretical views is detailed. He begins simply, making the issue clear: "We both can and should

attempt to 'change' society." And just as simply, he situates political commitment and struggle in a larger picture, namely,

...the freeing of the human spirit, mind, and body from arbitrary social and psychological constraints...that is, the liberation of human potential in a framework of democratic rights, responsibilities, and practices.

Where to begin this effort? With consciousness:

(Summarizing Gramsci's views on consciousness) First, the existence of a separate entity called human consciousness is apparent, and next, change in human social consciousness is necessary and a precondition of later political change. And, it is precisely in the realm of changing consciousness that I believe our expectations should reside.

While this work involves theory development, that is not its end. The point of theoretical work is political, social and particularly, institutional change:

Our activities, efforts and expectations should...be focused upon the ideas, values, attitudes and morality of persons in schools in the context of their concrete lived experiences; and our efforts should be toward changing consciousness in these settings toward more liberating and fulfilling outcomes.

What does this mean?

What I propose is the attempt to shift the perspective of educators from the dominant quantitative achievement task orientation toward nebulous future goals, to a perspective which focuses directly upon the quality of the lived everyday life in our working situations.

The quality of lived experience centers in the relationships that exist in our lives. Thus, the way we relate to other people, the way we organize and administer power, the relationship of our work to our self-esteem, how we feel about what we are doing, and what meaning our lives have in concrete contexts are all ways of thinking about the quality of our experience.

As a teacher at the University, after many frustrating years, I have realized that if one wishes to influence others' ideas and perspectives, one must literally embody these ideas and perspectives.

While this work is a matter of politics and education, it is, in a central way, a matter of

...transcendence. We are asking persons to transcend the limitations and restrictions of their social conditioning and common sense and to venture beyond by seeing and choosing new possibilities.

Not just for students. Indeed,

There is...a need for us as curriculum teachers and workers to be in the process of continuous liberating growth ourselves; and to facilitate personal growth in those we work with through our own caring for them as total persons.

In a second paper published in 1981, coauthored by Susan Colberg Macdonald, the major issues pertinent to sexism and the schools were identified. Consistent with the view developed in the "Social Change" paper, the Macdonalds understood that:

Sexism is not a problem 'out there,' but is a condition all persons share which is both subjective and objective in nature...It will necessitate change in human consciousness as well as change in instructional structures

and operating principles. This is fundamentally the challenge of our times, the recognition that change cannot be 'engineered.' The limits and illusions of technique must be transcended through personal reflection and action.

In a third paper published in 1981, Macdonald explored related issues in the theory-practice relationship:

The ancient Greeks distinguished between theory and practice as two ways of living: the contemplative and the political...The rationalist in curriculum theory is living a political way of life; explaining in order to affect the living context of education in a direct controlling way - a political action...it is time to reaffirm the legitimacy of contemplative curriculum theory. In Heideggerian terms let us accept meditative thinking on an equal footing with calculative thinking.

Some of us have begun to take this advice, slowly perhaps. Our field's history as well as the nature of academic "culture" presses against taking it. But it needs to be taken, in order to exemplify the orders of thought and understanding that are not embedded in the instrumentality and calculation of what we might call, for more than alliteration's sake, capitalist cognition. By such exemplification we offer hope for and evidence of transcendence. Jim again: "Curriculum theorizing is potentially the creation of reality... Curriculum theory, as a search for understanding, a meditative thinking, is an attempt to deal with unity rather than bits and parts additively."

What is the relation of such theory to practice?

The test of 'good' theory in practice is thus, not centrally that it works (i.e., that we can control practice), but that in the engagement of theory and practice

we are emancipated from previous misunderstandings and are then freed to reinterpret situations and reach greater understandings.

By what means to conduct such a search? "I would propose...a methodology...of the mytho-poetic imagination, particularly related to the use of insight, visualization and imagination, which is essentially separate from science and praxis. Its practical method is surely similar to Polanyi's indwelling, and most probably what Steiner credits Hiedegger's life work to be - that is, a process of radical astonishment."

The methods of practices also engage in the theory-practice relationship, only in a more personalized and uniquely biographical manner.

The art of theorizing is an act of faith...Curriculum theorizing is a prayerful act. It is an expression of the humanistic vision in life.

A prayerful act, an act of faith. Perhaps more than any of us, Jim experienced how profoundly we have moved away from the taken-for-granted and the everyday. His work and presence were openings to worlds not here, worlds most have turned against as impractical. But Jim knew that to give up praying to that world, dreaming of that world, is to collapse into this one, is to abandon hope of our redemption, and the redemption of our children. In a world and a field contracted by stinginess, blinded by loss of vision, and embittered by the loss of heart, understandably Jim has not yet been seen. Let us, his friends, see him today.

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The Noon Recess (1873) detail,  
Winslow Homer  
wood engraving

## REFLECTIONS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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I have titled this paper "Reflections in Early Childhood Education." A reflection occurs when some form of energy, often heat, light or sound, strikes an object and is thrown back into the medium. Reflection also has another meaning: contemplation, meditation, thinking about. It is in both these senses that I shall refer to James B. Macdonald's work. Jim was not an early childhood educator; his activity in relation to the education of young children was limited. His ideas, however, influenced the field, although in an indirect way.

My first contact with Jim Macdonald occurred in 1961 when I joined the faculty of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Jim was Director of School Experimentation and Research there at that time. Among his many activities, he was responsible for research at the Campus Laboratory School. The Milwaukee area had a unique early childhood educational tradition—one that should take on added significance now. The campus school and many of the surrounding public schools offered children two years of kindergarten: a junior kindergarten program for four-year-olds and a senior kindergarten program for five-year-olds (both half-day). Jim collaborated with Ethel Kunkle, a professor in the School of Education, and with Barbara Bixby, the Campus School kindergarten teacher, on a study of the junior kindergarten experience in the campus school. At this time little research was being done in early childhood education, a situation that was to change in the next several years.

During the four years I spent at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the years immediately following my

doctoral studies, Jim served as a mentor for me, as did other colleagues. Some of my earliest writings were in the research column in *Educational Leadership*, edited by Jim. I wrote three of those columns in three years as well as three for Bernice Wolfson's column in *Elementary English*. Working with these people provided more than an opportunity to be published. Dialogue developed around the materials I submitted which served to refine my thinking as well as my writing. I also served on the staffs of a number of research institutes Jim organized as chair of the ASCD Research Committee.

Through these experiences during the years at UW-M, a sense of educational scholarship emerged within me. I found the ideas I hammered through in my interactions with Jim contributed to my thought and my work. Unfortunately, while his influence was profound, it was diffuse and not easily identifiable. It was not the kind that can be credited with a citation or a reference to a particular piece of writing. It could not be tallied in the *Social Science Citation Index*.

There is probably at least one other early childhood educator whose work was impacted in the same way by Jim. Evelyn Weber had been on the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee when I came. She had taken a leave to complete her doctorate at Madison. Unfortunately, her advisor, Virgil Herrick, with whom Jim had worked, died during the course of her dissertation work, and her research on historical developments in curriculum theory in early childhood education was changed under the direction of her new advisor. Later published as *The Kindergarten: Its Encounter With Educational Thought in America* (1969), this was a major historical treatise which stood alone for a couple of decades. It was strong in quality and coverage of kindergarten history. Her later book *Early Childhood Education: Perspectives on Change* (1970) was one of the better critical analyses of the changes in early childhood education theory and practice in the 1960's and 1970's. While he did not serve as her instructor or as a member of



her dissertation committee, I believe Jim's influence on Evelyn was also great, but again indirect; another instance of Jim's reflected contribution to the field.

#### *Macdonald as early childhood educator*

Only one journal article dealing with early childhood education appears in James B. Macdonald's extensive list of writings: "A Proper Curriculum For Young Children" appeared in the March 1969 issue of *Phi Delta Kappan*. In this article Jim posited three criteria for judging early childhood programs: (1) their relevance for the individual, (2) their relevance for society, and (3) their relevance for the ethics of relationships. Jim argued that schools for young children should develop environments that "elicit and shape human potential in an ethically acceptable way" (pp. 406-407). Program planners must determine what kinds of responses they wish to elicit from young children. A proper curriculum would elicit a range of perceptions. It would provide for maximum motor potential. It would provide social experiences that would lead to greater sensitivity towards others and a better sense of self-identity.

In Macdonald's view, sharing activities in classes allow children to evolve rule-governed behavior in relation to objects, persons and the symbolic universe. This element of the proper curriculum is most clearly related to traditional school programs. While children's responses are to be shaped, the program should be flexible and multidimensional, with continual opportunity for children's choices, and with continuous opportunities for children to achieve what Hunt (1961) has conceived as "the problem of the match." Play would serve a key role in this part of the curriculum.

With regard to relating, Macdonald was concerned that the relationships that are developed reflect ethical concerns for the dignity, worth and integrity of all persons present. He also was concerned that the relationships reflect the necessity of choice and freedom for all (Macdonald, 1969).

Macdonald's proper curriculum for young children differed markedly from traditional early childhood curriculum proposals of the time. While he was concerned with the whole child, and while his proposal is rooted in a concern for development, the strongest theme that recurs in every part of the program and gives it conceptual integrity is the deep concern for the ethical and the moral in even the earliest forms of education for children.

#### *Reflections*

Shortly after this article appeared, I had two articles published relating to early childhood curriculum (Spodek 1970, 1971). In these I critiqued contemporary and historical conceptions of early childhood curriculum and analyzed the various sources of curriculum for young children. This critique is best summarized in the following passage:

#### *The Proper Source of Curricula*

...Learning theory, developmental theory, and conceptions of organized knowledge and ways of knowing are all sources of curricula that must be used in concert. But even together they are inadequate to determine a curriculum. Only within the context of human values can these sources function properly.

Schools at all levels serve two functions. On the one hand, schools help children learn those behaviors that will help them adjust to an effective role in society. This we might call socialization. On the other hand, they help children develop sensitivities and competencies that will help them lead personally satisfying lives. This we might call self-fulfillment. To the extent that schools help to define the "good life" and the "good society," they are moral enterprises. It is the set of values growing out of this enterprise that determines how we should use our knowledge of human development or human learning, or for that matter

our knowledge of knowledge in determining educational experiences for young children.

Our view of the role of the school and the relationship between the individual and his society identifies goals for education. Dearden (1968), for example, has suggested that the goal of education is "personal autonomy based upon reason."

The concept of autonomy is not alien in the education of young children. Erikson's framework for human development includes the stage of autonomy early in the scale, just after the development of trust (Erikson, 1950). The child's autonomy in these early years may not be based upon reason. However, as the child's intelligence continues to develop, the basis for personal autonomy becomes more rational.

Dearden's goals derive from a conception of the individual as a contributor to a democratic society that is not unlike that found in the progressive education movement in the United States some years earlier:

If we accept the goal of 'personal autonomy based upon reason' as legitimate for early childhood education, then of what use is psychological theory to the educator? For one thing, it helps us determine ways of testing the effectiveness of a program in achieving the ideal. Second, knowledge of developmental processes can help us order the activities we provide for children in terms of what can be of use to a child at a particular level of development, and suggest what activities might precede or follow others. Developmental theory becomes a tool for the analysis of curricula rather than its sources, and the content of school programs must be recognized as a product of the imagination of educators to be tested by psychological means rather than as natural consequences of children's behavior, adults' thinking, or institutional organization (Spodek, 1972, pp. 50-51).

In rereading these materials a dozen years after they were

first published, I became deeply aware of the parallels in Jim's thinking and my own in relation to the ethical and value bases of curriculum. Even the use of the term "proper" was shared—a concern of Jim's about which I, too, had reflected.

#### *Further reflections*

Let me present one more example of Jim's work that influenced me deeply and also influenced the field of early childhood education indirectly. At the 1973 AERA meeting in New Orleans, Macdonald presented a paper entitled "Potential Relations of Human Interests, Language, and Orientation to Curriculum Thinking." This appeared in revised form as "Curriculum and Human Interests" in William Pinar's *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists* (1975). The original paper, which I found more generative for me, was presented as a reaction to a symposium on curriculum models, at least one of which was specifically for early childhood.

In my field there is a conventional wisdom that is often stated (and with which I disagree) that early childhood education is simply applied child development: As Betty Caldwell recently stated, "Our field represents the applied side of the basic science of child development" (1984, p. 53). From this perspective, research that is developed about children's growth and the impact of experience on development is taken from the laboratories of psychologists and child development specialists and passed on to nursery-kindergarten teachers and day-care practitioners and applied in some form to the education of young children. Different theories of child development lead to different curriculum models. Some programs are considered better than others for children by those who adhere to a particular developmental theory. Thus, we find that the maturationists, the behaviorists, and the constructivists disagree about what and how to teach young children as a result of their adherence to a particular developmental theory. Different theories

reflect different ideological positions. Each represents a set of value assumptions about what is educationally worthwhile combined with a set of theoretical assumptions about learning and development (Kohlberg & Mayer, 1972). But the values and ethics underlying these programs have not been analyzed and criticized in the same way as the developmental assumptions.

In his paper, Macdonald (1973) developed a matrix relating concerns about social roles, cultural data and personal growth to the three types of cognitive human interests identified by Jurgan Habermas: "(1) a technical cognitive interest in control underlying the empirical-analytic approach; (2) a practical cognitive interest in consensus underlying a hermeneutic-historical approach; and (3) a critical cognitive interest in emancipation or liberation underlying the self-reflective approach" (p. 2). It was with this matrix that curriculum proposals could be analyzed.

Using the Macdonald grid, it became evident that most early childhood programs are rooted in technical control interests, whether they are concerned with cultural data, as are the behavioral models, or concerned with personal growth, as are the interactionist models. None of the early childhood models appears to be rooted in emancipatory interests, although some gave lip service to protecting the freedom of the child. In contrast, most elementary school programs are rooted in consensus interests. The concern that is often heard about the fear of imposing the primary grades curriculum on the young child (e.g., "Let's protect the right of the kindergarten child to be five") may very well be less a concern about protecting or denying the child's freedom and more a concern related to a conflict in sources of program interests, that is, between a consensus orientation and an empirical/analytic orientation.

The Macdonald framework allowed me to see that the ideological differences in these orientations went beyond the issue of child freedom vs. child imposition. It also helped me become aware of the discrepancy between an espoused theory voiced by many early childhood educators

and their theories-in-use (a la Argyris & Schon, 1975). Early childhood educators continually articulate a concern for the freedom of children in their programs. A number of studies suggest that this is adhered to more in voice than in deed. Nancy King's (1976) study of a single kindergarten described the socialization process whereby the teacher moved the children from predominantly play activities to predominantly work activities with little concern for children's freedom. Cultural data drove that kindergarten program. In a later study of kindergarten teachers, Halliwell (1980) found teachers with a more child-centered approach to education. Even here, however, there was little concern with children's freedom. Similar studies of nursery school and day-care programs are yet to be done.

Let me try to return to my theme, "Reflections in early childhood education." It is evident in the passage above how Jim's work affected my understanding of the field. It also influenced my writing. This is not a strange affair; it always happens. Where does knowledge start? Who owns an idea? In the field of early childhood education many consider Maria Montessori a great innovator. But did all of her ideas arise from within her or was she influenced by others? Montessori's works are essentially the adaptation of the works of others. You can trace her ideas back to the writings of Edouard Sequin, and his can be traced to the work of Jacob Periera, a contemporary of Rousseau's. He, in turn, was certainly influenced by others. Important ideas are picked up to be modified and adapted or to influence others in less direct ways. Knowledge bounces around, often returning to us in ways that were not intended originally. I see Michael Apple's work and Dwayne Huebner's work intersecting in many ways with Macdonald's. The work of Habermas was interpreted by Macdonald. I picked up and interpreted Macdonald's ideas.

I recently reviewed a paper by Jonathan Sillin on the professionalization of early childhood education. Sillin questions the move towards increased professionalism. As I read

it, I felt that Sillin was building upon the paper that Macdonald had presented at the AERA conference in 1973, yet there was no reference to Macdonald. There is, however, reference to Habermas' *Knowledge and Human Interest* (1971) and to my work along with the many works of others. Sillin again raises the issue of the place of technical knowledge in the field of early childhood education:

Even if it were appropriate to base our authority on knowledge of child development, some suggest that the very nature of this research lacks the certainty demanded in the traditional professions (Katz, 1977). In fact, the important decisions in education are not technical, but moral and are based on differing notions of the good, the true and the beautiful (Spodek, 1977). But again ethical and aesthetic languages are not ones that are highly prized in our culture which tends to celebrate technical knowledge, empirical science, control and predictability (Huebner, 1975). (Sillin, in press).

Sillin goes on to identify the limits of professionalism in early childhood education: (1) that it might bring about a devaluing of the field's historical involvement in social reform and community activism; (2) that, while increasing teacher autonomy, social honor and economic rewards, it might function as a form of social control; and (3) it might prevent teachers from taking an interrogative stance towards teaching. Sillin's basic concern is that professionalism might mask moral and political issues by transforming them into issues of control and management.

In reading Sillin's paper, I seemed to perceive the reflected ideas of Jim Macdonald even though it is not a curriculum paper. Yet, as noted earlier, no reference to Macdonald's work appeared. I later learned that Sillin had worked at Teachers College with Dwayne Huebner. The source of the reflection then became apparent.

### *Reflecting back*

I come from a cultural tradition that does not concern itself with eternal life. The issue of life after death is an open one; no one is expected to return to life in some re-incarnated form. As a matter of fact, man is celebrated for his mortality. But in this tradition, words are immortalized. The writings and thoughts of men are written down and preserved from generation to generation. Literacy is highly prized. While The Book is considered holy and each person is expected to study it, study is expected to lead to interpretation. Commentaries are written, and then commentaries are written on those commentaries.

So it is in the field of education. Few scholars of education are deified and immortalized. Rather each of us has the responsibility to study in order to interpret, to find our personal meanings in the works of others. James B. Macdonald's work takes on meaning, not as a result of our veneration. Rather, it is in the fact that so many of us have been touched by Jim, who allowed us to see better and understand better in our own realm because of our contact with his thought, his vision, and his concern for the right as well as the true. In some way, Jim is reflected in all of us who were fortunate to interact with him in life. He is also reflected in the thoughts and perceptions of many other educators who were touched by him, directly or indirectly, through his writings.

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## CLOSING REMARKS

I am personally pleased  
and aesthetically  
satisfied

with our celebration of Jim -  
with laughter and tears,  
with serious thought,

and with our memories  
of his work  
and of the man himself.

We will pursue  
our personal reflections  
and actions  
as Jim's work continues  
to move us.

I thank you for your participation.

B.J.W.

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B.J.W.

## CURRICULUM AND THE MORALITY OF AESTHETICS

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As an arts educator, much of my study has focused on the meaning of the aesthetic dimension as it relates to the arts curriculum. Beardsley (1958) distinguishes the aesthetic and the artistic by indicating that the aesthetic has to do with apprehending, and the artistic with making and creating. Yet surely aesthetic apprehension is—or ought to be—part of the process of creation; judgments based on apprehending the product-in-the-making guide the process. For a long time my major concern was that the aesthetic dimension seemed largely missing from much of the curriculum in arts education, particularly below the University level: as long as something was created or performed, there seemed to be little concern with quality, or with awareness of the process or the product. In fact, even original creation seemed hard to find. I despaired when my own child brought home from art period the orange pumpkin (cut out by the teacher) onto which he had glued, in the appropriate places, black triangles (cut out by the teacher). In my own field of dance, I despaired of the many classes I observed which made no attempt to deal with quality—either quality of the dance, or the qualitative aspects of dancing; classes instead became a rote repetition of steps and exercise. I felt my calling lay in the development of an aesthetic model for curriculum and teaching in the arts.

The work of Elliot Eisner (1979) encouraged me to think more broadly than just the arts curriculum. Coming from his background as an educator in visual arts, he noted that teaching in any area can be regarded as an art when it is engaged in with sensitivity, intelligence, and creativity. Further, he found art criticism a useful model for educational evaluation; such a model can help us see and understand the quality of classroom life. It seemed to me that, if one could

use aesthetic awareness to evaluate curriculum and teaching, it should be equally valid as a guide to curriculum design.

But, fortunately, just as my purpose was becoming so clear to me, I had some very compelling encounters which muddled my vision, forcing me to re-examine my position. One came with my advisor and now colleague David Purpel, whose commitment to moral concerns gradually began to touch my aesthetic ones. His question to me was only somewhat facetious: whether it was not really trivial to spend one's time prancing around in leotards and tights, confined to a dance studio or theatre. Thus compelled to look more deeply, I recognized that there was much in dance education that was not only trivial, but also dehumanizing and even dangerous. Furthermore, such practices seemed to occur most frequently among those who produced the greatest art.

There were adults using children, distorting their bodies and driving from them their native language of movement, to be replaced by one the adults prefer to see.

There were teachers who believed that practice of the arts was the prerogative of only a talented elite, and dismissed the right of all others, belittling their attempts.

There were dance students who starved themselves to conform to a narrow vision of beauty of the human body, or whose bodies became permanently damaged through improper instruction or overuse.

There were teachers using the arts not to liberate students but to manipulate them; there were students learning primarily passivity, obedience, and rigid thinking.

There were people who used the arts simply as a way to avoid the challenge and responsibility of living in the world, such as those for whom the image in the mirror and their own pleasures in sweating and achieving became the sole ends in their lives, and those for whom an emphasis on purely personal growth in the arts shielded them from social awareness. It was here that I recognized myself.



I had to face the realization that in the work I loved, and had defended for so many years, there was something wrong. I no longer could omit moral concerns in examining arts education or the aesthetic dimension.

This realization coincided with the beginning of a period of questioning in my own life—an early mid-life crisis regarding the meaning of my life and my work. The crisis was further enhanced through my encounters with Jim Macdonald and his work. Macdonald noted two questions he saw as essential for curriculum theorists; they have stayed with me, giving a focus to all of my personal reflection and curricular thinking:

What is the meaning of human life?

How shall we live together? (Macdonald, 1977)

I realized that only if my work responded to these questions could it be other than trivial.

Macdonald and Purpel (1983) noted their high regard for the aesthetic dimension of existence, because the aesthetic attitude includes a valuing of something in and of itself, without regard for its usefulness; the aesthetic object is an end in itself. They wrote that such an attitude is important in education, in contrast to the prevailing technical view that sees things—children, teachers, studies—only as a means to an end, as things to be used. The valuing of an activity as an end in itself is a value shared with the moral attitude: an act cannot be considered moral simply because it will produce a good result, but must be moral in and of itself. This shared value seemed to offer the convergence of the aesthetic and the moral, and the thought that, if arts education were not a moral enterprise, it was because of its divergence from the aesthetic attitude. It seemed I had found the resolution to my conflict.

Other sources confirmed the connection between morality and art or the aesthetic dimension and added further bases for support. Dewey (1934) noted that imagination is the

basis for not only art but also morality:

Imagination is the chief instrument of the good... a person's ideas and treatment of his fellows are dependent upon his power to put himself imaginatively into their place. (p. 348)

Marcuse (1978) acknowledged the value of art in helping us see beyond the limits of a pre-established reality to find what is really real. In this aesthetic dimension of existence, the locus of the individual's realization shifts,

from the domain of the performance principle and the profit motive to that of the inner resources of the human being: passion, imagination, conscience. (p.4)

Yet Marcuse noted that art exists not only in this transcendent dimension, but also in the everyday world. It therefore has the capacity to return us from inwardness with an expanded consciousness and strengthened drive for changing the world to become one in which freedom and happiness are possible.

Kupfer (1978) noted that aesthetic experiences contribute to moral instruction, because relationships found in aesthetic objects serve as a model for moral relationships; the relationship of parts to whole in an aesthetic object is akin to the relationship of community. Further, he finds that aesthetic experience gives us the opportunity to develop mental habits and perspectives necessary to the realization of community: "We are given practice in activity involving discrimination, economy, venture, and integration, and are induced to respond to others as free responsive beings" (p. 22).

Newman (1980) found further congruence between the aesthetic and the moral attitude. He noted that aesthetic sensitizing involves five aspects which are relevant to Kohlberg's sixth (ultimate) stage of moral development: nonstereotyping (removal of prejudice), genuineness (integrity and authenticity), an openness to varying perspectives, a sense of what is fitting (an awareness of internal relationship among the parts of a whole), and empathy. While Newman saw that rational intellectual process is also



important in moral judgment making, he suggested that the fostering of aesthetic sensibility can enhance moral education because the aesthetic is not only instrumental to the process of moral development, but is an essential dimension of the moral.

Ross (1981) agreed that the five aspects of aesthetic apprehension noted by Newman are inherently of value. However, he extended Newman's ideas further, to state, aesthetic experience--and hence aesthetic education--is centered upon our capacity to act and perceive with love: Love of life, of living, of lives--our own and the lives of others known and unknown to us. (p.157)

Yet despite the convictions of these authors, and my agreement with them that aesthetic sensibility might be related to living a moral and even loving life, I still faced some nagging concerns, grounded in my own reality with the arts. In regarding a dance, for example, as an end in itself, the dancers become a means to an end, I knew of too many times that persons were dehumanized and destroyed by others in the process of creating a grand work of art. Further, I have found that, all too often, the love generated for the aesthetic object ends with the object, rather than extending to transform our relationships with others. When anything receives our full attention as only an end, complete in and of itself, it is too easy to "fall in love" with it, and thereby lose contact with the broader perspective in which it also has meaning. To love my children, valuing them as persons in and of themselves, is a moral act--but not if I lose my capacity to be touched by the humanity and personhood of other children, and respond to their needs as well. For some parents, having a child narrows their vision and their concern rather than extending it. Similarly, to care about and appreciate beautiful music may lead me to care about beauty in the world, but not if all of my energy and attention is given to music. And valuing the child in the classroom as a person rather than as a future worker seems a moral stance, but not if it blinds me to the very real pain suffered by persons who are unemployed. Appre-

hension and appreciation of the individual, the personal, the unique-- and valuing it in and of itself--cannot be a moral attitude if it keeps me from recognizing other persons and larger social problems. A double vision is necessary.

With this realization, it became apparent that further exploration of the meaning(s) of both *morality* and *aesthetic* was necessary, in terms of both the validity of arts education and the validity of an aesthetic model for curriculum.

#### *Meanings of the Moral Dimension*

The work of Martin Buber was central in my exploration of the moral dimension. For Buber, morality is grounded in relationship. In fact, Buber (1958) pointed out that the idea of morality as such would be unnecessary if we would live with others as subject with subject instead of treating others as objects. He referred to the latter relationship as an *I/It* relation. In an *I/It* relationship, I relate to others as things which can be classified or coordinated, used or experienced, regarded only in terms of their function. The relation of subject with subject he called an *I/Thou* relation. I do not experience or use the other, but become bound up in relation with it. A *Thou* cannot be classified or coordinated, or observed objectively. I am in the realm of *Thou* when I regard things in their essential life.

In these two kinds of relation, not only is the *other* different, but also the *I*. The *I* of the *I/It* is an individual, differentiating himself from others. The *I* of the *I/Thou* is a person with others, feeling from the side of the other as well as one's own side.

Buber describes the phenomenon of feeling from the other side in words which speak to my whole self:

A man belabours another, who remains quite still. Then let us assume that the striker suddenly receives in his soul the blow which he strikes: the same blow; that he receives it as the other who remains still.

A man caresses a woman, who lets herself be caressed. Then let us assume that he feels the contact from

two sides--with the palm of his hand still, and also with the woman's skin. (p. 96, 1955)

If we truly feel the pain of another as our own, and simultaneously feel our own part in causing that pain, we are less inclined to cause it; few people intentionally hurt themselves. If we truly feel the pleasure of another as our own, and simultaneously feel our own capacity to generate that pleasure, we are likely to seek to increase that pleasure which is also our own. When we realize we are connected with another, we are also responsible for ourselves. Thus, Buber notes, "love is the responsibility of an *I* for a *Thou*" (p. 15, 1958), so if we would love, then separate moral guidelines would be unnecessary.

In Carol Gilligan's work (1982) I found further clues to a deeper understanding of morality. Gilligan notes that traditional moral concerns--private rights, equality, justice--are grounded in a view of the world as consisting of autonomous individuals. She identifies this perspective as a masculine view, encouraged by traditional childrearing practices which make the mother the primary caregiver. Separation (from the mother) is the primary reality of growing up for boys. For girls, however, identification and connection (with mother) form the primary reality. As a result, the predominating view of the world for women tends not to be one of autonomous individuals, standing alone, connected by rules, but rather a world composed of human relationships, cohering through human connection, sustained by activities of care. A conception of morality in this view revolves around the idea of responsibility for others, making sure that we help one another when we can.

I recognized that this "feminine voice" of morality has largely guided my own moral development and still is central. Yet I see that such a view has sometimes served as a trap for both men and women--to care for only that which is close to us, providing us with a sense of goodness and well-being which may keep us from recognizing that we are related with all persons, all creatures, all life with whom we share the world, and thus have a responsibility to care for them as well.

It is so easy to care for that which we have created--a child, a home, a work of art--and sometimes difficult to recognize our relatedness with that which we have not created, that which is so fully Other.

It is a sin of commission to abuse a child. Yet is it not a sin of omission to, in loving my child or my art, fail to care for others? What is important, then, is not just responding to relationships of which I am aware, but extending my awareness of relationships that are more difficult to recognize, and responding to them.

Gilligan suggests that the fullest development of our moral sense comes when men extend their recognition of universal ethical principles to include an awareness of their relation to individual persons in need of care, and when women extend their responsibility to individuals to include a recognition of universal principles. It became clear to me that both the masculine and feminine voice are necessary in living a moral life--the feminine voice that feels touched by others and responds with care, and the masculine voice that steps away to see the larger social picture, recognizing what may otherwise get left out. For me as a woman, the acknowledgment of my masculine voice--the need to be a social critic as well as a person with persons--represented a powerful awakening. With this dual voice, close personal relationships serve not to close me off from broader concerns, but to illuminate and remind me of the larger relationships of which we are a part.

The acknowledgment of this dual voice reminds me of Macdonald's (1978) calling for a dual dialectic as the basis for a transcendental developmental ideology in education. He suggested that we must not only look at the consequences of an action in the world, but also sound the depths of our inner selves. Values are thus articulated on two levels, both in our actions and in an inner dialogue of reflection. Without the former, we all too easily become people who think about living a moral life but take no action; without the latter we risk cutting off our actions from the inner self that is the ultimate judge of those actions. Both personal awareness

and social awareness are necessary.

### *Meanings of the Aesthetic Dimension*

Recognition of relationship is also essential in aesthetic apprehension. However, there is more than one way of looking at the concept of relationship. From my deepened understanding of the moral dimension, I have found myself identifying three particular views of relationship in aesthetics. Each leads to a different meaning of the aesthetic dimension and holds a different meaning for curriculum. Each represents a place in my own development—a place I have lived and, to a certain extent, still do.

The first of these views emphasizes the relationships within the aesthetic object. The beauty of the aesthetic object—and hence its value—comes from its internal cohesiveness, the relationship of parts to a whole in revelation of artistic qualities. That some objects or experiences are more aesthetic than others is a result of the distinct qualities revealed in the relationship of elements. Because the work is complete in and of itself, its meaning is to be found solely in the qualities it possesses—its robustness, delicacy, or wit, for example—and is there to be described, not interpreted. Apprehension of art rests entirely on identification of perceived qualities, and is devoid of emotion and personal meaning. Redfern (1983) names this the objectivist view.

However, even objectivists recognize that not all people see the same qualities in a given work of art. Individuals must have special ability or training in order to recognize the qualities a work of art possesses. This view assumes that understanding what art means is the unique prerogative of specially talented or trained individuals, an elite group who possess more than normal eyes, ears, and intelligence.

If this view of the aesthetic dimension is applied to arts education, the emphasis of the curriculum becomes acquiring the training to perceive the relationships and qualities of the art object, and understanding how and why it is accepted as good art. Success of the curriculum is

determined by whether works created by students possess aesthetic qualities, and whether students perceive aesthetic qualities and relationships in works created by others. The ability to appreciate, if not also to create, the “finer things in life” is the most significant outcome.

While I appreciate the sharpening of cognitive skills that come with this approach, I also find it problematic. If the meaning of an aesthetic object is found only within the object itself, and has no connection with what is essential in our lives, it immediately is an extra, a “frill”, a way of decorating what is truly basic. Indeed, the arts are often viewed as purely decorative, to be engaged in for pleasure once real work is done and once real needs are met. Of course, the “finer things in life” belong to a very small proportion of the world’s population, those whose survival needs have already been met, and who have fairly large amounts of discretionary income. Art in the objectivist account, and aesthetic literacy, become simply another way to identify the haves from the have-nots, the “privileged elite” from the “ignorant masses,” those who decorate the world from those who endure it.

I also find it problematic that, in this view, only certain (predetermined) qualities and relationships are considered to be aesthetically valid. Certainly many artists have faced this limitation in having their work accepted by art critics, and, over a period of time, the definition of aesthetic qualities has broadened. However, a child in school is rarely in such a position of personal strength to persist in defying prevailing definitions. The child most often accepts the definitions of others, limiting his or her art to copying forms of others, and limiting responsiveness to art works to recognizing those qualities already identified by others. The child is thus denied the validity of personal response and personal meaning, and arts education is merely another way to preserve the status quo.

When the objectivist view of the aesthetic dimension is applied to construction of a curricular model, construction of a curriculum becomes similar to construction of a work of art, with an eye to its internal relationships and the

qualities it possesses. The curriculum planner following such a model would seek unity of theme or purpose, variety in choice of activities, grace in transition, economy, originality, and elegance. The planner would attend to the rhythm of the day in the classroom, the alternation of intensity and serenity, and would try to be sure each school or even each classroom had its own distinct flavor or character, rather than aiming for homogeneity. There might be concern for congruence between form and content—one should not teach about creativity uncreatively, or teach about democracy undemocratically. Evaluation of such a curriculum would be akin to art criticism, seeking to describe the qualities found by the trained observer.

I find much that is appealing in such a model, certainly an improvement over the factory model for curriculum that is so prevalent. Yet I also find it incomplete. Just like the artist or art critic who looks at the art work in and of itself, the curriculum planner in this view may omit the social and political context in which a gem of a curriculum may be seen to be seriously deficient. Without such a context, one opens oneself to the possibility of doing something which is very wrong, very well.

A second point of view of the aesthetic dimension focuses not on internal relationships of the work of art, but on the relation between the observer and the aesthetic object. In this view, what the observer brings to the encounter—the aesthetic attitude—is just as important as the inherent relationships within an object. Many avant-garde artists would say that relationships exist anywhere, and the responsibility of the apprehender is to look aesthetically. Yet looking aesthetically in this view does not mean looking for inherent qualities, but opening oneself to responding to the work of art. We regard an object as aesthetic not just in terms of what it is, but according to how it moves us. As Redfern (1984) notes, this view would find quite absurd a statement such as, "It's a great work of art, but it doesn't do anything for me." While some objects may be easier to respond to than others, what matters is the aesthetic experience.

Descriptions of the aesthetic experience vary, reflecting the individual response of the apprehender. However, it is often described in mystical terms, as a heightened state in which we lose track of space and time, becoming one with the aesthetic object. Csikszentmihalyi (1975) describes characteristics of what he calls the "flow experience" as including a merging of action with awareness, a centering of attention on a limited stimulus field, and a loss of ego through fusion with the world. Such experiences are very powerful. Many would suggest that they are a source of knowledge of God and a major source of meaning in life. I do not necessarily disagree, and I have found in discussion with my students that it is such transcendent experiences that have drawn them to choose dance as their life's work.

Transcendent experiences occur rarely in schooling, I expect—even in the arts classes. While it is never possible to guarantee that aesthetic experience will occur, it is possible to structure the arts curriculum to make it more likely. Whether activity involves creating, performing, or observing, teachers must ensure psychological as well as physical safety for children. In order to increase concentration, they may even lead a meditation prior to the beginning of work. Content will be selected according to whatever holds the greatest possibility for stirring the child on a feeling level; the curriculum will be very child-centered.

If applied to a larger curriculum model, this view of the aesthetic dimension emphasizes children's participation in curriculum, and helps children learn to open themselves to new experiences and respond to them. The basis for content selection is "whatever turns kids on"; methodology emphasizes hands-on participation and total involvement. Arts activities may be an important aspect of the curriculum because of their capacity to stimulate aesthetic experiences.

It should be mentioned that many serious artists, while acknowledging the existence and the power of the transcendent state, may deny it as the basis or goal for curriculum, because it seems to make art a means to the end of a transcendent state, or even a form of therapy, rather than an end

in and of itself. As one of my colleagues, a serious artist, told me, "Art is not to serve people. People should serve art."

My concerns with this view are different, and exist simultaneously with a valuing of transcendent experiences as a path to knowledge of ourselves as well as the Source of ourselves. However, I recognize a significant danger as well: aesthetic experience, in transporting us to another, more beautiful realm, may just become a way to escape from living in a difficult and often ugly world. Transcendent experiences may too often simply refresh us—like a mini-vacation—making us better able to tolerate some things which we ought not tolerate.

As I mentioned earlier, even the most satisfying relationships may become problematic if they cause us to lose the capacity to look with a critical consciousness at our actions. There are too many instances when relationships which may be positive in themselves become harmful because they blind us from seeing beyond the satisfaction. I think of the S.S. officers who carried out such horrors during working hours, and then spent the evening listening to Wagner; did the experience of beautiful music make them feel so beautiful that they could avoid recognizing the evil and ugliness of their daily work?

Furthermore, people can have powerful, transcendent responses to rape, murder, and other violence, as well as to power, speed, and drugs. The transcendent quality of an experience is no guarantee that it is beneficial for human beings, or educationally valid. Without maintenance of a critical consciousness, transcendent experience can be dangerous.

It would be easy to give up at this point, to conclude that the aesthetic dimension is moral in some respects but not in others, and is insufficient as a curricular model. However, I wish to suggest a third view of the aesthetic dimension which I believe has considerable validity in curricular thinking. This view emphasizes the relationship of the observer/participant to the world; the aesthetic object

is the lens through which we see/make sense of the reality of being a person-in-the-world.

This is the aesthetic vision I see reflected in the work of Maxine Greene. She notes (1978) that certain works of art are considered great primarily because of their capacity to bring us into conscious engagement with the world, into self-reflectiveness and critical awareness, and to a sense of moral agency, and that it is these works of art which ought to be central in curriculum. This suggests that an educationally valid work of art is not one that simply engages us as we sit in a theatre, concert hall, or gallery. Rather it is one that transforms our consciousness, so that when we leave we see ourselves and/or the world differently: something has been revealed. Redfern (1983) also speaks of transformation:

...there we may *realise* in a particularly vivid way what we already know, yet seem to learn for the first time ...our experience is such that our knowledge gains a new dimension. (p. 96)

It is important to recognize that this new dimension is not merely a new piece of knowledge, a bit of information which we can verbally define. We may already know, for example, that suffering is a consequence of war. What contemplation of Picasso's *Guernica* adds to this knowledge is allowing it to touch me. No longer is it distant and objective, like a newspaper report; I feel my relatedness to it.

This is not meant to imply that all significant works of art must deal with concrete subject matter. Even an abstract dance may stir us to feel ourselves as moving creatures, thereby related to other moving creatures. Choreographer Alwin Nikolais, whose works are so abstract that the human figure is often unrecognizable as anything other than pure design, speaks often of the theory which is behind his choreography, what he calls the "theory of decentralization." This theory is actually a non-hierarchical vision of the world, in which humankind exists in partnership

with other forms and other life, rather than in domination of them. Other choreographers celebrate the glory and uniqueness of the human form; but, in any case, participation as observer or performer in a work may offer us a new dimension in understanding what it is to be human, what it means to be a person-in-the-world.

Dancer/choreographer Erick Hawkins (1969) reminds us that not all art serves this function. He points out that there is both sacred and secular art. Secular art uses the aesthetic materials for their own sake. It involves "forgetting about what the total world of man, nature, and God is, and deals with totality in a partial way leading to triviality and naive realism" (p. 38). Sacred art, by contrast, reveals the harmony, the patterns of relationship in the world. Hawkins writes that,

this pattern of relationship is love, even the love to make the corn grow. Periods of greatest love and faith are the periods of the great creativity in art...the dance artist...must be a priest representing the noblest of what it is to be a man and a woman on this earth in all the fullness of body, mind, and heart. (p. 39)

As an arts educator, I can find my work personally and morally valid only if it is concerned with such relationship—only if experiences in creating, performing, and viewing art bring the student into conscious engagement with the world, to increased understanding of self and relation with others as subject with subject. Further, I see that in my role as educator I must go further than even the artist who creates sacred art; I must also help students recognize the responsibility that comes with relationship, a responsibility to respond that does not end when we leave studio or classroom.

This does not mean that students should not come to appreciate what makes a work of art successful, and how its parts fit together to make a whole. It does mean that they should carry this sharpened perception and understanding

with them as they look at the larger world. As I discussed earlier, Kupfer (1978) suggested that aesthetic relationships can serve as a model for moral relationships, but this can only happen if observation and discussion of relationship are not limited to the poem, play, or symphony as subject matter. We must teach not only content, but also connections, and ask, "What does this mean for us as persons who live in the world?"

Neither does this view of the aesthetic mean that teachers should not seek to encourage possibilities for transcendent experiences for students as they create, perform, or observe art. It does mean that these experiences should not be a means to lose oneself, but a means to recognize our power to transform ourselves and to transform reality through our total engagement with it.

This also does not mean that we should use art as a means to teach moral behavior and social awareness. It is important not to change a work of art or a creative, aesthetic experience into a moral lesson; the power of art to move us comes only when we relate to it as art. However, the arts have been significant throughout human history not because they make our lives prettier, but because they allow us to explore who we are and what is our relationship with the rest of existence. Choosing to teach the arts from this perspective is not using them as a means to an end, but allowing them a significance that is rightfully theirs.

As a curriculum theorist, I find an aesthetic model for curriculum to be valid only if it sensitizes—rather than anesthetizes—us to moral concerns. It is not enough to have a beautiful classroom and harmonious relationships within curriculum, even if it is personally meaningful. Curriculum must function as art, serving as a means for the child to connect not only with self but with the larger world, becoming the link between self-understanding and social awareness. Content and methodology are selected according to their possibility for facilitating connections—teacher/student, student/student, student/self, student to the world. Certain kinds of arts activities may be an important dimension of the curriculum not only because they may allow

students to transcend the here and now, but because they may return students to the world able to think more clearly, feel more deeply, respond more humanly. It is only this conception of an aesthetic model that will allow curriculum to extend the student's consciousness to those significant questions--

What does it mean to be human?

How can we live together?

It is only with such a model that students may come to recognize their power to create not only works of art, but also their lives and the world.

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# THE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL JOURNEY OF JAMES B. MACDONALD

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What we must reveal is our passion, our value, and our justifications. To focus simply on our behavior is near to selling our souls to the devil at the price of our own vital energy. What we must ask ourselves then is to really profess; to reveal and justify from our own viewpoints what we believe and value...what must be risked is the loss of the posture of neutral scholarship suffered with aridity of living the uncommitted life.

James B. Macdonald

## Author's Note

This essay presents the story of the personal and professional journey of James B. Macdonald. It includes the early influences, the educational experiences, and the processes of personal growth that have contributed to his lifelong pursuit of understanding, questioning, and interpreting the complexities of the human experience as they relate to educational settings.

Four distinct areas of his writing emerge as his journey unfolds: scientific thinking, personal humanism, socio-political humanism, and transcendental thought.

The first half of this essay recounts the experiences and recollections that Macdonald chose to share with me. The use of quotation marks in this section indicates those words that Macdonald spoke in the many hours of interviewing

that took place from November, 1982, until August, 1983. At this time Macdonald was spending fifteen hours per week on a dialysis machine as a result of kidney failure. Most of the interviewing was done during this dialysis time when he allowed me to sit by the chair and pose question after question. Naturally one only shares what one chooses to share with another, but I feel grateful for his openness and candor during these interviews.

This essay is a part of a doctoral dissertation entitled *Reciprocity of Perspectives: An Application of the Work of James B. Macdonald to a Personal Perspective of Special Education* which was completed in November, 1983, at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The direction and guidance of Dale L. Brubaker, Professor of Education, is gratefully acknowledged.

Each area is an outgrowth of the former, an evolution of thought influenced by an ever-increasing awareness of the self, and of the multiplicity of variables that affects one's personal and educational development.

A special challenge faces the writer who tries to make sense of the writings of Macdonald. Their very nature makes it clear that they are exploratory rather than finished or definitive. At the outset this appears to be a problem, but in fact, the heuristic nature of the writings proves to be a challenge that motivates the reader. The reader naturally compares and contrasts her own ideas and experiences to Macdonald's. The reader also feels invited to extend Macdonald's explorations and indeed question the validity of his ideas. These reactions to Macdonald's writings are consistent with his stated purpose for writing:

Personally, my own work in the field in retrospect is best explained to myself as an attempt to combine my own personal growth with meaningful social concern that has some grounding in the real world of broader human concerns. Thus, education has served as a societal pivotal point to explore myself and the broader



human condition in a meaningful context (Macdonald, 1975a, p. 3).

### *Early Experiences*

The personal journey of James Bradley Macdonald began on March 11, 1925, when he was born into a prominent family in the small Wisconsin town of Delavan. It was here that Macdonald's strong sense of community and security developed at an early age. People knew him, knew his family, and they knew and communicated with each other. Delavan was a democratic town that endorsed liberal values, openly accepting individual differences within the community. Because it was a resort town, the summer influx of vacationers from many different places added an element of sophistication to the town itself. Macdonald's home and its location contributed to a sense of belonging that played an important and positive role in his early childhood experience.

His father, a sales manager for a knitting mill, frequently traveled to Chicago and New York and often took his family with him. These opportunities for Macdonald's travel were presented early. Macdonald spoke of his father as "very bright in credentials," and appearing quite intellectual. A Naval Academy graduate, he enjoyed being engaged in intellectually stimulating activities such as playing bridge. "He let me watch him play bridge and I admired his mind and how it worked with cards." He was the only person Macdonald can ever remember consistently completing the *New York Times* crossword puzzle in one half hour. Mr. and Mrs. Macdonald were both avid readers of the many books and magazines around the home. His father was also physically fit and active. He had a high energy level and did not seem to age as he grew older.

Alcoholic tendencies contributed to some inconsistencies in the senior Macdonald's behavior during Macdonald's youth, inconsistencies that were stabilized by his mother who maintained the home and family with warmth and

devotion. Macdonald remembered his mother with admiration and affection. She held strong beliefs about fairness and equality and justice which she consistently communicated to her children. Macdonald stated, "She dinged away at the idea I must be ethically fair, just, and good, and must do the right thing."

His mother also had a strong sense of humor ("She loved jokes—all kinds!") and radiated warmth, joy, and acceptance to her children. "She not only felt, but showed her love." This resulted in each child's feeling important and special to the mother and yet no one felt superior to the others. Macdonald recounted how the siblings, many years later, talked about these early feelings and shared their recollections of the sense of belonging and being special to their mother.

As Macdonald was growing up, his mother was a full-time homemaker, wife, and mother. After her divorce during World War II, she became a supervisor for the Armed Forces Institute, an agency that provided academic correspondence courses to persons in the armed services. Macdonald recalled that she worked very hard at this highly responsible position. He spoke of his mother with pride, warmth, and a quiet joy that emanated from both love and respect.

Macdonald's early years were not unmarred by pain. When he was five, his younger sister, a close companion, died of pneumonia. He remembered going to the funeral, seeing the small casket, and being very angry, thinking surely there was no God or this would not have happened.

Because of the sister's death, Macdonald began school early. The parents and school officials reasoned that he would adjust better to the loss of his sister if he were in a classroom with other children. Thus, a five-year-old James Macdonald began his formal educational journey.

He remembered a number of early incidents as he entered this frightening and sometimes overwhelming new world. One particular recollection was the terror he felt when the teacher used flash cards for recognizing words by sight. "I was petrified of those flash cards!" he recalled, fearing

that he would not remember a word that had already been read. He was usually able to get the word the first time, but the teacher would frequently ask the same word over, and he feared being called upon to identify it a second time. Flash-card time resulted in a frightened young boy trying to appear invisible.

After the adjustment of the first year, school began to be enjoyable, and easy. He was a good student, although he noted that he did not make the consistently high grades of his older sister. He remembered being told frequently at school that he was not living up to his potential. "I thought the comment was stupid!" He involved himself in the many activities that were interesting and exciting, as the world of grades seemed limiting and narrow. At one point, the principal called him in to point out: "This is your I.Q. These are your grades. Obviously you can do better." The grades reflected a B average and were basically composed of A's and C's -- the A's earned in subjects Macdonald found interesting and challenging, the C's earned in areas that were required but which invited little interest or concern.

Macdonald knew that he was doing a lot of different things that he cared about, and he found it absurd to limit those activities in order to focus on producing higher grades in the less stimulating areas. He also knew that drama, football, and social contacts were important aspects of his school life and consequently important to his total personality, and that grades were but one part of his life. Also, he was totally aware that he *could* achieve the A grade, should he so choose.

(Over this, I remarked that he seemed to have an unusually strong, well-developed sense of self for that age. Macdonald replied that he did but that this awareness also reflected a strong sense of family. What his family thought was far more important and influential than what others thought. His family was supportive and accepting of his own choices and did not push for the high scholastic marks more important to the principal).

Macdonald was also an avid reader, particularly during the pre-teen phase. The Richard Halliburton adventure series and all of the Tarzan books were among his favorites. Once in high school, his amount of reading declined because "I was too busy doing other things."

High school presented the opportunity for the first experiences that Macdonald remembered as "educational." Particularly in literature, history, and drama, the teachers encouraged the students to "open up," to explore without the "quality control pressure of grades." The sense of reward in these classes came in *doing* and in participating, rather than in earning a grade or focusing on the outcome. Macdonald and his fellow students felt significant and important, and they experienced a curiosity that he remembers with appreciation.

One decidedly negative educational experience that Macdonald carried into his high schools years began at the end of his elementary grades. Macdonald was in the safety patrol and had to leave school a few minutes early. As he walked through the high school to reach his patrol post, he passed the open door of a geometry class, and seeing the brother of a friend, he thumbed his nose at him. Unfortunately, the teacher was standing nearby and thought the gesture was meant for him. He reported Macdonald to the principal, and neither man would allow an explanation of the event. He was made to apologize to the teacher. Looking back, he perceived this as an example of the inability to violate the status and authority system that then led to an inability to learn in this geometry teacher's class. "By the time I had him as a teacher, I hated him and couldn't learn because of my own unwillingness to cooperate. I learned then that human relationships affect learning."

#### Higher Education

Macdonald entered Whitewater State University in Whitewater, Wisconsin as an engineering major, but went into the Navy after only one semester because of World War II. As

a "grease monkey" in the Seabees, he was stationed in New Guinea and the Philippines, where he read a lot, contracted malaria, and came to the conclusion that much of the military was "bureaucratic idiocy!" Macdonald remembered one particularly poignant encounter during this time with a fellow serviceman. Many of his co-workers were extremely racially biased, particularly toward blacks. Macdonald would argue with them, his arguments reflecting his value for each human's dignity and worth. The arguments were not friendly discussions of opposing views, but rather very direct confrontations of belief systems.

One such argument with a "very large Texan" became particularly heated and seemed to be leading up to physical violence. Macdonald was unwilling to retreat from his ethical position, but knew that he would be unable to physically match his opponent:

Very calmly I told him that he could beat me up, but I assured him that nothing he would or could do to my body would change my way of thinking, and after the fight I would again say what I now was saying about human beings and blacks in particular.

The Texan retreated in disgust and disbelief. "I'll never forget the look on his face. I felt a sense of the real power of a moral and ethical position, power that was almost like a shield." ("Ah, the idealism of youth," he later commented).

Returning to college after the war on the G.I. Bill, Macdonald decided to major in history and sociology with a minor in political science. He planned to be a high school social science teacher.

History courses initiated new approaches to learning a subject. In these courses, Macdonald felt encouraged to speculate and make educated guesses. He was fascinated by the opportunity to explore the background of events, to think about relationships, and to wonder. (For example, "What would have happened if X event hadn't taken place?")

Many of his professors created an atmosphere which encouraged and expanded learning; they modeled the kind of intellectual curiosity they fostered in Macdonald. He recalled one sociology class where five hundred students attended lectures. "I was really turned on to sociology in there by observing him think." For Macdonald, the professor was "an interesting mind at work." Even with five hundred students, he invited individuals to probe further and he provided an example of how teaching can stimulate the thought process through modeling.

But all undergraduate experiences were not as exhilarating as the sociology and history courses. He recalled a course in economics as the best example of mis-education in his college setting. The professor read aloud from his notebook, and the students copied. "Boring!" The task of the students was to end the course with a notebook just like the professor's, a practice that Macdonald considered to be a product orientation that he continued to find abhorrent.

Macdonald's first course in education was taught by John Rothney, a "little Scotsman" who introduced a developmental approach to understanding the relationship of the cognitive, affective, and social domains in children. Rothney criticized many practices of the public school system and presented the area of education from a holistic perspective. This perspective made sense to Macdonald, and he began to experience an awareness of the "why's" of his own criticisms, and of his own feelings about the entire educational experience. "Things came together in my mind and I found myself saying, 'Sure!' 'Oh, yeah!' 'That's right!' as Rothney made his points." Macdonald already had identified many activities in schools he believed to be wrong. He knew the teacher was wrong to embarrass him in the first grade; he knew that the unrestrained use of authority in schools was dehumanizing to students and therefore was wrong. But with Rothney's influence, Macdonald now began to understand why and how such practices were wrong. Rothney's course played a vital role in what was to become

for Macdonald a lifelong investigation of and commitment to the field of education.

Four years in college led to a secondary teaching certificate in social studies. But during his student teaching experience, Macdonald knew that the profession was wrong for him. He found high school teaching restrictive and subject-oriented, with the students and teachers concerned with products (i.e., grades) rather than the subject content. He decided to study sociology in graduate school. Before making a decision to leave a career in education, however, he conferred with Virgil Herrick, Professor of Education and director of a new program in the area of elementary education, at the University of Wisconsin.

A half-hour conference with Herrick convinced Macdonald that he should remain in the field of education, and that he should not only certify for teaching in the elementary grades but also study for a master's degree.

(As I listened and probed into these early experiences, I was fascinated by this short conference with Herrick, which I identify as a critical turning point in Macdonald's professional life. Herrick was a bright, articulate man who challenged his students, and Macdonald recognized this opportunity to study with a respected, intellectually demanding person whose ideas about education were congruent with his own. Later Macdonald, with two colleagues, wrote, "Dr. Herrick was a man with a forceful personality, and the ideas he expressed tended to gain force from his own intensity, conviction, and depth of insight," (Macdonald, Anderson, and May, 1965, p.vi).

After study to complete the certification process, Macdonald accepted a position as fourth grade teacher in Park Forest, Illinois.

The superintendent of this school system was Robert Anderson, who was both a creative educational leader and a supportive administrator. He encouraged his teachers to involve parents in their children's education. When an open-door policy was maintained, the teachers experienced particularly good relationships with the parents. Macdonald

remembers being invited to dinner in his students' homes and talking with parents with unscheduled regularity.

During his first year of teaching, Macdonald had an emotionally disturbed child in his class. Diagnosed as schizoid, the child was in therapy with a psychiatrist. Macdonald wanted to keep the child in the class but felt that he needed some additional guidance in dealing with the bizarre behaviors, and so he wrote to the psychiatrist. The answer came back stating, in essence, that Macdonald should do whatever he thought best, but the inference seemed to be, "You can't handle or understand therapy anyway." The child remained in the class, and was accepted and supported by his classmates, despite the differences. Macdonald knew the child was in the right school, but the lack of assistance from the psychiatrist "reinforced my biases about analysts. I never really took to being talked down to!"

During that same year, Macdonald was elected chairman of the local chapter of the National Education Association and, as such, began negotiations for salary increases for the teachers. An insurance company owned the land, appointed its own school board, and financed the school system. The teachers had to negotiate with this company for salary increases. The school board, after hearing arguments that the teachers were paid below the rate of the surrounding systems and their request for a raise, turned down the request. The teachers had agreed to strike if that should happen, but on the appointed day, only the three male teachers in the system appeared to picket at the school. Macdonald learned that educational professionals tend to be motivated by fear and was greatly disappointed at this outcome. "But by this time, I was committed so deeply that I couldn't stay and take the lesser pay. I owed it to the other two male teachers who had families and couldn't resign as easily as I."

Thus at the end of the school year, Macdonald resigned from that school system and moved back to Madison to finish the course-work for the Master's degree and to teach

in a fourth-fifth combination grade in the Madison school system the following year.

Thereafter, Macdonald enrolled in the doctoral program at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, where he spent three-and-a-half years as a full-time student and research assistant.

The doctoral program as a whole was exciting and demanding, a diverse learning experience in which many aspects of teaching and learning were researched and investigated. Seminars, coursework, and work as a research assistant meshed into a long and stimulating period of Macdonald's life. He remembers that Professor Herrick "treated you as a colleague as long as you realized you weren't!" The quality of participation was high. Students were encouraged to try out ideas. Macdonald recalls that the doctoral students worked assiduously to be like their professor, and to attain the excellence that the students perceived their mentor demanded. "It is hard to put into words," stated Macdonald. "He (Herrick) was a bit like a father you wanted approval from, but you were never quite sure you got it."

Fellow students also contributed to the atmosphere of intense investigation and inquiry. They pushed each other to learn, and shared ideas and expanding concepts. Dwayne Huebner, currently on the faculty of the Yale Divinity School, was one such student and friend. "Dwayne and I grew up together in the doctoral program. We were close friends as well as colleagues." Both Huebner and Macdonald continued to incorporate much of the writing and thinking of the other in their own publications.

Of this collaboration, Huebner wrote:

Jim Macdonald and I have been very close professional and personal friends for nearly thirty years...In spite of our physical distance from each other over the years, we have found ourselves reading the same kinds of materials, of late, theology. I presume that part of the reasons for this similarity is that we were graduate students together, and shared many classes, professors,

friends, and interests together when we were at the University of Wisconsin. Both of us would acknowledge the influence of Virgil Herrick on our lives, work, and careers. (Huebner, personal communication, 1983).

Assistantships in the doctoral program were learning experiences more than opportunities to finance the schooling. Students carefully selected and were selected for assistantships that would facilitate skill development and learning in areas of specific interest and need. Macdonald held three assistantships that enabled him to learn research techniques by participating in actual research studies, and to focus more keenly on the area of curriculum theory.

"We began research projects by sitting down—professors and assistants—as colleagues, brainstorming the various designs that seemed applicable to the studies being proposed." Although he took basic research courses, he emphatically stated, "I learned research by doing research."

Writing the doctoral dissertation was an important experience, more because of the skills required to complete the work than because of its content. Macdonald chose to master a very complicated systems theory and apply it to the school setting and curriculum. This involved the application of "retroduction" which he described as "taking a model from one discipline and 'laying it over' another area to discover new findings"—a feat which required "learning a whole new vocabulary in the process." The exercise was significant in approaching a setting from a holistic perspective, which required a disciplined approach to writing and thinking. "I elected to do this because I couldn't stand the piecemeal way so many people thought." The terms "disciplined thinking" and "holistic approach" seem to describe the most important concepts in the process leading to completion of the dissertation, concepts that he continued to use in his thinking and writing. His dissertation, entitled *Some Contributions of a General Behavior Theory for Curriculum*, was, he believed, the first such dissertation in educational theory completed at the University of Wisconsin at

Madison. Macdonald gives much credit to Herrick, who supported and encouraged this research.

*Experiences in Teaching in Higher Education*

Following the completion of the doctoral program, Macdonald moved to Austin, Texas, to join the faculty of the University of Texas at Austin. In their extension program he visited many different school districts, traveling over much of the state of Texas, and offering courses and workshops in the subject areas designated by teachers and administrators. He also worked with local administrators who were involved in the evaluation of schools.

A number of significant learning experiences occurred during this year. In each school district etiquette required that Macdonald first check in with the superintendent, and he quickly discovered that the superintendents seemed isolated from support systems and were starved for someone to talk to about their various settings. Their trust and openness startled Macdonald because he felt so new in the educational field. And yet these men talked at length, eager to share their ideas and problems. Macdonald concluded from this experience that a good administrator cannot stay long in one particular location because innovative educators "make enemies and get bounced" when the status quo is questioned and changes are proposed. In places where administrators had stayed for long periods of time, he found the educational programs were usually static and rigid.

Special education also made an impact on Macdonald during this year. Although he did not have direct contact with the special education teachers in his workshops, he enjoyed visiting the special education classrooms in the schools because he found there "the kind of teaching I thought should be in all classrooms." The learning environment seemed to embody the components of progressive education important to the recognition of the value of each student. Individual needs were focused upon in a caring, open atmosphere that reflected enjoyment and respect. "In

those days, the special education classrooms were the places where I found good liberal education taking place."

At the end of his year in Texas, Macdonald was invited to New York University to direct a graduate program designed to certify elementary education teachers and to study effective methods of teacher preparation. As Assistant Professor of Elementary Education, he designed the research models and taught courses in the Foundations of Education component.

During his two years at NYU Macdonald dealt with the readiness of applicants for teacher education programs. In a study of graduate students, he compared younger full-time students with a group of older part-time students who were homemakers and mothers preparing for the teaching field. The results of the study indicated that teacher education programs might benefit from the more mature student who brings with her positive attitudes, a greater sense of personal security, and a clearer understanding of her purpose for being in the program (Macdonald, 1961).

While in New York, Macdonald wrote an article entitled "Practice Grows from Theory and Research," which was published in *Childhood Education* (1958). This article represents Macdonald's first writing following the completion of the dissertation three years before. He recalled that he was asked to write the article, a task that he did not want to undertake at that time. However, it served to "get me thinking again" and became a springboard for the many writings that were to follow.

The article suggested that sound teaching practices must acknowledge the results of research, but that an intervening step must also be recognized. Theory, or construction of theory about human behavior, can result from understanding and synthesizing results from research which will then affect further development of teaching practices and improve the interaction between classroom teaching and learning.

This first publication focused on the link between the behavioral sciences and education, and encouraged a concerted effort to synthesize and test a larger framework.



The article supported a statement Macdonald made much later:

It was during this earlier period that I was much enamored with taxonomics, general systems theory, and technical schemes such as the 'Tyler rationale and behavioral objectives.' This period of some ten years was spent being engaged in a great deal of empirical research and technical developmental work. That it met a need for me that paralleled some educational needs, there can be no doubt (1975a, p. 3).

However, even in this very early technical writing (1958), Macdonald identified the self as a source of important knowledge which has impact upon the total teaching/learning experience. "Better teaching practices come from better sources of knowledge. Personal experience is one source of knowledge" (1958, p. 256). The emphasis on the person was not yet clarified, but the need for internal awareness and the importance of recognizing that value foreshadowed recurring themes in Macdonald's future thinking and writing.

An emphasis on systematic thinking was evolving, but Macdonald began to turn away from this and move toward humanism as he realized that the purely scientific approach excluded the aspects of feeling and affect. Although the research in the classrooms yielded interesting results, they too often produced the same findings one would expect intuitively. The multiple variables involved in human relationships were the essence of human interaction and learning. But because these variables could not be controlled in the classroom setting, Macdonald began to focus on the individual and the impact of the setting on the individual.

#### *Personal Humanistic Thinking*

An opportunity to observe and work with individuals and groups of students and expand this new thinking was

provided when Macdonald was asked to return to the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee in 1959 to direct both the laboratory school and research for the School of Education. The New York work was engaging, but the new offer was appealing because of both location and challenge. The university laboratory school was truly an experimental setting where structured research was conducted. As its director, Macdonald could also present inservice opportunities for faculty colleagues to identify areas of interest and potential research.

At this time several other professional activities also provided opportunities for intellectual development and growth. Between 1960 and 1966, Macdonald served on, and then directed, the Research Commission of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. This commission held two research institutes each year at which scholars from many areas of the social sciences gathered to present current issues and related data. Leaders in such areas as anthropology, psychology, and sociology gathered in a non-political atmosphere where they shared, compared, reflected, debated, and grew. Macdonald found these exchanges with his colleagues stimulating and challenging.

Also during this time, Macdonald was named the university representative to the Lakeshore Curriculum Council, which directed a study of individualized reading programs in eight school systems. This was a lengthy and complicated effort that provided intense involvement with children and their learning patterns and contributed to his movement toward a social-psychological perspective of education. His writing began to reflect this. Although the term "humanistic education" was not commonly used at this time, he focused his thinking on the value and dignity of each person in the educational arena.

His 1964 essay, "An Image of Man: The Learner Himself," is particularly important because it was his first written commitment to this view. This essay is a strong statement in which Macdonald presents his perception of the developing individual and relates this perception to the role of the school

setting in human development. His belief about the nature of man and his relationship to the educational process was clearly expressed: "The functions of teachers which promote learning are inseparable from the nature of the human beings who are functioning and learning in the school situation" (1964b, p. 29). He reiterated his belief that fundamental social values such as freedom, individuality, and human dignity must not be excluded even as one considers the nature of man from a scientific vantage point (1964b).

Macdonald proposed that human development is a process that places the person in a transactional relationship with his environment and therefore involves creative, self-actualizing phenomena that occur simultaneously with, but not necessarily in relation to, predictable patterns of growth and socialization. Rather, one's personal response to stated developmental patterns is that "avenue through which individuals stretch and may reach their potentialities" (p. 31).

Macdonald contended that the sense of self is present in all children, and this presence provides the teacher with meaningful ways to enter the life of the individual. Opportunities are available for each teacher to help the child see himself more clearly and to foster his sense of identity and success in his striving toward selfhood. As a socializing agent in the classroom, the teacher can and must provide opportunities for children to reveal themselves, to promote positive relationships in a social context, to open new areas of relevant cultural knowledge, and to understand and clarify values. Macdonald stated that "curriculum tasks can be oriented toward the maximizing of possibilities to develop thinking at any level and can be woven into the patterns of methodology to the enhancement of self and society" (p. 44).

Teacher behavior that is congruent with the teacher's real self, empathy, and a demonstrated positive regard for children are critical elements of a learning environment that facilitates the development of one's understanding of himself and others. The school that provides this positive learning

environment is a school that focuses on what Macdonald calls a reality-centered curriculum. This curriculum encourages children to come in contact with the reality "of which our society, ourselves, and our cultural heritage are parts" (p. 47). The basic goal of such a curriculum is to free the student to develop thinking and values, and to encourage creative responses to reality.

Macdonald's conclusions about the nature of the learner present the reader with a basis for further investigation into the total development of the child and the relationship of that development to the school setting. His focus on the emerging self clearly presents his belief in the value of the individual and is enlightening to a teacher who is herself struggling with the multi-faceted aspect of self-actualization.

The optimism inherent in the monograph is apparent in the implicit notion that teachers, schools, and curriculum can provide an impetus for self-discovery when teachers believe in the critical nature of this personal journey and strive to facilitate its occurrence.

"The Person in the Curriculum" a chapter in the book *Precedents and Promise in the Curriculum Field* (1966b) was the second major statement of Macdonald's belief in the importance of the person, the individual. His choice of the word "person" rather than "individual" in the title introduced a moral and spiritual dimension to his thinking. Here Macdonald established his belief in the individual value and dignity of the person which is the essence of what later was labeled humanistic philosophy.

The person is valued because of what he shares in common with all persons: the human condition. Each person strives to create meaning out of his existence in the world, and attempts to gain freedom from crippling fear, anxiety, and guilt. Each person shares the common fate of his mortality and possesses the potential for expressing joy, awe, and wonder. The awareness that all we know with certainty is that we are here, and that there are others like us, characterizes the



human condition and makes the person of value. Thus it is not the uniqueness of the individual in terms of his personal perceptions, idiosyncratic needs, desires, and motives that makes him of value; it is his common human status (p. 4).

Macdonald proposed that the curriculum must respond to each person's need to make decisions, regard options, and experience freedom within the context of learning—freedom to pursue knowledge. Curriculum decisions must be made in light of concerns about morality (right or wrong) and truth (true or false), each decision being as right and true as possible. The area of instruction is to be regarded as a beginning process rather than a mastered subject in the educational framework: "Instruction which is based upon the creation of conditions for culture rather than upon the outcomes of performance is both realistic and moral" (p. 46).

Macdonald suggested that the public school is not functioning as an agent of humanization because of its need to control and to focus on products and outcomes. His criticism of the schools is based on his perception of their inability or unwillingness to be flexible enough to allow for individual growth and intellectual freedom. Again, however, if optimism can be construed as a lack of pessimism, there is optimism inherent in the statement of what the basic function of schools should be: "The schools should function to protect the person from dehumanization....What we must strive for is to make men what they ought to be—complete human beings" (p. 52).

His optimistic assertion of what schools ought to be seemed to be made with every expectation that the ideal is, in fact, possible. This point was in contrast to later writings such as "The School as a Double Agent" (1971b), which give no hope for fulfillment of a humanistic goal in current educational settings unless massive changes are brought about. However, Macdonald assured me that he could be optimistic because he had seen positive events occurring daily in the experimental school at the University of Wisconsin

at Milwaukee.

In "Independent Learning: The Theme of the Conference" (1967b), Macdonald continued to assert that the schools are a moral enterprise, and that independence in moral terms must allow choice and freedom of the individual. Macdonald stated that the schools can and must assume responsibility for providing order in interpersonal relationships and acquainting students with their potential for choice. Schools should introduce students to viable alternatives to create an awareness of options. Thus, independent learning evolves from the commonly used curricular definitions of activities and self-paced learning into a moral issue that revolves around the value of the human being, the learner, as the focus of the curriculum.

"Language, Meaning, and Motivation: An Introduction" (1966a) continued to emphasize the importance of the person in developing curriculum. Macdonald reviewed current practices in curriculum reform and accused those who "have perpetuated and projected an experiment upon the schools...Public education is providing them with an opportunity to learn a great deal at the expense of others."

His thesis pressed for the element of personal meaning to be added to the existing aspects of formal knowledge and inquiry processes:

Personal knowledge brings depth to meaning and reflects the uniqueness of our own experience. The connotation we bring to words, the commitments we give to certain ideas, or the perceptual selections we make from among relevant alternatives are all predicated upon and integrated through the unique being of each individual (1966a p. 4).

Macdonald (1967a) further suggested that curriculum theory should not diagnose and prescribe, but should present frameworks from which curriculum designs may be generated—designs or phenomena which represent both the technological and the aesthetic rationality of mankind.

He stated that contemporary focus on the technological rationality characterized by scientific theory is useful but warned that its ability to explain, predict, and control objects and humans in relation to each other is inadequate when used singularly. Aesthetic rationality must merge with technological rationality in the curriculum theorists' attempt to make sense out of their lives and their educational experiences. Macdonald defined aesthetic rationality as man's ability to "cope rationally with the world on an intuitive basis—to return to the world for insights which will enable him to transcend his present systems of thought and move to new paradigms or fresh perspectives" (p. 168).

In his description of disciplined curriculum thinking, Macdonald acknowledged the influence and importance of historical developments leading up to the current awareness and attitudes regarding education, and also underscored the importance of an awareness of man's contemporary status of development. He concluded that curriculum theory "should be committed to human fullness in creation, direction, and use. All of man's rational potential should be committed to the processes and goals in curriculum theorizing" (p. 169).

When studying the complexity of curriculum development, Macdonald (1964a) used the concepts of systems and structures to facilitate understanding of the components of curriculum. A system is characterized by its boundaries or distinct properties that separate it from other aspects in the environment (p. 6). He later (1967c) clarified the concept of structures when he pointed out that structures refer to central ideas dealing with the nature of things. "Descriptive structures tell us what is. At least they approximate man's present awareness of what is" (p. 32).

In "Structures of Curriculum" (1967c), Macdonald contended that the terms curriculum, instruction, teaching, and learning are systems that must be individually and collectively considered as one attempts to arrive at a definition of curriculum. The concept of structure is also important to an initial understanding of the role or purpose of

curriculum. Macdonald suggested that curriculum knowledge may be structured into the four basic elements of knowledge: substantive content, knowledge about students, knowledge about society and its needs, and knowledge about theory and practice (p. 33). Inherent in these concepts is an awareness and understanding of the most basic elements of the teaching/learning setting. Critical terms such as mode of inquiry, readiness, motivation, teacher commitment, societal roles, values, and morality are influences which are infused into a discussion of the nature of curriculum. These terms and the larger structures to which they relate are critical to the curriculum planner. "Until such time as we are able to conceptualize the task and have some knowledge of the interactions of these elements, we will be unable to proceed with the business of curriculum in any careful and reflective manner" (p. 45).

#### *The Period of Socio-Political Thought*

In 1966 a position in curriculum theory became available at the Milwaukee campus. The professor was charged with the responsibility of moving a proposed doctoral program through the regency, a challenging task. Macdonald agreed to undertake the demands of the program and moved back to Milwaukee. After the program had been established and approved, he was promoted to the position of Director of Doctoral Studies, and later, chairperson of the Department of Curriculum.

The years in Wisconsin from 1959 to 1972 were both professionally and personally significant for Macdonald. He wrote prolifically about curriculum theory, development, and planning, and his writings reflect a movement from personalistic humanism to a socio-political humanism.

The Civil Rights Movement and the beginning of the Viet Nam War influenced this transition, but Macdonald was not reacting to specific events alone. The moral and democratic fervor of the times, combined with his own growth, reading, and thinking—and certainly his mother's early

influence regarding justice and moral reactions to perceived injustices—all influenced a movement to an analytical critique of society. Macdonald began to look closely at the institutions which perpetuate patterns in society. The value and importance of the individual was not negated by Macdonald in his shift to societal needs and problems. "When I moved to social humanism, I took the personal with me, of course." His socio-political writings call attention to the impact of society on the individual.

"The School as a Double Agent" (1971) was one of Macdonald's first papers to represent this new focus. In this strong indictment of the public school system, Macdonald identified the four faces of schooling, indicating the incongruence between the ideas of American education and the actual practices that take place. He contended that the democratic ideal upon which the American school system is predicated has been subjugated by practices allowing the system to perpetuate itself with little regard for the needs and values of the students who are compelled to move through its passages:

The fact of the matter is that schools have not produced an informed citizenry and there is little evidence that rational processes of problem-solving are ever learned and/or practiced by students in schools, or that they are utilized in society (p. 236).

He went on to assert, "Opportunities to learn about democracy and to build the necessary understanding of the democratic process through the living of a democratic life are almost totally absent" (p. 237).

Identifying aspects of consumerism, control, evaluation procedures, and teacher security, Macdonald stated that the status quo of American education is not only inadequate, it is "negative and destructive to the young." He concluded:

In that end, the various faces of schooling lead to the fundamental schism in our society—the widening gulf

between our democratic ideals and the individual human fulfillment possible through our social structures as influenced by the pressures and strictures of an industrial nation....The issue is no longer whether or not the traditional school can be adequate, but whether or not schools as we have known them can exist at all, as places for productive fulfillment of human potential (pp. 244-245).

In Macdonald's social critique, he identified the political framework as an instrumental force on all educational processes. Therefore, problem areas in education, or in schools, must be first identified as problem areas in society (Macdonald & Zaret, 1975b). "The fundamental reasons for the shocking educational data do not lie in the children or in school practices per se, but in society" (p. 21). Curriculum must therefore allow for liberation of youngsters from the authoritarianism of society which perpetuates class distinction and repressive inequities. Documentation of the problematic influence of society on the schooling process was presented in "The Quality of Everyday Life In Schools" (1975c), in which Macdonald highlighted the contradictions between those things that are considered to be important in school and the quality of living in school, and contended that resolution of these contradictions is imperative if enhancement of life is believed to be a fundamental goal of social change.

Macdonald proposed that the technological and bureaucratic emphasis in society results in a circular effect. A consumer-oriented ethic is reflected in the schools which, therefore, reinforces the same emphasis in society. The technological rationality readily apparent in the industrial aspects of society translates to school settings as evaluation, teacher accountability, compartmentalization of subject areas, grades as indicators of success achievement, and a myriad of other educational phenomena. These aspects contribute to a view of education and learning that is distinctly separate from daily living and encourages students to

view themselves as dual role players--private unique persons, and public functionaries (p. 80). Control is emphasized; freedom is limited. Efficiency, effectiveness, conformity are prized; individuality and creativity are negated.

The schools become self-perpetuating bureaucracies that are politically oriented, paying attention to status, procedures, rules, and order. Categorization of students by levels of ability and labels that foster a feeling of impotence within the student further exemplify the bureaucratic tendencies of the schools. The focus is placed on the attainment of subject-oriented goals of the educational leader rather than on the environment that fosters individual growth and development.

Curriculum decisions are social policy decisions which Macdonald likens to legislative acts. They are intended to facilitate attainment of the goal of a high quality of life, but the quality of the schooling seems to be measured by articulation of goals and the means ascribed for reaching the goals rather than on the meaning of the goals themselves. Thus attainment of the goals is less valued than the institution of innovative means toward upgrading the quality of life. The attempt becomes the prize; the end itself is lost in the emphasis on means.

Macdonald (1975c) contended that meaning resides within the individual:

If we are to understand the meaning of schools we must search for the social meaning of the human activity that takes place there; and if we wish to examine the meaning implications of schooling we must look at the personal activity of people in the schools (p.85).

If we are to analyze what really takes place in schools, we must attempt to understand the personal meaning that each activity affords each individual teacher and student. Measurement of achievement (e.g., number of words memorized) is meaningless in relation to the development of personal and social understanding afforded to students who are engaged

in social interaction within a school setting.

And yet, personal meaning seems to be negated when schools are viewed as institutions. The school setting characterizes the problems inherent in the broader societal context by perpetuating or fostering the dehumanization of other people, and rejecting individual perceptions of fairness, justice, and equality. Personal meaning is rejected through categorization, labeling, and authoritative practices. Personal meaning is devalued and the student learns to repress, resists sharing ideas, and becomes withdrawn and passive--characteristics which are then rewarded. Anger and aggression may also result from the unequal power that is imposed upon the student by the system in which he is immersed:

The struggle for personal meaning goes on within persons, but if we have done our job well, students are effectively cut off from the personal sources of their own creativity and growth, and accommodated to an alienated view of the social world. Thus, a person who attempts to exercise choice and direction, lacking clear personal grounding or adequate social reality frameworks, creates further socially and personally destructive behavior. Thus, the hope of developing or facilitating the development of responsible personal meaning structures and activity becomes less and less likely (p. 88).

Macdonald identified *Schools in Search of Meaning* (with Zaret, 1975b) as the capstone of his writings regarding social justice and believed that "Curriculum Consciousness and Social Change" (1981) was a major statement reflecting his belief in the necessity of social change as a prerequisite for effective educational intervention in the lives of children.

*Transcendental Thought*

When a second request was made to come to the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as Distinguished Professor of Education for the purpose of teaching and writing a definitive book on curriculum, Macdonald accepted the invitation and moved to Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1972. Shortly after his move (and unrelated to it), his writing seemed to reflect a fourth turn or shift in focus toward transcendental thinking which urges mankind to transcend cultural boundaries in a quest for personal liberation and freedom in societies that accept and even foster such growth.

In this phase of his development, Macdonald posed what he held as the most important question faced in curriculum: "How shall we live together?" The determinations of what constitutes a sense of community, what environments or settings we should live in, become critical aspects of inquiry for the curriculum theorist. Moral, ethical, scientific, and aesthetic issues mesh into the problematic nature of the search for answers to this simply stated but enormously complex and difficult question.

Macdonald (1977a) proposed that the social context in which we live is fraught with significant issues which impact heavily upon both education and the individual. His reiteration of major social concerns includes overpopulation, disregard for the environment, proliferation of nuclear weapons with a concomitant shift in world power, as well as increased poverty. His recitation of these conditions led to the identification of trends that emerge therefrom. One proposed solution has been movement toward a highly controlled state. An antithetical position is the emergence of a greatly decentralized community. Macdonald saw both as currently being attempted in school settings, and, Macdonald suggested, "we may have been rehearsing for the future without knowing it" (p. 10).

Instructional systems that are behaviorally based, highly controlled, and evaluation-oriented reflect the first position.

On the other hand, open-space classrooms, interest centers, and increased participation of students in decision-making processes reflect a movement toward decentralization of the educational administrative power structure.

Macdonald asserted that neither movement can solve societal or individual problems alone. Our goals in education arise out of our beliefs about education and persons. Macdonald suggested that the recognition of education as a tool for liberation of the human spirit, an avenue for the freedom that allows human potential and understanding to flourish, must be considered. He clearly distinguished his perception of schooling as two distinct patterns which, by his own admission, are a bit simplistic, but exceedingly powerful.

Where you have a control interest, a society orientation, with a focus on school as a place of work with citizenship training, you have fascist schooling. Where you have development of human potential with the emphasis on individual needs and interests, you have liberation schooling (p. 11).

Macdonald (1977b) strongly communicated his belief in liberation schooling and proposed that it presents the only real hope for change. The humanistic educational movement is reflected in liberation schooling as it focuses on the concept of the individual and the ability of that individual by the very nature of his humanness, his personhood, to be an agent of choice, capable of intentional purposes, and able to progress toward self-actualization (p. 354).

However, when a system for a humanistic platform for education is attempted, problems arise out of the very nature of the developing person. For while emphases may be identified as critical to a humanistic environment, standardization of any humanistic platform would impose upon the individual external guidelines which, by definition, contradict the concept of freedom of the individual.

Rather than the establishment of a platform, then,

Macdonald suggested that an understanding of the principles of humanistic education can be expressed in two fundamental value questions reflecting interwoven concerns. "What is the meaning of life? How shall we live together?" Theological orientations arising out of the Judeo-Christian tradition form the basis for values shared by this country's educators as they struggle with these questions. These values, reflected in such concepts as justice, equality, and liberty, are integral to humanistic education and the moral and ethical aspects of the educational enterprise (p. 355).

An example of an application of these values to curriculum development is embodied in the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee Social Studies Project. Macdonald and Brubaker collaborated to develop a social studies curriculum that addressed social problems and that encouraged students to identify their own values through a method of critical inquiry. The program, described in *Curriculum Patterns in Elementary Social Studies* (Thomas Brubaker, 1971) addresses the broad questions of the development of a sense of responsibility to oneself and to other human beings and the need for community by focusing on the critical areas of urbanization, technological change, survival, intergroup relations and group interactions, and intragroup relations and personal behavior (pp 278-280).

In "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education" (1974), Macdonald reviewed current ideologies of education and proposed that a transcendental ideology is the most potentially useful in the modern world. He suggested that sources of values of objective neutrality, social relativism, and ethical principle transcend immediate awareness and evolve from a dual dialectical process. The dialectical process within the individual exists in the conscious and unconscious perceptions which transact upon and are transacted upon by the dialectical process within the world embodied in both structure and situations or events (p. 94). This dual dialecticism not only explains the development of values, but also explains the existence of reason or aesthetic rationality. Macdonald proposed that this process "is a

critical element if we are to actually advance the position that culture is in any way created by human beings" (p.96).

The view of knowledge in the transcendental ideology is rooted in the concept of personal knowledge and understanding, which results from the individual's processing the realities of the world and bringing meaning to those realities in relationship to personal perceptions:

Knowledge is not simply things and relationships that are real in the outer world and waiting to be discovered, but a process of personalizing the outer world through the inner potential of the human being as it interacts with outer reality (p. 100).

Central to the transcendental ideology is the concept of centering, an idea introduced by Mary Carolyn Richards (1962). Macdonald contended that the aim of education should be a centering of the person in the world. This spiritual concept focuses on a person's search to find his inner being and become aware of wholeness and meaning in his life. Essentially, centering is freeing--freeing inner potential, freeing one to recognize and confront meaning and reality, freeing the ability to become aware of who and what one is.

Specific curriculum processes facilitate the act of centering, and these processes must be incorporated into the daily encounter of students with schooling if, in fact, centering can occur.

Macdonald suggested that pattern making ("the need to transform reality symbolically, to create order in search of meaning, is fundamental to locating oneself in time and space and towards providing cognitive awareness that may facilitate centering" (p. 109), playing, meditative thinking, and imagining are all critical processes in which children must engage in an environment where centering may take place.

The involved, aware teacher is also a part of the process of centering. The developmental goal of centering is as important to her as a person as it is to the child. The teacher



immerses herself in the process as she provides opportunities for the children to engage in the process; thus the relationship between the teacher and the children is enhanced by mutual responsiveness to the aim of centering.

The teacher in the process is therefore engaged in the art of living. The task of both student and teacher is the development of their own centering in relationship through contact with the culture and society, by bringing as much of their whole selves as they can to bear upon the process (p. 115):

In the field of curriculum theory, Macdonald is frequently referred to as "a reconceptualist," a term which emerged when Macdonald wrote that one function of curriculum theory is the function of reconceptualizing the field. William Pinar, in his book *Curriculum Theorizing: The Reconceptualists* (1975), documented the emergence of this trend which places the reconceptualist opposite the educational traditionalist, most frequently represented in the works of Ralph Tyler and others. The term itself is less than rigidly defined. It applies to those persons who have examined the area of curriculum theory, have functioned as critics of both schooling and society, but now "tend to concern themselves with the internal and existential experience of the public world....In brief, the reconceptualist attempts to understand the nature of the educational experience" (p.xiii).

The reconceptualists do not retreat from the role of the critic, but pose new avenues of investigation and thought, and, in Pinar's words, "begin to shift from criticism of the old to creation of the new" (Ibid.)

In the role of the reconceptualist, Macdonald (1975d) proposed that value perspectives underlie all curriculum decisions and suggested that an awareness of this is necessary for understanding of the many facets of curriculum planning and curriculum theory. He cited the importance of the work of Jurgen Habermas in the development of his thinking about the nature of human interests and their application to the

development of curriculum. Fundamental to this thinking is the basic assumption that all knowledge is grounded in human interest. From this assumption Macdonald concluded that the cognitive interests of control, consensus, and emancipation are the basic sources of value differences in curriculum (p.289).

The cognitive interest of control is exemplified in the works of curriculum theorists that seek to define relevant variables in curriculum and create a system of decision making that is relevant to curriculum design. The consensus model appears in the works of those who attempt to clarify all aspects of curriculum and identify dialogue, group processes, and communication as primary goals which enable the curriculum to become meaningful for all participants. The emancipation theorists focus on the involvement of the student in curriculum processes with the ultimate goal of self-development, self-realization, and liberation of the individual from externally controlled limitations, working toward the creation of new conditions and environments.

Macdonald, as a reconceptualist, presented an emancipatory position, suggesting that curriculum theory must examine the essences of the person and the values and interests of the individual, if the educational experience is to be significant.

In 1976, Macdonald contracted a mysterious flu-like illness which resulted in the complete loss of kidney functioning and the beginning of a dependency on life-sustaining kidney dialysis. A kidney transplant freed him of the dialysis machine for two years, but the side-effects of the many drugs necessary for this operation caused concomitant health problems that were critical, and at times debilitating and life-threatening. When the transplanted kidney was rejected, Macdonald was again faced with the necessity of regular dialysis. During the fifteen hours per week Macdonald was on the dialysis machine, he read, wrote, and frequently met with his doctoral students involved in their dissertations.

When asked if the illness had influenced his thinking and writing, he concluded that it probably had been more

significant in his daily interactions with others than in his conceptions of curriculum theory. Prior to the illness, he had begun writing and thinking about the transcendental nature of mankind and the need for spiritual and religious freedom. However, the serious and ongoing nature of the condition had, in his words, "confirmed the importance of the spiritual awareness of persons" and had deepened his concern for the understanding of the religious significance of present life.

#### Conclusion

Macdonald's thinking and writing seem to fall into four distinct phases which he identified as scientism, personalistic humanism, socio-political humanism, and transcendental thought. Because Macdonald's publications reflect his philosophic development, the reader following his works chronologically sees the emphasis on methodology shifting to a stronger emphasis on the development of the person in society. The phases or stages do not appear to be mutually exclusive; instead, they seem to represent turns in the road rather than new roads and to indicate a meaningful evolution of thought.

His contributions to the field of curriculum theory and education are extremely important. When a number of his colleagues were asked to comment briefly on these contributions, statements were made concerning his high level of achievement in scholarship, leadership, and ability to interact on a practical level.

Elliot Eisner summed up his perception of the professional contributions of Macdonald when he stated:

There are relatively few educational leaders in the nation at the present time. I would count Jim Macdonald as one of the few. His contributions to the literature have always been useful, some have been significant, and some have been classical. I regard him

as among the top four or five individuals in the world in this field (E.W. Eisner, personal communication, March 21, 1983).

Macdonald's life experiences have contributed to his thinking and writing. His early influences, his educational experiences, his personal journey were chronicled in the ongoing, developing person of James Macdonald:

But life seems to move in circles, and somewhere from my past the utopian impulse, perhaps best experienced and later expressed in terms of justice, equality, fairness, etc. pressed into my professional consciousness.... Thus the struggle for personal integration, educational integrity, and social justice go on, necessitating the constant reevaluation of oneself, one's work, and one's world—with the hope that whatever creative talent one may possess will lead toward something better that we may all share, each in his own way (Macdonald, 1975a, p.4).

\* \* \*

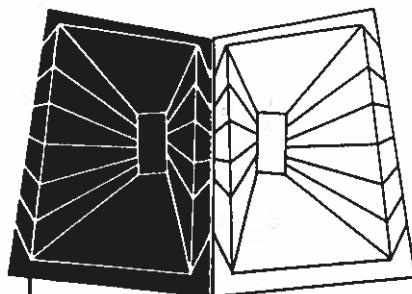
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## Letters

Dear Editors,

*"Education and Complexity: Meanings From Macdonald"*

The late James B. Macdonald, noted curriculum theorist, made many contributions to education as a field of study and to persons engaged in such study. Jim felt that his role as a teacher was largely to *remind* others of what they already knew – through the experiential, tacit, and intuitive ways of knowing – but were desensitized to as a result of enculturation in society. His thoughts on the complexity of life, humans, and learning seem worthy of remembrance as educators confront society's preoccupation with simplistic solutions and narrow viewpoints. Much of the following is derived from a reexamination of the author's notes taken in graduate curriculum courses with Jim Macdonald at UNC-Greensboro.

Jim Macdonald's reminders to graduate students reflected his concern about dogma and unwarranted certitude. He challenged both the pretentiousness of supposedly objective and value-free empiricism *and* the bias inherent in personal perspectives. The latter was clear one evening in a graduate curriculum theory class. When a doctoral student finished a long statement of her thoughts about an issue, Jim said "I share your values; but, in our values lie our blind-spots; therefore, I share your values and your blind-spots."

Macdonald's balance in critical thought was also applied in analyzing modes of inquiry and representations of reality. Jim pointed out that neither the *numbers* resulting from reductionistic categorical research nor the *words* reported capture the reality sought. He suggested that educators

must learn to live with ambiguity, but not become passive.

Jim took a clear stance that all values are not equal—the determining factor being universal concepts on the value of life, justice, and human spirit. He celebrated humans as active agents for improvement of the human condition. Human potential in education, according to Jim, calls for increasing the “response-abilities” of learners.

Finally, Jim was dedicated to the cause of humans and holism “by whatever names they might be called and however unpopular they might be” in relation to the spirit of the times. He knew, and stated explicitly in personal conversation, that the struggle for a “human-oriented” education had to be pursued from a perspective greater than an educator’s current lifetime in order to endure the cycles of education and society. The ideas which he reminded us of live on.

Neal Earls  
University of South Carolina

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# C A L L F O R P A P E R S

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You are invited to submit a proposal for a paper to be read at the 1986 Bergamo Conference on Curriculum Theory and Classroom Practice, to be held at the Bergamo Conference Center in Dayton, Ohio, U.S.A., October 22-25, 1986.

Paper and symposium proposals are due April 15, 1986. To request submission forms, or to submit proposals, please write:

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The Macdonald Prize, a cash award of \$1,000, is awarded each year at the Bergamo Conference to the essay submitted which best exemplifies the work of James B. Macdonald. Macdonald's work (see JCT 3:1, 3:2, 6:3 for examples) draws upon critical theory and hermeneutics, and focuses upon issues of theory, practice, method and gender. To be eligible for the Prize the submitted paper must be read at the Bergamo conference. JCT enjoys the right to publish the Prize-winning paper. The completed essay must be submitted, in triplicate, *no later than August 1, 1986*, to Professor Janet L. Miller, Macdonald Prize Committee Chair, St. John's University, School of Education and Human Services, Marillac 105, Jamaica, N.Y. 11439. The recipient of the Prize will be announced Saturday evening, October 25, 1986.

The Aoki Award, a cash prize of \$1,000, is awarded each year at the Bergamo Conference to the essay submitted which best exemplifies the work of Ted Aoki. Aoki's work (see JCT 5:4 for an example) draws upon critical theory and phenomenology, and focuses on issues in theory, competence, implementation and computer technology. To be eligible for the Award the submitted paper must be read at the Bergamo conference. JCT enjoys the right to publish the Award-winning paper. The completed essay must be submitted, in triplicate, *no later than August 1, 1986*, to Professor T. Carson, University of Alberta, Department of Secondary Education, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2G5 Canada. The recipient of the Award will be announced Saturday evening, October 25, 1986.

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