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THE PERSONALIST PEDAGOGY OF JOHN MACMURRAY

Serge G. Tittley

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submitted in partial completion of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Education**

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All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action for the sake of friendship.

John Macmurray,
The Self as Agent

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INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to determine what contribution British philosopher John Macmurray makes to contemporary issues in education. Specifically, it seeks to determine how the philosophy of personalism, a variant of which Macmurray developed over more than fifty years of professional practice, informs our attempts to create nurturing learning environments.

Macmurray's work is rich in content and subtle in presentation. Although he rarely wrote or spoke using only the technical language peculiar to philosophical discourse, his writings are textured and many-layered. They are accessible, but defy easy interpretation. Here is a presentation of his philosophical position in as clear and simple a manner as possible for a non-specialist. It is also an essay in the application of this pedagogy to a real-life setting. The thesis also connects Macmurray's insights with those of contemporary philosopher of education Nel Noddings. The ethical system proposed for schooling by Noddings is not theistic, as is the model proposed by Macmurray, but in its clear emphasis on personal relations as essential to moral sense-making, it meshes and complements Macmurray's perspective. As a respected contemporary voice, Nel Noddings brings an awareness and engagement with present-day issues that did not need addressing when Macmurray was formulating his personalist stance.

The thesis is structured as follows: Chapter One, *Wennington School: An Experiment in Personalist Education* provides a thumbnail sketch of Macmurray's personalism, and how these ideas were adopted by British schoolmaster Kenneth Barnes.

In Chapter Two, *Personalism and the Postmodern Context*, describes the encounter between a basically religious and personalist worldview, such as Macmurray's, with the secularizing influences of postmodern thinking. It then goes on to recast Macmurray's personalism in a more contemporary stance by twinning it with the "pedagogy of care" so well articulated by Nel Noddings. The first and second chapters are the core documents of the thesis. Two attached appendices provide helpful details and useful contexts.

A thorough presentation of John Macmurray's personalist point of view is found in *Appendix A: Historical Sketch of a Personal Universe*. The appendix provides an analysis of Macmurray's historiography, in which, as a thoroughgoing humanist of the old school, Macmurray grounds his philosophy within a Christian reading of purposeful history. *Appendix*

B: Religion-as-Liberation, Society, and Community examines issues of particular interest to Macmurray. This is done through reference to his own work, as well as to that of scholars who either based their views directly on Macmurray, or worked on identical themes along similar lines.

Macmurray, always a strong believer in the life of the mind, was nonetheless never seduced by the academy. He was far less interested in knowledge than in wisdom. "The philosopher," he wrote at the height of the Great Depression, "should reveal himself not as a specialist in a particular field but rather as one who has grasped the significance of human life and achieved the ability, if not to live well, at least to understand how it should be lived" (1935, p.56). As a teacher of adolescents, I can only hope that I shall have a small part in helping young persons come to such a conclusion by themselves.

CHAPTER ONE

Wennington School: An Experiment in Personalist Education

John's Macmurray's philosophy of education is derived from his development of a variety of personalism, the perspective which he found most congenial to his purpose of interpreting the human experience through history. Simply put, Macmurray's philosophy of education was founded on the rock of "action," as opposed to thought. Every person is an agent, naturally oriented toward action in a world populated by other human persons whose purposes, too, are directed by action. The aim of all action, Macmurray, argues, is to create or fashion the one value essential to human happiness and the creation of a just society, "friendship."

This "friendship" is akin to the Christian concept of *philia*, love of one's fellow men. It is also connected to that other Christian concept, "agape," or the love human persons have in, through, and for God. For John Macmurray, the life of the mind — the intellectual adventure which has fascinated philosophers in the West since the Enlightenment — is, by itself, a selfish, egoistic, self-centered exercise which seriously misreads both the purpose of the human person, and misunderstands the scope of human action.

A detailed background to the development of Macmurray's philosophical position, his *point of view*, as he preferred to call it, is provided in Chapter Two on specific issues and, more comprehensively, in Appendix A. Macmurray's reading of what he considers the chief error of Western philosophy is there presented, along with a sketch of his historiography.

In this chapter, the ideas which Macmurray developed over years of professional writing within the academy, as well as his broadcast addresses on topical issues, form the background for an experiment in personalistic education. The Wennington School in England would be the setting for an attempt by admirers of Macmurray's pedagogy to apply his principles in practice.

Chapter Two provides a contemporary context in which Macmurray's personalist pedagogy can be updated and made relevant to present-day conditions. The Scottish moral philosopher's work is integrated with, or grafted onto the approach promulgated by Nel Noddings, an American professor of moral education. The twinning of these two strands of thought provides a rich context for schooling.

The Biography of a Teacher

Macmurray's childhood was one of ordinary domestic contentment, a conventional middle-class existence in a loving family strongly devoted to Christian principles. His use of the family as the core theme for the ruling value of friendship comes from this period. It helped create the mind which would later fashion a philosophy grounded in love, from which a pedagogy of caring and affection could be extracted.

Although he would later turn against the religiosity of his youth, the seriousness and sincerity with which religion was taken in his home inculcated in the young Macmurray a deep desire to help others, a sense of duty and obligation. His focus was sharpened with involvement in the Student Christian Movement. He would seek an appointment to the mission fields of China, but his application would be refused because of concerns over his health.

Macmurray moved through several theological standpoints throughout his mature years, but he never rebelled against the fundamental teachings of the Christian church. In youth he was loyal to his family allegiance to the presbyterian Church of Scotland and, later, when his parents adopted a more evangelical form of theology, John dutifully followed (1961, p.6). Calvinism presented him with an intellectual and emotional burden which he would later reject on well-articulated philosophical grounds. His unhappiness with the shadowing effects of Presbyterianism is illustrated in an anecdote from Kenneth Barnes, later headmaster of Wennington School. Barnes writes in *Energy Unbound: The Story of Wennington School* how one day, in an uncharacteristic mood of depression, Macmurray said to Barnes: 'If only I could get this incubus of my back!' 'What incubus?' Barnes asked. 'Calvinism,' Macmurray replied (p. 27).

Macmurray entered Glasgow University in 1909, electing to read Classics but also finagling his way into geological studies, and winning the class medal in competition with students of engineering and science. In Glasgow, he developed an interest in philosophy and pursued that line after winning a scholarship to Balliol College at Oxford. There he combined philosophical studies with Greats (Latin and Greek). After one year of study, war was declared and Macmurray was faced with an important decision. He had embraced pacifism prior to the war and now found it impossible to enlist in the military as a fighting man. He initially

chose the Medical Corps but soon realized that this placed him every bit as much in a position of responsibility as a fighter. Opting for what he considered a more honest decision, he enlisted in the Infantry and served with great distinction as an officer of the Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders. Wounded at Arras, Belgium, he was evacuated to Britain for hospitalization.

The opportunity to deliver a speech before a church congregation in London during his convalescence helped him decide that the core values of Christianity had been compromised by bureaucratization and nationalization. In his address, Macmurray was bitterly critical of the war boosterism and jingoism of the Christian churches. "I thought of the churches as the various national religions of Europe," he reports. His move away from membership in any Christian church was a declaration of independent thought. But this was done without a wholesale surrender to secularism. Macmurray remained a deeply spiritual person. Indeed, his stand against the conventional loyalties of so many of his contemporaries was based on his own reading of what a commitment to God could entail. As one sympathetic observer has written,

> For one who had thought at one time of becoming a missionary, this was a grave decision, but it did give him an unusual degree of intellectual freedom from institutional constraint in pursuing his philosophical reflection on religion. Whatever conclusions he might be led to, Macmurray was not likely to be open to the criticism of simply offering a version of the traditional story (Duncan, 1990, p. 9).

From the late 1920's onwards, Macmurray devoted himself to an academic career in philosophy. He first taught at the University of Manchester where he worked out detailed perspectives toward the philosophy of science, a subject that had long interested him. His approach included the idea of the essential part that action plays in moral reasoning and reconsideration of the idea of certainty. Macmurray reached conclusions in this line of thinking which Duncan (p. 11) believes are "strikingly similar" to those of John Dewey, even then a leading light in the American movement for progressive education. [Dewey's conclusions were presented in the Gifford Lectures of 1929; Macmurray's in the Gifford Lectures of 1953-1954.]

In 1928, Macmurray was appointed to the Grote Chair of Philosophy in the University of London. By now the main themes which would occupy him as a philosopher for the rest of his

life were in place: the essential place of the personal, the connections between knowledge and faith, the need for religion to become "experimental" (a Quaker term from the 17th century perhaps translatable today as "existential"), and the concept of the self as an agent of moral action.

At this point, Macmurray started his engagement with the public. He soon came to see that philosophy, his or that of any other thinker, was only as good or valid as the good which it could produce in real life. The young academic had always possessed a broad-streak of Scottish good sense, and now it would be put to service by him in his capacity as a public intellectual.

The British Broadcasting Corporation asked Macmurray to deliver a series of lectures on contemporary problems. The issues to be discussed would be the immediate ones so much preoccupying peoples' minds in 1930: unemployment, the contest of ideologies — Fascism and Communism — being played out on the Continent, the contest of science and religion, the place of women in a new society; in other words, all the hallmark issues of modernism.

Macmurray's easy manner, his presentation of rigorous thinking in terms comprehensible to educated but non-specialist listeners proved a sensation. As Duncan (1990) points out, "The popular response to his talks may well suggest that Macmurray had a more accurate conception of 'ordinary language [philosophy]' than many philosophers who have since talked a great deal about it but seldom in it" (p. 13). Along with Bertram Russell's, Macmurray's work on the BBC helped shape his public image as an intelligent, incisive, and honest critic of contemporary culture and issues.

One of those influenced by both his scholarly and popular work was a young educator named Kenneth Barnes. The British schoolmaster would, in Macmurray's thought, "find a philosophy" for a new type of school he wished to create. Although Macmurray never articulated a formal pedagogy based on his personalist insights, Barnes had no doubt that many of Macmurray's insights lent themselves ideally to the forming and sustaining of learning communities. Macmurray had long enjoyed a certain status as a popularizer of philosophical reflection, a career not dissimilar to Bertram Russell's. The Scottish intellectual had also frequently lectured to working class social clubs and labor-oriented association. Barnes saw no reason why the general philosophical outlook which undergirded Macmurray's efforts at adult

education could not be applied to the more formal learning environment of an English composite residential school.

Wennington School

The fourteen BBC broadcasts Macmurray produced between 1930 and 1932 were published by the corporation's magazine, *The Listener*, and later produced as the book, *Freedom in the Modern World*. It was this work which helped convince Barnes that Macmurray's personalism held the key to formulating a philosophy for his educational project.

He was looking for a grounding philosophy which could combine the recognition of the 'manipulativeness' of most contemporary schooling with a broader view which would encourage students towards purposeful action within a 'convivial' environment. Barnes would find that guiding philosophy in John Macmurray's work.

But what purpose does a philosophy, Macmurray's or anyone else's, serve? Macmurray, like any other thinker, has both positive and negative orientations in mind. There are things, movements, or ideas, to be opposed as well as ways to be charted. The following, taken from *Freedom in the Modern World* (1932, 1992), is a call to keep the connection between thinking and doing, reflection-as-action. Knowledge, he argues, has not value in and of itself.

Now this particular unreality, mischievous and monstrous as it is, has been erected as an ideal for thought. It is the ideal of knowledge for knowledge's sake. There is no significance whatever in knowing things just for the sake of knowing them and nothing more. The search for knowledge is either the search for that which has a vital significance for human life or it is a relapse into unreality. *Why then have we come to regard knowledge as good in itself? I shall tell you what I believe to be the real reason. We are afraid of the terrible power of thought to change the world we live in, to destroy our illusions, to force us to alter our habits and our social arrangements. We hate to be disturbed and to have the familiar unreality of our ordinary existence and beliefs shattered. There is an enormous, savage weight of inertia in us.* If you look back on history you will remember how society has set up barriers against the great thinkers and teachers to prevent their thoughts having any effect upon people's lives. In the old days it

was simpler to kill them outright. Nowadays we know a much better method. We do homage to thought. We make an ideal of it (p. 93) [italics in original].

At this point in his intellectual development, Macmurray is analyzing at a highly developed level those values, personal and religious, which he is adopting from the Religious Society of Friends. They are also directly connected to the pedagogical orientation Barnes, himself a Quaker, is seeking for his school.

Wennington School will be designed to evince Macmurray's ideals of Personalism, the exploratory freedom urged by the new generation of progressive thinkers in education, and the spiritual nurturing of Quakerism. All this, too, will have to take place within a context of utter practicality mandated firstly by the nature of Quaker pedagogy, and secondly by the social conditions prevalent at the time of Wennington School's founding. The spiritual and intellectual foundations of Quakerism, particularly matters directly relevant to the management of school affairs such as decision-making, is taken up below.

A Headmaster's Personalism

Barnes discusses Macmurray's ideas at length in a chapter entitled "Finding a Philosophy", in his account of his years as the sole schoolmaster of his community, *Energy Unbound: The Story of Wennington School*. He had, as the Quaker phrase has it, "felt a concern" in 1940 to open a school, this in the midst of the Battle of Britain. While German air force formations flew bombing missions over England, Barnes, an experienced secondary school teacher of science, was preparing an old manor house in the south of England for its rebirth as a residential school managed along pedagogical lines informed by the personalism of John Macmurray.

Barnes and his wife, Frances, had been social activists throughout the Depression, working on employment programs, involved with refugee issues, and engaged in anti-Fascist work in the pre-war period. They were quite familiar with Macmurray's work as an intellectual supportive of progressive, pacifist, and Leftist, causes at the time. Like so many other educators strongly influenced by socialist and progressive ideals, Barnes's expressed the belief that their

chosen vocations as teachers offered the best opportunity for social betterment. In 1936, they published a manifesto entitled *A Proposal for a New School*. One of their stated aims was to "carry 'progressive' education further, to make it more relevant to the total social and political situation, to take independent education away from its exclusive association with the well-to-do." (p. 2).

Some of the Manifesto's line reflect the spirit of Macmurray which informed the drafting of the document:

> some points at which might be laid, without violent upheaval, the foundations of
>
> a changed and just society within the scope of the common people (based upon the
>
> convinced position that) the change to a new and just society will come only by
>
> the will of the significant and producing masses of mankind whose inheritance of the
>
> world's wealth is now largely withheld (p. 3).

The entrenched class system then prevalent in Britain was the main evil which this call for a new form of schooling meant to redress. Barnes argued that only change based upon the individual person could alter socio-political realities in a meaningful way. Barnes had also to contend with conflicts persisting between advocates of private schooling and those urging that universal access meant exclusive state control. The bureaucratic wrangling is quite beside the point, says Barnes.

> But thought about education-in-community carries the argument beyond the deceptive
>
> state-versus-private conflict. All generalizations about what a category of schools does
>
> are of only temporary significance; we must pass beyond them to the more complex
>
> problem of the relation of a child to the community in which he grows up; otherwise
>
> all our changes will end with the same disillusionment. (Barnes, 1980, p. 26)

Barnes was determined to use Macmurray's personalism to create a model of a school which could provide a uniformly high standard of education to a community of students recruited from all socio-economic groups. "We reminded ourselves that politics was for persons, not persons for politics," (p. 4). A series of unexpected circumstances, serendipity, and good luck permitted Barnes to occupy Wennington Hall, a manor house near the Yorkshire border, which had been designated for use as a holiday resort but which, given the circumstances of the war,

was now available to the Quaker teachers for one pound's rent. They arrived in August and planned to be open by September.

Teachers were recruited from amongst Quaker acquaintances. Some were experienced, most novices, many held advanced degrees in the arts or sciences. School policy stipulated that children would be admitted without regard to financial resources. Many children were recruited from among the populations being evacuated from Britain's threatened cities to the countryside.

Financial equality was a principle among the teaching staff. Barnes wanted all to share burdens equally, although talents might not be so neatly divided. For eight years all teachers earned the same salary until a policy change mandated the introduction of the Burnham Scale Salaries (p. 7). Barnes did not want a uniformity of class membership. "We claimed to be a classless society and we took, with help of local authorities, children whose parents could never have afforded the fees" (p. 75).

In writing the history of his school decades later, Barnes reflects on Ivan Illich's understanding of how schooling "invariably" takes on the aspect of a manipulativeness which seeks to assure dominance and control, whatever the nature of controlling political ideology, capitalist, socialist, communist. Barnes does not view the treatment proposed by Illich, a process of "deschooling," where the coercion is removed and "conviviality" installed, as reasonable, in the sense that it is attainable (p. 23). This kind of convivial curriculum was likely just what the parents of children attending Wennington were seeking.

> Few [parents] had boarding schools in their tradition. Most were reacting from the mass culture of the large secondary school, from its impersonal and institutional treatment of children, and they were seeking an education more personal, more inclusive, more practical, carried out in a social unit small enough for the child to comprehend and value (p. 75).

A pedagogy appropriate to such a search is found in John Macmurray's personalism; one which avoids the polarization of attitudes by refocusing or reframing the argument. "His philosophy is for living, not mainly for thinking about thinking," Barnes writes (p. 23), commenting on the availability of Macmurray's thinking to ordinary persons. Not only does Macmurray's personalism celebrate the being of person, it assumes that those creature who enjoy

such being can understand its nature and their place in sharing it.

John Macmurray's thinking, moving along completely different lines than those being followed by the overwhelming majority of his professional colleagues, provided the right impetus for Wennington School. For while Barnes appreciated some of the work done by progressives like A.S. Neill, he worried about the tendency amongst such writers to allow for an untrammeled freedom. A freedom without limits could not serve the best interests of the young, Barnes believed, because it lacked discipline and focus. The key to an authentic pedagogy was Macmurray's idea of freedom-in-action, a freedom that exists because it is at the service of others, a freedom that is authenticated through the reality of friendship.

In John Macmurray we found a philosopher showing us what we were doing in the whole pattern of living activity, saying that here was the primary focus to which everything else converged, from which every intention radiated (1980, p. 24).

Macmurray's emphasis on "friendship" is the royal road to moral agency, and "community" is the creation of society based in friendship.

Barnes is critical of the progressive education movement's emphasis on a notion of freedom which, he claims, lacks discipline and focus. He presents Macmurray's perspective as offering a more authentic understanding of how human nature is expressed in action generated in *spontaneous objectivity*:

It is our nature to apprehend and enjoy a world that is outside ourselves, to live in communion with a world that is independent of us. We are completely ourselves when we live in the full knowledge of what is not ourselves. This is *rational* living — whether it concerns thinking or feeling or simply doing (p. 25).

This sort of language might be mistaken for a licence to riot if not placed in the proper context of a learning community. Barnes points out that Macmurray himself told him that "Discipline is the key to freedom." Barnes realizes that some educators reject discipline altogether, trusting in a maturity which flowers naturally. Others believe the word "discipline" is too closely associated with "the old obedience concept," an imposition of authoritarianism. Barnes recalls what Macmurray's teaching meant to him.

To us, what John Macmurray was urging was a sensitive adjustment of our inner life

and our actions to the objective nature of the world and other people. It was not an effort to make other people fit into a pattern of behaviour or morality that we thought good, nor a willingness to discipline ourselves to another person's pattern. It could be better compared to the discipline of science. This is not a submissive discipline; it is a study of how things really work and it confers on us a freedom — one that has opened up incredibly in recent years — to do what we want with material things (p. 26).

Barnes is saying action through friendship produces goodness in a reliable and predictable manner, almost an objective manner. The theme of friendship is key for the life of Wennington School. The nurture of friendship "is the aim of all community life and the central aim of true education. It makes possible the highest degree of spontaneity, trust, and an intrepid spirit." (p. 27). It also makes possible the elimination of the greatest suffering a child can endure in school, he adds. "If you watch children, who express their basic needs more openly than do adults, you will see that the worst possible fate is to be friendless" (p. 26).

Students and Teachers in a Personalist Environment

The appreciation of Macmurray's ideas by staffers at Wennington School would be put to the test. Student populations were mixed and not all students who arrived at the school were inclined to engage in its curriculum with great enthusiasm. The model selected by Barnes in consultation with his staff, emphasized practical applications in real-life situations. For example, children were expected to assist in the development and maintenance of the property. Practical building skills reinforced ideas from science and mathematics. The arts were also strongly emphasized. Creating ceramics and paintings, and writing and performing plays were every bit as important at learning mathematical algorithms.

Adaptability was essential if these personalist norms of behaviours and objectives informed by personalism were to be manifested in daily life at the Quaker school. Children showed more evidence of flexibility than did the adults. Staff had great difficulty in overcoming set patterns of behaviour shaped by previous indoctrination in state or private schools. Barnes reports that perhaps the main concern of children was the series of chores for which they were responsible. One of the aims of the Wennington community was to be self-sufficient in

food. That worthy aim was even more significant as the whole of England dealt with severe wartime and post-war shortages.

It might have been expected that children, whatever their background, would respond to humane treatment. I am sure that is true — in the long run, sometimes the very long run.... There were many examples among the children of an initial failure to understand what we offered in a way of life. They could accept as a biological statement that land had to be dug, for potatoes to grow; but the force behind the spade has to come from the heart, not the head, and the heart had yet to feel the connection between digging in the autumn and dinner next year (p.32-33).

The adult population in the school faced problems "different and more serious" (p.33). Nearly all were conscientious objectors in the midst of a rural England deeply engaged in the war effort. Nonetheless, relations with the neighboring community were excellent. Quakers had been part of the regional scene for centuries, and local residents came to recognize Wennington School as a hard-working community led by responsible adults.

To Barnes, it was the ingrained idealism of staff which could be troublesome. He writes: Adults are less adaptable [than children], and the more idealistic they are the more severe the problem. Idealists can work together happily on committees to decide what the world ought to be like or what statesmen ought to do; but put them all in one house to live together and share the routine duties and you will meet plenty of trouble. (p. 33)

To distinguish the minority of reliable idealists — whom he reports amounted to about 25 percent of the staff — from the more quarrelsome majority, Barnes theorizes that idealists come in two basic types. The first type wishes to live his beliefs by realizing a pattern which appeals to the intellect, conscience, or moralistic judgment. "It can be self-centered in that it makes the idealist feel good, feel right, feel that he is really meeting the problems of society" (p.25). The second and rarer type grounds her interpretation of the world and human reality in an "idealistic" philosophy, and incorporates a large measure of "commitment." "Commitment," explains Barnes, "in the sense used to make the distinction, is a willingness to respond to need...however disturbing it may be to any preconceived ideas we may have. It is readiness to respond to other people, to engage with them in an exploration that may be self-revealing and disturbing,

prompting frequent reassessment, not only on what is outside ourselves but also of the kind of beings we imagine ourselves to be" (p. 33-34) [italics in original].

Barnes hits upon a theme in Macmurray's personalist approach which has only been alluded to so far. Although Barnes is taken up with the headmaster's duties of managing a school and therefore emphasizes practical politics, there is an underlying philosophical seriousness.

The engagement of one person with another demands a full opening of self to be authentic, to be genuine; but the exchange cannot stop there. If only the self is displayed, then it remains a static entity, invariable in its integrity, solid in its cohesiveness; "perceptible" but "unmoved" in Macmurrayan language. In his reminiscences of teaching at Wennington, Barnes hints that the most philosophically appropriate grounding for student-teacher relations includes an approach which sees the self opened to display and, through the process of being informed by the Other, being changed in ways leading to growth in both self and Other. The relationship between student and teacher must lead to such growth.

There is a resulting "pragmatism" which for Barnes is a practical demonstration of Macmurray's own beliefs that any philosophical theory must be relevant to real life to bother with. It is also anchored, says Barnes, in "the fundamental urge that moves us," love [Macmurray uses the term "friendship"].

> Love must indeed be the fundamental urge that moves us, the guiding light, but you
> cannot squeeze love into a moral pattern. It has to work within the complications of real
> life. Educational ideas and projects are often in the same category as ideals; they can be
> strongly held as what *ought* to be done (p. 34) [italics in original].

He makes a similar point when describing the instituting of student government at Wennington. The committed democrats on staff insisted the process begin early, while Barnes urged delay. The process went ahead, and failed. Again, says Barnes, the lesson is that cooperation works best when based on real needs with goals which can be articulated and shared. As Macmurray's personalist stance suggests, philosophy must be practical and the practical is found in real-life situations, not artificially contrived environments, or problems, or management techniques, or principles.

Men and women, and boys and girls, develop creative and well-founded forms of co-

operation better when they are responding to necessity than when they try to realize an ideal that they think is to be desirable....Our imagination is stirred by a need and leaps ahead. sometimes very far ahead, of our experience; it needs a discipline, and the sharper the necessity the more effective the discipline (p. 35).

Persons, Macmurray would agree, are problem-solving creatures who do best at bettering themselves and improving their environment when fully engaged with others.

What makes Wennington special as a school is that from the start children could not help but be aware of the challenges faced by adults as they attempted to create the school, almost literally from the ground up. They were given the opportunity to recognize the challenges being made available. Children and adults were deeply involved in creating — physically and emotionally — their own culture of learning.

The Curriculum

The structure of the daily curriculum did not differ in significant respects from that of many other residential comprehensive schools in Britain at the time. Classes were structured so as to allow the maximum amount of participation possible to students. The visual and dramatic arts received strong support. All students spent much time developing skills suited to personality types, interests, talents, and dispositions.

What was different, essentially so, was the degree to which all members of this learning community were involved in the physical development and maintenance of the school. The typical day began at 7 a.m. with kitchen assignments and a breakfast taken at one's own pace. Before the 8:45 a.m. assembly there was time for swimming, music rehearsals. cleaning of corridors and the pottery shed, and an assortment of jobs. Teaching periods numbered five in the morning and two or three in the afternoon. Tea was at seven with most evenings left free for students.

Class structure was rather conventional, but one innovation is worth noting. Each student was required to produce a research assignment every two weeks. Barnes explains this "made it possible to fit drama rehearsals, debates, music practice, and any other sporadic activity into an evening, without disturbance to class work. Sixth-formers were encouraged in this assignment

system, to behave as students rather than as school-children doing limited bits for particular occasions" (86). Barnes had to respond to the criticisms of those who expected Wennington to be a kind of Quaker Summerhill. Why had he not pursued a more creative or daring curriculum? His response is that experimentation at Wennington was based on "the fearlessly open kind of personal relationship" the teacher was encouraged to develop with students. Anything new would have to grow out of the life of the School, not from the imposition or adoption of ideas from elsewhere, however enlightened (p.86).

If Wennington was to be a school whose philosophical orientation was shaped by John Macmurray's personalism, then the emphasis had to be on the nature of relations between persons. How these are to be viewed and developed is what mattered most. Just how Chemistry. Mathematics. English and the other subjects of the curriculum were taught comprised a second-order priority, not a first-order one.

Reflecting on his attempts to use personalism as a basis for schooling, Barnes says he learned something about the nature of leadership in an educational institution which needs to retain its status as a state-sanctioned school and yet still offer an alternative to existing models of learning; to provide a culture of learning in which risk-taking is not merely academic but involves a much wider, fuller, and richer curriculum. He also warns that "it may be the pioneer was asking too much of the people," by not gauging well enough what kind of change, and how much of it was appropriate and when.

Barnes is skeptical of an approach which mandates progressivism. The idea of compulsion is repellent because of its authoritarianism. "The teacher who rebels against traditional ideas in education and substitutes what he imagines to be freedom, may be as remote from the reality of children's lives as those he rebels against. He may simply be taking children from one prison and putting them in another" (1980 p.107).

John Macmurray had been recruited as the first Head of the Board of Governors of Wennington, a post he would retain for virtually the entire existence of the school. The management style for which Barnes opted was meant to overcome what he terms the "traditional gap" between school and governing body. Members of the board were urged to be frequent visitors to the school. Macmurray himself, although now Professor of Philosophy and Dean of

Arts at the University of Edinburgh, found time "to help build the shelves for our Library." He attended meetings at end-of-term and frequently addressed the school on Sunday evenings (p.83).

Macmurray's determination to remain connected to Wennington in as practical a manner as possible is characteristic of his approach to participation in community life. Personalism is a philosophical perspective, not a standpoint. It does not urge quiet, reflective contemplation from a position of rest. The personalist is involved, *engage* as French personalists would say, in the very conditions in which the personalist finds herself or himself. Barnes makes a similar point when writing about change within schools; familiarity with a variety of institutions in which he worked as a teacher before founding Wennington taught him of this possibility. Bureaucratic structures are amenable to progressive development. And change as improvement is undertaken first by the recognition of the existence or prevalence of fear, and then its removal.

Macmurray maintains that fear, not hatred, is the great obstacle to authentic relations between persons. Fear compels a shrinking away from the Other, a narrowing of mind, a constricting of the heart, a shriveling of the emotions, and a crippling of the emotional reasoning we need to pursue our happiness, which is always found in others. Barnes applies the lesson to the administration of education. It is one he reports having learned while a teacher of science at Bedales School, a progressive-minded institution at which he taught for 10 years.

> The removal of fear implies the removal of anxiety, guilt, hostility, individualism, all the conditions that box up children — or adults — within themselves. That this was happening in the boys and girls could be seen in their faces, the way they looked at you, the interest and acceptance they showed. It established relationships of mutual trust. The removal of fear also set the mind free to explore, gave a child confidence in the ideas that came to him (p.19).

> He comments that "what one does creatively in education is a product, not so much of intellectual sorting out, as of what becomes built into one's personality as a result of what one goes through — in every dimension" (p.17). Naturally, openness of this kind comes at the cost of allowing oneself to be vulnerable and, in the context of schooling, for a teacher to abandon the defense mechanisms which normally first establish, then maintain, the distance deemed necessary between teacher and student.

In a personalist pedagogy, once commitment to the Other is made, once the opening of one's self to other selves is undertaken in the understanding that reciprocity is possible, then acknowledging that is necessary to our achieving the status of complete persons. "If we thought of education in community as a nourishment of the whole personality then we had to be prepared to accept, and meet constructively, all that is in humanity — so very much more than we are normally willing to meet in the classroom" (p.39). Any learning environment fashioned along lines taught be Macmurray had to recognize that society is built through friendship, not mere cooperation. As Barnes put it, "Because the School was a community rather than an institution, the inner life of the adults mattered as much as that of the boys and girls, perhaps even more, for a group of teachers divided among themselves and personally unfulfilled cannot establish the conditions for children to grow" (p.196).

Lessons from Wennington

Wennington School operated as a residential school for elementary and secondary students from 1941 to 1976. Perhaps fittingly it closed the same year in which John Macmurray died. A declining student enrolment, and the expectation that the school would meet national standards of compensation for its teaching staff were the reasons cited for closing the school. Barnes's personal qualities as a leader had always been singularly significant for the life of Wennington. With age came weariness and a decline in the energy available for the task.

In his concluding reflections on the meaning of Wennington School as an experiment in personalist community-building, Barnes offers some words of encouragement to those wishing to pursue a similar experiment, however modified, within their own learning cultures.

He points out that much media criticism of education is ill-informed because it almost always takes a narrow interest in instruction and skills. "What of the deeper education we have been considering?...What do careful observers find behind the facade of organization and marketable results? What of the needs of children as persons in relationship growing towards maturity, of the need for a creative and responsible community sense?" (p.216). The personalist perspective can help create a culture of learning that recognizes the importance of those affective needs.

Barnes contrasts the intimacy afforded all at Wennington and the general anonymity reigning in most schools. Other writers with philosophical perspectives compatible with personalism, such as economist E .F.Schumacher, reinforce Macmurray's and Barnes's aversion to gigantism in general and in schools in particular. Here Schumacher echoes Macmurray's own concern over the "organic" being used as a metaphor of human growth and social engineering.

> . This means the same as [Ivan] Illich's statement about the schools being the reproductive organs of the consumer society, for nineteenth century metaphysics had an ideal of unlimited progress, which meant unlimited production and an unlimited exploitation of natural resources, carefully provided by a Darwinian God (p.213).

If our ailment is metaphysical, Barnes says quoting Schumacher, then so must its cure be metaphysical. As education has become a tool servicing the interests of exploitative and rampant consumerism — a new form of barbarism, as maintained by education critics such as Henry Giroux — it has ceased to permit emancipation.

> Education which fails to clarify our central convictions is mere training or indulgence. For it is our central convictions that are in disorder, and as long as the present anti-metaphysical temper persists, then disorder will grow worse. Education, far from ranking as man's greatest resource, will then be an agent of destruction, in accordance with the principle *corruptio optimi pessima* (p.213).

Divisiveness in all its forms is anathema to Barnes. It is the pitting of persons against each other, a threat to the social fabric, and a condition always exploited by the politically ambitious. He asks,

> Can the necessary enduring commitment be anything other than an expression of the religious dimension of life and relationship? This means, not necessarily 'belief' or a theological pattern, but the awareness that brings all experiences, hopes, desires and actions, into an indestructible, growing and life-long coherence. It perceives that the future must be nourished by love and eagerness and it insists on action (p.204-205).

That the life-span of Wennington School was as long as it was is a tribute to Kenneth Barnes's talents as headmaster, and to John Macmurray's animating philosophy of personalism. Macmurray's ideas grounded the school in a perspective which allowed for both social and

personal development.

The School and Quakerism

From the very first, Wennington School was known as a Quaker institution. Kenneth Barnes and several members of the teaching staff were members of the Religious Society of Friends. Although most of the student body was drawn from non-Quaker households, the spiritual teachings of Friends — along with John Macmurray's personalism — were a vital part of the defining profile of Wennington.

As Macmurray developed his personalist philosophy he was increasing his involvement with the Religious Society of Friends. He had become familiar with Quaker approaches to social issues, particularly pacifism, prior to World War One. That interest had grown over the years to include a growing affinity with Quakerly ways on a host of issues, mainly in the area of social justice. Macmurray claims his philosophical stance enjoys a viability and authenticity independent of any theological position-taking and dogmatic assertions. I agree. But that is not to say that it must be divorced entirely from connections, at some level, with a spiritual community whose teachings were central to the founding and operating of Wennington School, and which will figure prominently in our understanding of what a Macmurrayan personalist pedagogy will look like today. To that end take a look at how Quakerism, has strongly-expressed tendencies which are recognizably personalist. John Macmurray sought as thinker and acting moral agent one goal throughout his professional life as an educator, and as an ipso facto moral theologian: to increase the Light.

The Religious Society of Friends, better know by the term Quakers, is a spiritual body which he long supported as an outsider. After leaving the shelter of the Church of Scotland, as we saw an effect of his experiences in the trenches, Macmurray spent many years on what I term a pilgrimage. Through his professional research and teaching as a metaphysician and moral philosopher he tackled those great social problems which plagued persons living through a century challenged by materialism and totalitarian politics of one stripe or another. He sought to offer practical advice grounded in a disciplined intelligence shaped according to pedagogical

principles based on his own personalist perspective.

Macmurray's very practical demonstration of personalism-in-action in his own life was to join the Society of Friends. The Society, so strongly--even foundationally--pedagogically-oriented, offered itself as an almost inevitable choice to the philosopher struggling to reconcile his analytical perceptions as an academic, his commitment to social betterment as a political actor, and his deep religious faith. After years of acting on the margins of the Society, but long-acknowledged as one of its most valued contributors and publicly-recognized associates, Macmurray took the final step of acknowledging that his own sense of duty and obligation required that he fully embrace the spiritual community which he had long served with distinction.

The purpose of the Society of Friends is to function as a corporate body witnessing to God's presence in the world. This is done through service both spiritual and social. Even in the pluralistic cultures in which Quakers find themselves today, there remains an overriding commitment to "seeking that of God in every man."

To understand the Wennington experiment in personalist education well one must understand the greater spiritual context in which it was developed. That was the Quaker experiment. The Society of Friends was founded not to reform society but to make a new world from the ashes of the old. Its mission was about more than civilizing, or domesticating life, but its consecration to God through an everyday mysticism generally bereft of dogma. In Macmurray, this essentially religious understanding of life was converted into a personalist viewpoint which, in turn, is the foundation of the pedagogy used at Wennington.

The purpose of the Society was not primarily to comprise yet another ecclesiastical body struggling to find its place in the competing marketplace of religions which was the agitated church scene of 17th century England. Such a movement toward evangelization was certainly part of the equation and Quakerism's founder, the spiritual Seeker from Yorkshire George Fox, spoke frequently of his vision "of a great people to be gathered."

The movement was founded by the nonconformist Fox after four years of wandering throughout northern England in search of spiritual enlightenment. He recalls in his *Journal* his encounters with leaders of the established Church of England and dissenters, none of whom could address his concerns. At age 23, in the fourth year of his wandering, Fox heard a voice

saying "there is one, even Christ Jesus, who can speak to thy condition." He later maintained this was a direct call from God to become an itinerant preacher and to promote the concept of the *Inward Light*, or *Inner Voice*. He believed that an element of God's spirit is implanted within every person's soul, a theological concept he called "the seed of Christ," or "the seed of Light."

This ability to access God directly and enjoy a mystical union with the divine was available to all and always had been. The practical implications for Quakerism as a movement were tremendous. If each person, regardless of station, intellectual attribute, or caste enjoyed potential union with God without benefit of mediation, then the elaborate ecclesiological structure was superfluous. And not merely an unnecessary add-on, but in fact an impediment to authentic spiritual sonship and daughtership with God. There was no longer a need for what Quakers dismissed as "steeple houses" (churches): prayer books, dogmatic theology and "compelled" interpretation; all rituals, gowns, creeds, dogmas, and other "empty forms" were "customs" to be avoided because they interfered with the worshiper's communion with others of the pure Light.

Friends were to worship in silence. At Meeting for Worship participants would speak only when they felt moved by the Holy Spirit. The worship style of Friends was frenzied in the early years of the movement's growth, but it settled into a more decorous silence as they found their spiritual grounding through daily and weekly practice of this meditative practice.

Fox's message proved enormously popular. It drew thousands to a rapidly consolidating spiritual movement offering freedom of thought, worship and expression. The mutuality inherent in the Quaker movement was proving appealing to large numbers of seekers in a century marked by much seeking. Fox abhorred dogma. He was quite clear about the nature of his own insights and "leadings" (obligations to action) to which they compelled him. However, he saw no merit in dictating experiences for his followers.

Historian and Quaker mystic Rufus M. Jones, explains in well in a 1937 World Conference of Friends report:

> The original message of George Fox which gathered the Society of Friends was never
> systematically formulated by him. It was essentially the faith, based on personal
> experience, that God and man have direct relationship and mutual correspondence. This

was not ...a doctrine, but a live and throbbing experience. George Fox kept his faith as concrete as possible and avoided, as far as one can, abstract phrases which tend to become mere words. The principle which he named 'that of God in man' as first of all for him a personal discovery that something not himself, something beyond himself, was operating in him as an invading spiritual power. He seemed to have found a central stream of life, flowing over the ocean of darkness and death, and revealing to him the infinite love of God present here in the world where we live (BYM, p.206).

The "experimental" faith (we might today use the term *experiential* or *existential*) which Fox and the early Friends experienced soon led to positions which over the past three centuries have developed into mandates to action.

The Quaker emphasis on the personal experience, the convincement that such an experience is an innate part of what it is to be a human person, deeply impressed itself upon Macmurray. His philosophical project, which we know as a "dynamic" perspective rather than a "static" one, is premised on this core idea. The human person can know God. Every person's dignity is comprised of that fact alone. The possibility of God-relatedness is the characteristic which distinguishes human beings from the rest of Nature. The human person is not only a natural creature, but a supernatural one.

Patience, guidance from loving others, and nurturing within a disciplined community will help anyone recognize the bond of union, the experience of the one Divine Light. This inward experience is then shared in outward action. Both elements are essential. The knowing of God leads inevitably into action for God, action for and through love, or again as Macmurray preferred to say, in action through "friendship." The latter term, perhaps less emotive than 'love', permits Macmurray's non-Christian or non-believing readers to take his philosophical approach seriously on their own terms. The choice of words is not accidental, surely, and it remains appropriate. The avoidance of overtly theological language, or damagingly sentimental terms, is necessary to allow for an intelligent and unbiased debate on the merits of Macmurray's ideas.

The form and manner of Quaker worship is based on silence, the spirit speaking from within, and its validation through consensus within the community. The gathering of the

community for worship is a model available for understanding the corporate or communal implications of Macmurray's personalism. Macmurray agrees with all other Quakers that meetings for worship are for action, not for contemplation. As stated above, Macmurray does not value contemplation as sufficient in itself. It must issue in action, activity, engagement with the Other.

A pedagogy grounded in the teachings of John Macmurray's framework of personalist philosophy, can help educators to fashion a culture of learning which can contend with today's challenges. It can do so by combining two elements necessarily existent in Macmuray: The individual person's presence, and that person's reliance on community to inform a total environment of support. This perspective can be sharpened by adopting the postmodern element of polyvalency, or multiplicity of voices, and investing it with a sense of social or corporate responsibility.

A number of present-day critics of education have articulated positions not terribly different from that of Macmurray. For example, any coherent personalist pedagogy can well benefit from the work on "caring" produced by Nell Noddings, and John P. Miller's "Holistic" curriculum. The benefit available with Macmurray is that his work provides a comprehensive theoretical framework within which these post-modern views may be accommodated. The most significant contribution in that regard is that Macmurray's approach is a required corrective to some serious deficiencies in the post-modern models.

CHAPTER TWO

Personalism and the Postmodern Context

Before looking at how a personalist pedagogy can be renewed or reinvigorated with an infusion of contemporary thought, we should examine how profoundly postmodernism has influenced educators over the past three decades or so. The challenge of postmodernism is serious. It questions the very meaning of "meaning," and the human ability to convey such through narrative structures. John Macmurray's personalism, and any pedagogy deriving from it, is anchored in the root metaphor of our culture — the Biblical narrative in all its depth and many-nuanced subtleties. Macmurray's defense of a "meaning-full" universe is further advanced by consideration of schemes of personalist psychology based on Macmurray's insights.

The Submergence and Resurfacing of Personalism

With the closing of Wennington School ended an important chapter in personalism. Wennington had been the first school where the curriculum and human relations were fashioned through personalist principles articulated by John Macmurray.

Macmurray was never a teacher at Wennington, but, as Chair of the Board of Governors, he retained a lively and enthusiastic interest in the school, its students, and its teachers. In an unpublished manuscript, Macmurray wrote that in its "effort to make the school itself a society of friends, the development of the personal lives of their pupils" was the primary focus at Wennington (quoted in Creamer, 1996, p.17). Macmurray's spiritual presence was manifested through the personalist stance adopted by the school's headmaster, and some of its teaching staff. The devotion of Kenneth Barnes to John Macmurray and personalism fostered two books, but in neither of these did Barnes formally articulate a *personalist* pedagogy.

After the Wennington experiment, Macmurrayan personalism, as an undergirding philosophy for any pedagogical enterprise, virtually disappeared. A few personalist scholars, mostly those connected with the traditions of personalism at Boston University, did write a little on personalism and education (Bertocci, 1979). However, the record is scanty. The very word "personalism" is apparently rarely heard in most departments of philosophy, and aside from one journal and its accompanying website on the Internet, references to this orientation are

difficult to come by in the academic literature. It is hardly existent at all in educational thought.

Since the late 1960's and early 1970's, a new generation of scholars of education has arisen. The philosophical orientations and perspectives which many of these writers have adopted do not necessarily have much in common with each other, but generally they stand at some variance to that of personalism. These approaches vary from the neo-Marxist critical pedagogy of Henry Giroux, to the ethics of Nel Noddings, through the "education-as-the-practice-of-freedom" community represented by writers such as Paolo Freire and bel hooks. Many of these platforms fit under the umbrella of "postmodernism."

One of the few features they share is a denial of the transcendent. However reality may be interpreted, they maintain, it cannot be done with reference to "meaning" as lying outside of human agency. Baldly, and perhaps crudely stated, they adopt Nietzche's stance that God is dead and we must learn to live without Him anymore. All cultures and their artifacts, including the metanarratives, are human-made and radically subjective.

The Voice of Suspicion: Postmodernism

The postmodernist environment is the one in which a great deal of current theorizing about education is taking place. It is an attitude prominent in faculties of education around the world, and so, singularly influential upon persons training to become teachers. Defining the term is a difficult, but necessary, exercise.

A good starting point is available with Jean-Francois Lyotard, who writes: "I define postmodernism as incredulity toward metanarratives" *(The Postmodern Condition*, 1984, *xxiv)*. In his work Lyotard argues that no one set of rules, no one story, no one condition, accurately explains knowledge and communication. No one interpretation of life and the historical process, un real in any case, can be "priveleged" over and against another. Postmodern theorists warn us that we should all be aware of instances of privileging one set of ideas over another.

Lyotard reports that postmodernism is continually being refined: "The emphasis can be placed on the powerlessness of the faculty of presentation, on the nostalgia for presence felt by the human subject, on the obscure and futile will which inhabits him in spite of everything." What one moment challenges our ideas, our senses of how things are, becomes, at

the next moment, that which we seek to challenge (*The Postmodern Condition*, p.79).

This concept of "privileging" information is at the core of the postmodernist stance. Many discourses among postmodernist thinkers deal with ideas of what is "privileged" and what is "silenced" or suppressed. The concern here is postmodernism's view of metanarratives, the interpretive stories present in cultures and civilizations which assist their members to make sense of the world and their place in it. For example, the Bible is likely the greatest metanarrative of Western Civilization. When understood in the sense in which Canadian scholar Northrop Frye does, the Bible is the "great code" our civilization has used to create the mythologies of art and story essential to interpretation and for self-understanding. To postmodernists, the Bible is an example of a metanarrative in need of deconstruction. Any of the conventional Biblical interpretations, of whatever stripe, miss the mark by failing to appreciate the essentially contingent nature of the Bible. And, since there is no transcendent reality beyond the physical (and what human beings construct with the physical), then the whole notion of theism, of meaning being inherent in life, is absurd.

Further, the privileging of metanarratives have political and historical consequences. Many postmodernists argue that the Biblical metanarrative was central to Europe's sense of itself as a cultured civilization advancing the work of God. When its civilization-building enterprise encountered peoples with radically different perspectives in the 15th and 16th centuries, e.g. the First Nations of the "New World," the Bible was, of course, "priveleged" while the Amerindian cultures and their metanarratives were "silenced."

Postmodernism, explains American scholar Gertrude Himmelfarb, started as a school of literary theory, but it has become prominent in other disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, law, theology, history, and education. Deriving from Friederich Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger, and others, its more immediate progenitors, and most frequently cited authorities, are Jacques Derrida and Michel Foucault. Derrida is generally associated with such "deconstructionist" ideas as the "aporia" of discourse, the indeterminacy and contrariness of language, the "fictive" and "duplicitous" nature of signs and symbols, the dissociation of words from any presumed reality. Foucault is more directly responsible for the emphasis on the "power structure" immanent in language, not only in the particular signs and ideas that "privilege" the

"hegemonic" (or "controlling") groups in society, but in the very nature of rational, logical, coherent thought — "logocentric," "totalizing," "authoritarian" discourse, as it is characterized (Himmelfarb, p.1-11).

In her useful textbook, Nel Noddings explains postmodernism more simply as "more of a mood than a movement" (*Philosophy of Education*, p.72). Yet, considering the number of scholarly books, professional journals, and international conferences and assemblies associated with self-described postmodernists, it is difficult not to qualify Noddings's statement as disingenuous. The postmodernist approach is a quite substantial "movement."

Noddings points out that "capital-T truth" is non-existent for postmoderns, a chimera, an illusion which was founded on an epistemology (theory of knowledge) now understood to have been based on metanarratives and symbol systems which collapse under the scrutiny of dispassionate deconstruction. Such views stress the priority of the social to the individual; reject the universalizing tendencies of philosophy; prize irony over knowledge; and give the irrational equal footing with the rational in our decision procedures. Postmodernism is a cultural sensibility. There is no purpose, perspective, or real objectivity. Without these, how can there be knowledge in the traditional sense? How can fields of inquiry which maintain that knowledge can be produced and tested against an authentic existing reality through impartial inquiry be acknowledged as authentic? In answer to the first question, There cannot, and in answer to the second question, there is no validating authenticity.

Therefore, the hallmark of postmodernism is the precommitment to relativism in relation to questions of truth. To use the language which has become characacteristic of the movement, one may say that postmodernism represents a situation in which the signifier (or signifying) has replaced the signified as the focus of orientation and value. The implications for a Macmurrayan personalism will be made apparent later.

In terms of the structural linguistics developed initially by Ferdinand de Saussure, the recognition of the arbitrariness of the linguistic sign and its interdependence with other signs marks the end of the possibility of fixed, absolute meanings. Thus, writers such as Derrida, Foucault, and Jean Baudrillard argue that language is whimsical and capricious, and does not reflect any overarching, absolute linguistic laws. It is arbitrary, incapable of disclosing meaning.

Some postmodernists maintain that contemporary society is trapped in an endless network of artificial sign systems, which mean nothing of themselves. They merely perpetuate the belief system(s) of those who created them.

One aspect of postmodernism which illustrates this trend particularly well, while also indicating its obsession with texts and language, is deconstructionism. Deconstructionism is a critical method which virtually declares that the identity and intentions of the author of a text are irrelevant to the interpretation of the text, prior to insisting that, in any case, no meaning can be found in it. All interpretations are equally valid, or equally meaningless. Himmelfarb points to Paul De Man as a postmodernist who "has gone so far as to suggest that the very idea of 'meaning' is fascistic and is to be resisted as contrary to the free expression of the human intellect" (Himmelfarb, p. 29). We begin to appreciate postmodernism's comprehensive skepticism, and its deep commitment to a secularist view of human reality. It is a skepticism which traces its lineage back to Rene Descartes's fashioning of his own questioning approach to human truth and certainty.

Opponents of postmodernism are said to support the Enlightenment project — "that is, the project to improve the condition of humanity through the proper understanding and application of reason" (Noddings, p.73). Macmurray never doubted the validity of epistemology as a legitimate area of philosophical reflection.

We know from Chapter 1 that Macmurray's disagreement with the western tradition of philosophy was in how, precisely, with the working of reason was understood by Descartes and his successors. We are "knowing and oughing persons" because of our feelings, Macmurray insists. The correct approach to philosophy will recognize and reconcile the natural harmony which exists between the "intellective rationality" of reason, and the "emotive rationality" of feelings. There is not the slightest reason to suppose that Macmurray ever thought that the work of philosophy, from the pre-Socratics to the Existentialists, was a suspect enterprise the way so many postmodernists appear to suggest. Again, and this must be understood clearly, Macmurray believed in rational thought; he simply suggested that rational thinking had taken a wrong turn with Cartesianism, the ancestral echo of both modernism and its offspring, postmodernism.

Postmodernism in Education

When the postmodernist perspective is applied to the field of education, it results in findings which reflect the larger themes of the movement: radical diversity, the distorting and compromising effects of "asymmetrical" power, and the discontinuities to human discourse because of the specificity of languages.

Burbules (1995) looks at these themes where he suggests the following: Firstly, multiculturalism, embedded in a world of instant communication, taxes "the human ability or willingness to understand one another or to pursue potential agreement with one another" p.(3). Secondly, public and private opinion are too easily shaped and manipulated by power dynamics too few of us recognize or acknowledge. This asymmetrical power compromises even our good acts and intentions. Thirdly, our languages are "diverse, and non-congruent," and place limits on what and how human persons can hope to genuinely communicate "all matters of truth, value, and so forth" (p. 4). His conclusion repeats the postmodernist theme of a new kind of doubting:

> Postmodernism can be viewed as, at heart, a kind of doubt...It is fair to ask what kind of doubt it is. It is not a Cartesian doubt: a doubt which says that whatever is not clear and certain must be rejected....Cartesian doubt was always doubt in the service of seeking certainty. ...We return to the very different connotations of the term "incredulity" (Lyotard), an inability to believe — an inability to believe in modernism anymore, or to believe in it in quite the same confident way. But what we are incredulous toward are our own presuppositions and procedures (Burbules, p. 10).

But the doubting seems to have reached its limit, even with some postmodern critics. Feminist writers have availed themselves of the new critical perspectives offered by postmodernism, deconstructionism, and structuralism, only to find that the values they wish to introduce can be assailed by the doubting perspective they have embraced. Highly specialized discourse couched in complicated, hard-to-understand vocabulary accessible only to initiates, seem to compromise the postmodernist claim of seeking a more authentic form of human freedom. Nel Noddings is a philosopher of education who has carved out, in feminist reflection, a position which combines many valuable insights of postmodern thinking with a process of human caring remarkably similar to that described by John Macmurray.

Before leaving this consideration of the postmodern perspective, it would be valuable to know how Macmurray himself, who died in 1976, might have responded to its challenges. Although it is pure speculation, the exercise provides some satisfaction, and can help us understand how the connection between Macmurray and Noddings can be made.

Critics of postmodernism attack the position on various grounds. Most of these are of technical interest only and have no place here. However, one critique is worth presenting because it suggests how Macmurray himself might have addressed postmodernism, had he lived long enough to engage it.

Martin Gardner, an American writer on science and mathematics, has an interesting postscript, in one of his books, in which he addresses postmodernism. Gardner is only a little younger than Macmurray and, like him, trained in philosophy and mathematics. Their writings indicate they share a similarly unconventional theistic perspective, although there is no reason to believe either man ever heard of the other. Gardner writes of postmodernism as a kind of solipsism (the belief that *only* oneself and one's experiences exist). He is worth quoting at length too, because of his idea of "correspondencies":

> [A] few scientists and followers of... postmodernism defend a curious kind of social solipsism. These thinkers do not doubt that there is a world "out there," independent of human minds, but they insist that science, even mathematics, is not a progressive discovery of objective truth but merely a cultural construct, a useful fiction fabricated by human minds. The belief of scientists and ordinary people that science is a cumulative process for discovering how the universe is constructed and how it behaves is dismissed as myth....Of course no realist denies that culture has a strong influence on how science operates, and even on what mathematicians do, but this is to say something trivial. The significant point is that in spite of cultural trends, regardless of science's corrigibility, the plain fact is that science gets ever closer to an understanding of nature.... The accuracies of science rest on correspondencies between statements about nature and the actual structure of a universe not made by us. Such statements are, obviously, part of culture because everything humans say and do is part of culture; but if the assertions of science did not correspond with great accuracy to the laws of nature, such accuracies would have

to be viewed as a monumental set of miraculous coincidences (Gardner, p.363-364).

I make no claim for the "scientific" validity of Macmurray's personalism, but I do maintain that his philosophical perspective provides just the sort of "correspondency" that makes it possible to construct a pedagogy not subject to the suspicion, or corrosive skepticism, of postmodernism. The correspondency is found in the work of a postmodernist "fellow traveler," a scholar who has been critical of the educational development of recent decades, who uses much of the analytical instruments shaped by postmodernists, but who remains an independent thinker: Nel Noddings.

Noddings and Macmurray: Mothering and the Ethics of Care

To Noddings, schools should be more like families where caring is the theme that runs throughout. Academic disciplines, society, developmental psychology, all these may have their place in fashioning the curriculum, but the dominance one or another theme has enjoyed in the past has not measurably improved learning cultures because, at heart, these approaches are about control and manipulation. Her critique, here, recalls the postmodernist one of "asymmetrical" power. She writes in *The Challenge to Care in Schools: An Alternative Approach to Education*:

My argument against liberal education is not a complaint against literature, history,

physical science, mathematics, or any other subject. It is an argument, first against

an ideology of control that forces all students to study a particular, a narrowly

prescribed curriculum devoid of content they might really care about. Second, it is an

argument in favor of greater respect for a wonderful range of human capacities now

largely ignored in schools. Third, it is an argument against the persistent undervaluing of

skills, attitudes, and capacities traditionally associated with women (1992, xii).

The richer approach is to see the learning community, such as the classroom, as a family. Admittedly it is a large family, but as a mother of 10 children, Noddings is in an excellent position to write knowledgeably about large families.

We will pretend that we have a large heterogeneous family to raise and educate... How

shall we educate them?...I will suggest education might best be organized around centers

of care: care for self, for intimate others, for associates, for acquaintances, for distant

others, for non-human animals, for plants and the physical environment, for the human-made world of objects and instruments, and for ideas (1992, xiii).

As Pinar (1995) observes of the Noddings perspective, "Importantly, the curriculum designer is not a bureaucrat, or even a theoretician; she is a mother." (p. 694). This is the first and foundational point of contact between John Macmurray's personalism and Nel Noddings's feminist ethic of care. At this juncture the two philosophers connect with their respective examinations of one seminal idea: mothering as essential to being a person.

Macmurray describes the mother-child relationship as the bond which "creates the framework in which all later motives will be shaped." Noddings, too, recognizes those very implications of the infant-child relationship. She applies the lesson to education specifically. She says so in terms which are virtually Macmurrayan:

> Much of the time I will speak as the actual mother of a heterogeneous family, and I will draw freely on personal experience to illustrate my points. Indeed, one of my points will be that we cannot separate education from personal experience. Who we are, to whom we are related, how we are situated, all matter in what we learn, what we value, and how we approach intellectual and moral life (1992, xiii).

Noddings recognizes, like Macmurray, that an ethical caring depends upon the "natural caring" that come from one's maternal rearing. She writes, "We love, not because we are required to love but because our natural relatedness gives birth to love. It is this love, this natural caring, that makes the ethical possible," (1984, p. 43). Again with Macmurray, she speaks in the language of the personalist:

> A new child is not just "flesh of my flesh" but a genuine other whose appearance may or may not mirror mine....I look at her face not as a reflection but as a genuine, unique subject who gazes back at me. The very heart of this ethic is the receptivity that allows the other to enter my consciousness in all his or her own fulness — not as a set of facts I have gathered. The result of our encounters will not necessarily be love...Rather, we are prepared for the whole range of human emotions when we meet the other, but recognizing our mutual otherness, we reject violence (1995, p.194).

It is on this most basic and elemental of relationships that all forms of human relating are

based, including the form of teaching. Care, and its corollary of compassion, do not contradict thought and reflection, they are its basis. Feelings may motivate but they require, even lead to, intellectual activity:

> An ethic of care does not eschew logic and reasoning. When we care, we must employ reasoning to decide what to do and how best to do it. We strive for competence because we want to do our best for those we care for. But reason is not what motivates us. It is feeling with and for the other that motivates us in natural caring (Philosophy of Education, p. 138).

Connecting thinking about being human with the earliest experiences of the human person are important to Macmurray. He wants to counter the imagery associated with the "organic" metaphor of development often attached to the primal mother-child relationship. He opposes "the widespread belief...that the human infant is an animal organism which becomes rational, and acquires a human personality, in the process of growing up" (Persons, p. 44).

Human infants, being totally helpless, are "made to be cared for." Macmurray does not doubt that animals are endowed with instinctual drives which allow them to attain a self-sustaining status relatively early in their life development. But the maturation process amongst human beings is quite long and involves complex emotional support, as well as physical maintenance. Human development "is not simply biological but personal, a need to be in touch with the mother, and in conscious perceptual relation with her" (1961, p. 49).

Macmurray goes so far as to say that mothering need not be restricted to females, which is generally the case among animals. Male humans can occupy mothering and nurturing roles as effectively as female humans. "A human infant does not necessarily die, like an animal, if his mother dies in childbirth....A man can do all the mothering that is necessary..."(1961, p. 50).

Looking further at Macmurray's infant psychology, we find *communication* as the key to understanding the nature of the person. It is not that he acknowledged communicative abilities amongst human persons alone. He recognized that various forms of communication are observable in nature. But these, he argues, "are not definitive."

> In the human infant — and this is the heart of the matter — the impulse to communication is his sole adaptation to the world into which he is born. Implicit and

unconscious it may be, yet it is sufficient to constitute the mother-child relation as the basic form of human existence, as a personal mutuality, as a 'You and I' with a common life (1961, p. 60).

For Macmurray, this is the beginning of what is elementary, basic, and essential in all human persons: shared experience. Human behaviour inherently contains within it "a reference to the personal Other." That reference is carried out and through communication within the matrix of human sociability.

All this may be summed up by saying that the unit of personal existence is not the individual, but two persons in personal relation; and that we are persons not by individual right, but by virtue of our relation to one another. The personal is constituted by personal relatedness. The unit of the personal is not the 'I', but the 'You and I' (1961, p. 61).

Personal life is the life of objectivity, Macmurray says. It is the life of relation to the world of other people; of capacity to behave in terms of that which is other than our self. Because personal life is not based in our biological nature, it cuts across all racial and sexual barriers. Macmurray's position makes it only logical to recognize that restrictions and barriers to human relationships such as class division, sexism, ageism, and other forms of discrimination, are obstacles to the personal life, and therefore irrational, since they conflict with our most basic natural impulse: sociability.

Further, human sociability is quite unique. "That man is social by nature is true, but highly ambiguous. Many animals are social; yet no species is social in the sense in which we are, for none has the form of its life determined by communication. Communication is not the offspring of speech, but its parent," Macmurray writes in *Persons in Relation* (p. 67).

The Place of Martin Buber

There is a further connection between Noddings and Macmurray which needs to be pointed out. It is quite significant because it suggests, quite strongly in fact, that if Noddings had been aware of John Macmurray's work, she would quite possibly have founded much of her own theorizing upon his philosophical insights.

The bridge between these two writers, so widely divided in time, is the figure of the

Jewish Existentialist writer Martin Buber.

A story is related by John E. Costello, S.J. in his introduction to Macmurray's *Reason and Emotion.* Costello writes: "In his one and only meeting with Martin Buber, after three hours of conversation Buber is reported to have said, 'I see no point on which we differ. It is simply that you are the metaphysician and I am the poet,'" (Costello, xix). For his part, in private correspondence, Macmurray would later write of Buber, "I met him once and was wholly at one with him" (quoted in Creamer, 1996, p.17).

Our interest in this exchange is simply that Noddings considers Martin Buber one of her chief sources of inspiration in matters philosophical. In all her major works (1984, 1992, 1995) Noddings returns to Buber to illustrate her themes. She depends upon him particularly when considering her ideas of "encounter," "inclusion," "I-Thou," "receptivity," and "relation" as the basis of teaching. Although Noddings does not subscribe to the Existentialist school — neither did Macmurray, by the way — she does find some writers from this strand of continental philosophy especially useful. Buber's poetry, the factor which seems to appeal profoundly to Noddings, is well illustrated by the following quotation which she includes in her textbook on educational philosophy:

> Trust, trust in the world, because this human being exists — that is the most inward
>
> achievement of the relation in education. Because this human being exists,
>
> meaninglessness, however hard pressed you are by it, cannot be the real truth.
>
> Because this human being exists, in the darkness the light lies hidden, in fear
>
> salvation, and in the callousness of one's fellow-men the great Love *(Between Man*
>
> *and Man,* quoted in Noddings, 1995, p. 172).

The spiritual kinship between the two men can be made more explicit by comparing the above with this observation from one of Macmurray's radio talks later published in a collection of writings for sixth formers in British Quaker schools.

> Whenever we are driven into the depths of our own being, or seek them of our own
>
> will, we are faced by a tremendous contrast. On the one side we recognise the pathetic
>
> littleness of our ephemeral existence, with no point or meaning in itself. On other side, in
>
> the depth, there is something eternal and infinite in which our existence, and indeed all

existence, is grounded. This experience of the depths of existence fills us with a sense both of reverence and of responsibility, which gives even to our finite lives a meaning and a power which they do not possess in themselves. This, I am assured, is our human experience of God. (Quoted in Quaker Faith and Practice, s26.11)

The spiritual and philosophical kinship between these two men is such that it is quite likely that Noddings would find in Macmurray's personalist philosophy a theoretical framework appropriate for her purposes.

The Need for the Spiritual

Both Noddings and Macmurray value spirituality highly. In her several books and many interviews (Halford, O'Toole) Noddings repeatedly maintains that as life "is a moral quest," room must be made within it for a spiritual dimension. As we have already seen in Macmurray, the spiritual was a key element in understanding the historical process, and central to the exercise of reason.

Noddings views her understanding of spirituality as shaped by a feminist reading of the human experience; one in which the spiritual traditions are recognized as liberation movements attempting to bring forward "much more equality and egalitarianism" (Halford, 1999). After all, she insists in the same interview, "...feminism is not antagonistic to spirituality."

In that same interview Noddings is asked the following question: *There's been an explosion of general interest books about various aspects of spirituality. Why do you think there's such interest in spirituality now?* Here is her answer;

> Because people are longing for the sacred. Even those of us who have rejected institutional religion still have that longing. If spirituality is removed entirely from schooling, if it becomes a topic that is more or less forbidden in everyday conversation, then that longing becomes repressed until people go out and buy books about spirituality (Halford, 1999).

Her view, that education "is a multitask, multigoal enterprise" requiring a spiritual dimension, meshes easily with that of many contemporary educators who argue for a more spiritual interpretation of teaching and learning. Books (Pinar, 1995, Glazer, 1999), and

magazine articles (Miller and Hunt, 1999) testify to the need, apparently felt by many teachers and thinkers in education, for a connection with transcendental, or spiritual, values. The conventional, mainline religious communities and churches in which many of these writers were reared no longer seem to offer a suitable context within which this approach to spirituality may be fashioned. That is one reason why writers of critical pedagogy like bel hooks use themes drawn from Buddhist, as well as feminist, sources for their analysis of the proper purposes of education (hooks).

The Contribution of a Personalist Psychology

Macmurray's personalist project may be described as a virtue theory that rests on a religious reading of the social narrative. It is meant to be self-comprehending moral philosophy in action: The free moral agent acknowledging his environment and, being a fully-engaged moral agent, building fellowship. As such, Macmurray recognizes that participation in a personalist program must be open to other disciplines, particularly psychology which, of course, grew out of philosophy in the first place. Macmurray's realization is based on his idea of what constitutes legitimate science which must proceed from a purely theoretical perspective.

> A philosophy which excludes certain questions on the ground that they belong to the field of psychology is giving itself the form of science, and so becoming a pseudo-science.... What I am doing is to remove the limitation which results from adopting a purely theoretical standpoint and to reassert the inclusiveness of philosophy by thinking from the standpoint of action. If thinking is one of the things we do, then the question, 'What motive have we for doing it?' becomes an essential element in any philosophical account of thought (1961, p. 132).

As we have seen, Macmurray possessed a keen interest in psychology, particularly in the bonding processes of mother-and-child. His perspective makes the point by connecting moral action with knowledge of motivation. We can know ourselves very well, particularly since our "selves" are co-creations which come about because of our relationship with others. Macmurray maintains we are responsible for the degree of clarity there is in our own thoughts. We have the means to explore inwards as well as outwards. Our minds need not be *terra incognita*.

Macmurray would agree that psychological consciousness and moral consciousness are very closely related.

In *Self as Agent*, Macmurray provides four maxims, or categorical rules for thinking. which apply to both his philosophical analyses and his work in psychology. The importance of the maxims lies in that they assign a dual role to the person. One is both agent (actor) and subject (acted upon). The roles are distinguishable but integrated.

1. The Self is agent and exists only as agent.

2. The Self is subject but cannot exist as subject. It can be subject only because it is agent.

3. The Self is subject in and for the Self as agent.

4. The Self can be agent only by being also subject (p 100-103).

In *Interpreting the Universe*, Macmurray writes that personality is understood "in the nature of inter-personal consciousness," or a relationship (p.134). When we look at his proto-psychological understanding of friendship we arrive at the keystone of Macmurray's philosophy. and it is here too where we must acknowledge that no "private" or "individualistic" perspective can take root.

> The key to the nature of personality, and so of reason, lies, then, in the nature of
> interpersonal consciousness. or, in plain terms, in the nature of friendship. Friendship
> is the name we give to such relationships between persons as are fully personal, that is
> to say, in which one person is consciously related to another person in terms of his
> personality (1933, p.13).

Interestingly, Macmurray points out that two persons may share a conscious relationship which has an ulterior motive, perhaps a shared goal or a common purpose. Such a relationship is then "of the organic type," and therefore functional and *not* personal. Better still, a deep animosity *is* a personal relationship precisely because there is no common purpose. or joint project. or extrinsic cooperation implied. In other words, relationships of intense dislike are probably genuinely personal while merely cooperative ("function-driven") ones are not. The rational, Macmurray says, is achieved and expressed only within the authentically personal relationship.

The psychologies which have strongly influenced education over the past fifty years have sprung from three main sources. The first two are Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, and B. F. Skinner's behaviouristic theories. Macmurray would labeled both these schools "mechanistic" because of the reliance on instinctual drives, in the first instance, and automatic responses, in the second. A third source, arguably more influential than either Freudianism or Skinnerism amongst educators, is Humanistic Psychology, which originated with Abraham Maslow and was most fully articulated in practice by Carl Rogers. The enormous growth of the "human potential movement" has been guided by the principles underlying the ideal of a "self-actualized person." Humanistic education has been a staple of teacher-training programs in many faculties of education, and many teachers have incorporated principles of humanistic psychology in their practice (Coulson, p. 83).

But the depth psychologies of the various schools of psychoanalysis and humanistic psychology cannot serve the purposes of a genuine personalism, according to critics like Crosby, Coulson, (a co-researcher with Carl Rogers), and Seifert (1995).

Hans Furth, of The Catholic University of America, is another psychologist who has articulated a personalist perspective (1982). Furth, who worked at the Center for the Study of Youth Development at the Washington, D.C. university, is the only clinical or academic psychologist who has mined Macmurray's work for its potential psychological insights. He summarizes his findings in seventeen themes which he calls "theses."

Furth reports that his work on Macmurray's personalism, as articulated in the Scottish philosopher's mature work (*The Self as Agent*, and *Persons in Relation*), "is a powerful framework for a comprehensive study of human development, and for a contructivist-relational theory of knowledge." (365). Furth teased out the themes, provided some personal interpretation, and compared these to then-current (1982) psychological notions.

A detailed examination of Furth's work is useful for three reasons: It is one of the very few recent investigations or applications of Macmurray's personalism; it gives us a rich insight into the psychological possibilities of that personalism, and, finally, because several of Furth's theses — particularly theses 11 through 17 — are key to understanding how a Macmurrayan personalist pedagogy will work in a learning culture.

<u>Furth's Seventeen Macmurrayan Theses</u>

Thesis 1: *Action and Knowledge*. Action is the starting point of this philosophy. In the 'I do' of the action is the implied 'Other' which, "offering resistance and support," gives direction to the action. All action is carried out towards, and for, this 'Other.' "The person as **agent** participates in existence and determines the other positively. The person as **subject** withdraws form existence and, therefore, determines the other only negatively or theoretically (emphasis added).

Thesis 2: *Reason*. The rational nature of an action is such as long as the agent recognizes the 'Other' objectively, e.g. as different from one's self, and as existing in its own right. The main function of reason, or rationality, is "the capacity to act objectively," not to "think objectively."

Thesis 3: *Intention*. Agency, the ability to engage is action, is the critical characteristic of a person. An action is personal when it is intended. Intention is unreflective, it is connected to the act as the act is being carried out. The intention-to-act cannot be divorced from the action itself, and it has nothing to do with results since these may or may not coincide.

Thesis 4: *Three Inclusive Realities*. A person's reality includes the body, its biological organism, its matter, or material substance. It then follows that personal action is also organic behavior and material fact. The exercise of intention (Thesis 3) must include organic motivation as well as material causality, therefore. Furth argues that this inclusion rule "abolishes the knowledge-created dualism of mind and body." The personal is the ground from which everything else rises. It is the "primary and inclusive reality from which other forms of reality are derived by an abstraction of exclusion." Furth further maintains that philosophizing or creating psychologies of human understanding grounded only in the physical or organic "cannot end in the personal without logical contradictions and ... inadequacies, as is amply documented by the Western history of thought."

Thesis 5: *Determination and Freedom*. Much of our biological lives develop according to recognizable processes. These processes are observable through the sciences. Objective facts and laws can be derived from these observations. The personal is not (fully) determined and it

can shape the future. Furth says a "determinate act," such as blinking one's eyes, is not an "action" in the personalist sense. It is a fact or event. He explains this difficult concept:

> According to the inclusion rule (thesis 4) personal actions include determinate (organic and material) components which are content for scientific inquiry...The biological development of reason...in the form of autonomous knowledge...provides the 'determinate' instruments of 'indetermined' openness and freedom. This (more apparent than real) paradox between determination and freedom can only be camouflaged or denied to the detriment of an integrated conception of psychological reality" (p.367-368).

Furth therefore maintains that, with Macmurray, a free will can not only exist with a degree of determinism, but is compelled to do so by virtue of being "embodied."

Thesis 6: *Material Reality*. Mechanics rule the world of matter, a reality conceived as a whole, the parts of which relate to each other through a series of predictable, knowable laws. Furth says the material world conforms to a *continuant* (law of inertia) "where every change is a transformation of invariant energy and is due to an external or mechanical causality."

Thesis 7: *Organic Reality*. Species evolve and individuals (animal and human) grow and decay through time. Through the evolutionary process to which individuals and species are subject, "preforms" of knowledge appear. The initial feelings of discomfort eventually give way to consciousness after having passed through phases such as specific sensing, discrimination, and perceiving. Developmental patterns of childhood have showed this clearly. The preforms act as motivators for ongoing behaviors, further maturing.

Thesis 8: *Personal Reality*. Commencing in infancy within a dependence model, personal reality evolves into a matured relationship with surrounding others. We grow into knowing our 'selves' as different from, but connected to, other 'selves.' Reason is the instrumentality that allows each self to explore and get to know (to a greater or lesser degree) all other selves. Our choices may be more or less adequate, more or less right. Furth explains it this way:

> According to the three levels of reality included in the personal, actions are **morally** good or bad to the extent that they contribute to interpersonal fellowship; they are **functionally** correct or incorrect insofar as they are successful in achieving a useful means-end relations (instrumental actions); they are **esthetically** satisfactory or

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unsatisfactory insofar as they are pleasing as an end in themselves (p.368-369. emphasis added).

Thesis 9: *Organic Base of the Personal.* A person acts in an unreflective manner when action, intention, and knowledge-in-action function properly. Furth says separate and reflective forms of knowledge derive from this base. We are acting persons whose carrying-out-of-actions necessitates the organic and material (the body). Action, intention, and knowledge operate in the ambient of the personal, while behaviour, motive (based on the emotions), and consciousness operate in the ambient of the organic.

In Thesis 9 Furth summarizes Macmurray's consideration of the mind-body problem. Given the challenging nature of these ideas, it is worth using Furth's own words.

> Organic behavior reflects organic motive patterns (emotions) that function in the habitual continuant fashion of subrational reality. Habitual behavior is a subjective reaction of the organism to prevailing conditions: the (undifferentiated) organism is cognizant (at different levels of consciousness) to motivating external or internal states. In contrast, action intends an objective relation, that is, a response to the apprehended nature of the other (as different from the knowing self) which could be one's own internal state apprehended as an object. In other words, while the knowledge dimension at the personal level is rational and informs a (more or less) rational action, the preknowledge dimension at the organic level, including unreflective consciousness, is purely motive and informs organic behavior (p.369).

Thesis 10: *Habit Formation.* Furth says Macmurray's psychology allows organic behaviour to "shade" into the personal level when recurring components of personal tions are relegated to the organic level of habitual behaviour. The greater part of almost any action proceeds automatically because of habit formation. While operating "on automatic," as it were, saves psychic energy, Furth maintains that it is here, in habit formation. that the "problematic" of personal relations is found. He writes:

> For the present rational and personal action is grounded on patterns of automatic and organic motives which derive from the person's physiological conditions and the personal history of habit formation. As Freud amply documents, many motives contribute to one

action, and they may be far from being positively integrated amongst themselves. Thus, actions may have results contrary to the 'best intentions' of the moment (p.369).

Thesis 11: *Beginnings of the Personal.* The bond between mother and child creates the framework in which all later motives will be shaped. Positive emotions of love for the other are played off against negative emotions of fear for the self. Macmurray says that the authentically 'personal' is found only in adults. The infant operates mostly at the organic level. "When does a child become a person?" one may ask. Macmurray answers that the question is inappropriate. It assumes that the concept of the person is an "isolate," which the person is not. A human being, even a child-not-yet-person, cannot be abstracted from what Furth calls "the concrete realities of interpersonal relations." Even "weak and vicarious" infants inhabit the human web, and can have no life without it.

With Thesis 11 we see how this psychological reading of Macmurray's work makes its way into pedagogical thinking. These ideas are developed in Chapter Three, especially in connection with the concept of "caring" articulated by Nel Noddings.

Thesis 12: *The Other.* The field of action exists to allow the meeting of other persons, rather than the response to events or the manipulation of things. The other is support and resistance. Experience in life is directed to others, not directed to self. In terms of child development, Furth recognizes the presence of the Other as quite similar to Piagetian concept of the "permanent object."

From this primary fully personal relation derives in the course of the child's development the relation to the other which is experienced as organic and material reality (e.g. Piaget's permanent object). This is a secondary personal relation: it is secondary because the object is limited to the non-personal, but it is still personal because it is abstracted from primary personal relations, and contains the personal component of the self-as-agent (p. 370).

Thesis 13: *Community.* The community, whether it be a school, or town, is the context within which one personal other deals with all other personal others. It is meant to be supportive of interpersonal relations in the direct and unconditional manner in which caretakers look after children. It is here that "relations of mutual reciprocity between equals" (friendship) can develop. Macmurray clearly says the functioning family is the first circle of community. As a human

being grows into personhood other circles are added, school, workplace, nation, humanity.

Thesis 14: *Association.* Impersonal and indirect relations dealing with matters such as politics, economics, and other means-ends dealings are played out in terms of association. Macmurray uses the term "society" to signify that grouping of persons who undertake cooperative ventures that do not require direct personal relations. When securing the success of a project is the aim, it does not matter if one's fellows are "friends" in the personalistic sense.

Thesis 15: *Morality.* Fully personal morality is expressed in the commitment to maintain personal community. Justice is the "minimum form" which morality takes to regulate interpersonal relations. Furth suggests that "interpersonal relations are moral to the extent that they are subordinate to the overriding personal morality (of maintaining community)."

Thesis 16: *Reflective Activities.* Macmurray maintains that the human context is that of *knowing-in-action.* The elements of this term can be unpacked to understand where our reflective activities come from. When the "action" dimension is withdrawn, and the "knowing" dimension is used exclusively, then the space is created for reflective activities. *Religion* and *philosophy* — all myth-making instrumentalities — allow for rational reflection on the whole of personal relations. When the world is considered an end upon which may be exercised contemplation, and a measure of satisfaction to our emotional rationality, then the result is *art.* Those activities that reflect on the world as means-to-an-end constitute *mathematics* and *science.*

Thesis 17: *Order of Rational Activities.* Furth agrees with Macmurray that in any personalist hierarchy of values the topmost position is maintained "in mature relations and experientially lived in friendship relations." This provides the only authentic, "unconditionally objective," knowledge that is not in need of extrinsic justification. *Action* is the principle of verification by which all knowledge is to be evaluated, or appreciated.

> This in no way denies the legitimacy of theoretical activities aimed at improvement of
> knowledge. It points to the limit of an intellectual knowledge that treats the world as a
> *means*, or artistic knowledge that treats the world as an *end* (p.371).

This detailed look at Furth's examination of Macmurray's personalism helps us appreciate the richness of the philosopher's contribution. His philosophy is not only relevant to human development but is based upon the possibility and necessity of such development.

The Personalist Psychology of Paul Vitz

Another psychological program worked out in a personalist approach closely resembling that of Macmurray's is that of Paul Vitz of New York University. Vitz first warns us against other psychologists whose work, he maintains, involves a Cartesian individualistic reductionism centered around the 'I think.' "In this dominant psychological tradition objects are seen to be the products of individuals' thinking and reasoning processes," he writes (Vitz, p.25).

The personalist, Vitz argues, will see this as an ideologically biased perspective. Instead, the 'I think' should really be understood as a 'we think' since a person's thinking is simply not merely one person engaging in thought. Thinking, he maintains, is an activity involving more than one. Like Macmurray's argument that a person is truly herself when in relationship with the Other so, from the psychological perspective, thought is not purely private, because "it is initially a social construct before it is a private mental event" (Vitz, p.26).

Yet another psychological authority supporting a Macmurray-like personalism is L. S. Vygostky who maintains that other people always have a key role in developing and maintaining any given social or historical context. In his terms, "an interpersonal process is transformed into an intrapersonal process" (Vygostky, p.57). The basis, then, of the "I think" exists in the prior foundation of the social world; the interpsychological precedes and shapes the intrapsychological (p.732).

Macmurray does not say so directly, but there is an implied and necessary distinction in his thought between the terms "person" and "individual." The distinction is important in order to fully appreciate Macmurray's interpretation of distinctions between "society" and "community." Vitz articulates the difference plainly when he maintains that "...in important respects a person is the opposite of an individual, for a person comes into existence by connecting with others, not by separating from them" (p.27). The "individual" is a creation of the modern state, a political entity or unit with immanent qualities. The "person" is imminent too, of course, but as personalism has it, also possesses transcendent value. There is real danger in prizing the "individual" over the "person." A version of the "Slippery Slope" argument makes the point. Personalists argue that the process of becoming an individual is fraught with danger and usually ends with a assertion of "radical autonomy"— either overtly and self-consciously or not— which is destructively

nihilistic in effect.

> By making the self the center of personality, all modern theories of personality remove people from reality, from the external world created by God and filled with real others...[T]hese theories of the individual are intrinsically subjectivistic....the essential logic of becoming an individual — that is, of separating and distancing the self from others — eventually gets carried to its logical extreme. First, you break the "chains" that linked you to parents, then to others; then even to society and culture. Finally, you reject the self itself; that is, you separate consciousness from the illusion of the self. You end up rejecting the self and all its desires — and thus the process of separation culminates in an experience or state of nothingness. Radical autonomy ultimately means separation from everything; it means total or ultra-autonomy, where even the self is gone (Vitz, p. 28-29).

The destiny of the individual here portrayed is not particularly appealing, or would not appear so, were it not for the fact that only a slightly different interpretation of the process is proving popular among some leading pedagogical thinkers. Several currently active intellectuals (hooks, Halifax, O'Reilley) writing about education have endorsed values and approaches taken from Asian philosophies, particularly Buddhism. Buddhist ideas about the "self" and the idea or concept of the "personal" are at sometimes-considerable variance from traditional Western ones. The disintegration or disappearance of the very idea of a "self" is one of the cardinal points of Buddhist teaching. According to Buddhism, of course, there is no ultimate reality, there certainly is no God, and the universe is a Cosmos indifferent to our existence. This movement or trend is worth noting here, though its long-term effects cannot be discussed in detail. Perhaps this development among pedagogical critics is one kind of reaction to the overwrought rationalism and utilitarianism of our culture?

In *Interpreting the Universe*, Macmurray writes that personality is understood "in the nature of inter-personal consciousness," or a relationship (134). When we look at his proto-psychological understanding of friendship we arrive at the keystone of Macmurray's philosophy, and it is here too where we must acknowledge that no "private" or "individualistic" perspective can take root.

"The key to the nature of personality, and so of reason, lies, then, in the nature of interpersonal consciousness, or, in plain terms, in the nature of friendship. Friendship is the name we give to such relationships between persons as are fully personal, that is to say, in which one person is consciously related to another as a person in terms of his personality" (p.13).

Interestingly, Macmurray points out that two persons may have conscious relationship which has an ulterior motive, perhaps a shared goal or a common purpose. Such a relationship is then of "the organic type," therefore functional and *not* personal. Better still, a deep animosity *is* a personal relationship since there is no common purpose, joint project or, extrinsic cooperation involved. The rational, he argues, is achieved and expressed only within the authentically personal relationship.

We see, then, how a trans-personal psychology meshes easily with Macmurray's philosophical insights. The Scottish moral philosopher's personalism agrees that the human person, created in community and sustained in mutuality is called to *love* and *forgive*. Vitz points out that these two imperatives stand in contradistinction to the more prevalent programs in social psychology where the individual is called to *trust* and *forget*.

These two imperatives are essential to recognizing Macmurray's personalism as a lived context. To be truly a person means to possess historical consciousness, and to engage in relatedness with the Other. The 'love' of which Vitz speaks is what Macmurray terms 'friendship.' The 'forgiveness' which Vitz says we owe to one another is part of Macmurray's deep respect for the historical process as being endowed with meaning. The universe *is* personal, after all, not indifferent to human life and personal being.

Friendship Through Caring: Towards a Renewed Personalist Pedagogy

What would a "personalist" classroom shaped according to the ideas of John Macmurray look like today? To answer that question one must realize that Macmurray's theoretical contribution to understanding the nature of the human person cannot, by itself, draw the picture for us without interpretation. Macmurray's most productive period was the 1930's to the 1960's. The landscape of pedagogy has changed in significant ways since then, and the closing of

Wennington School. Thus the need to recontextualize Macmurray's personalism. That is done by referring, again, to the work of Nel Noddings, and adding to it the insights of a personalist pedagogical interpretation offered by Thomas Ewens, and American philosopher and psychoanalyst.

Noddings has long advocated a Deweyan approach to education. She finds in his writings much that is relevant today. She adapts John Dewey's progressive approaches with her own interpretation of relationships which, as we have seen, are strikingly sympathetic to that of John Macmurray. But the perspective of Noddings itself needs further grounding in personalist philosophy. That is why her insights have been interpreted within the context of a Macmurrayan personalism. Macmurray's thought is more comprehensive and more sensitive to the historical process, and the development of human culture. His view, I maintain, is complete and comprehensive. Noddings offers contemporaneity as a former teacher and university professor and researcher. Her work is rich with insights from the psychoanalitic research of scholars like Nancy Chodorow, and Carol Gilligan.

Ewens (1989) has approached the structuring of curriculum with Macmurray's idea of science and art as "reflective activities" as the organizing principle. Linking this interpretation of Macmurray with Noddings's "centers of care" will prove fruitful.

Centers of Care

The hallmark of Noddings pedagogy is her concern with creating "centers of care." She identifies these as caring for: **the self** (physical life, spiritual life, occupational life, and recreational life), **the inner circle** (relations with equals and unequals); **strangers and distant others** (the immediate and more distant communities); **the ecosystem** (animals, plant, the earth); **the human-made world** (tools, cultural and aesthetic artifacts); and **the intellectual world** (mathematics, sciences, the arts). Within and about these centers the various elements of an experiential curriculum can be put together.

Equally important to Noddings is the centrality of moral education. Such education from the care perspective has, she writes, four major components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation (1995, p.190).

Modeling is the principal way in which teachers teach care, by demonstration. Human relations must teach what it means to be a "carer" and a "cared-for." *Dialogue* seeks to explore the meaning of caring within community (the classroom), and to teach students a critical perspective. Noddings calls this "engrossment"; a "nonselective form of attention that allows the other to establish a frame of reference and invite us to enter it" (p.191). By *practice* she means both the action of carrying out acts of caring, and the process of reflection which follows it. This pattern reinforces internalization of the process, the "training of minds." Community service can be one way in which practice is made available. Finally, *confirmation* is each person's acknowledgment of that which is good seeking to emerge from every other person. It is recognizing that all seek to do good. Trust and continuity are essential to confirmation. That means that teachers should teach the same students several years in a row in order to develop the level of trust required.

The Noddings perspective on modeling needs to be embedded more securely if a genuine personalistic pedagogy is to be sustained along Macmurrayan lines. I believe that "modeling" is most appropriately embraced if a stronger metaphor is recruited. That metaphor is the idea of *vocation.*

Teaching as a Covenanted Vocation

The narrative of man's relationship with God is central to Macmurray's understanding of history-as-meaning, and revelation-as-truth. Allowing his Christian perspective to influence our interpretation of the teacher's role is therefore legitimate.

To teach is to exercise an agency of moral action within the context of learning institutions. In order to see the teaching act, the pedagogical moment, in its true light we must divorce ourselves from the functional vocabulary which has come to dominate the practice. Government agencies, academics, school boards, and teachers themselves have long been using an occupational lexicon to describe what has always been an essentially moral task. Much of this lexicon was embraced in an effort by teachers themselves to acquire enhanced status as "professionals," along with the commensurate financial compensation (Hansen, 1994). The effort has been ongoing since the end of the 19th century and has been closely associated with the

project of secularization within the larger culture. A personalistic view of the teaching role sees it as "vocational" in the classic sense of "a call to be answered." There are elements of compulsion, submission, and service to this. It is not merely a matter of choosing to engage in one profession rather than another. However, as Hansen suggests, vocation does not imply "a one-way subordination" to the craft (p.2).

> Vocation describes work that is fulfilling and meaningful to the individual, such that it helps provide a sense of self, of personal identity. Again, this means that many activities can quality as vocational....However,....being a teacher would not be vocational if the individual kept the practice at arm's length, divorced from his or her sense of identity...[in which case] the person would be merely an occupant of a role (p.2).

A more important point made by Hansen is that vocation presumes "a hopeful, outward-looking sentiment," a desire to engage the world, and, quoting Dorothy Emmet, "presupposing an inner urge to venture and devote oneself in working in a first-hand kind of way."

Hansen goes on further to argue that the sense of vocation is not a "possession" of its holder. There is little of choice in the matter. "Rather, it is a set of impulses that are outward-looking, and outward-moving, focused on what is 'calling' one to act — impulses that derive from awareness of social practices themselves...The sense of being impelled from within is coterminous with a sense of being called by something without" (p.3).

Of course it is at this point that we can usefully refer to the idea of "covenant." It too, certainly in its use in the Bible, has a strong element of compulsion. There is a midrash (rabbinical interpretive tale) which illustrates the point well. Before the Hebrews were granted the revelation of the Torah, which would be their way of life for generations to come, God had offered this gift/grace/burden to all other nations. These had all, perhaps wisely, declined the awesome responsibility of a partnership with the creator and unique God of the universe. Finally, God makes his "offer" to the Jewish people, but as he does so he holds Mount Sinai over the heads of the entire multitude. Reluctantly, but wisely, they submit to this call "by something without."

Teaching is about the exercise of a moral agency. The relationship between teacher and his or her students is a moral one even if the relationship lacks warmth or rapport. In terms of a

personalist pedagogy, the attempt must always be made by the teacher to create and sustain an environment of "caring" and compassion which includes the pedagogical responsibility, but which can transcend it. Hansen points out the disposition for service the teacher displays is an orientation that "is not so much ideological as it is temperamental" (p.5). The teacher's vocation is shaped by its covenantal call which binds him or her to the community of learners, and this call and covenant have a large degree of uncertainty.

We recall that even God's covenant with the Hebrews is, to put it crudely, not a sure thing. Uncertainty, the unknown, the unmeasurable, the unpredictable vagaries of human nature are standard themes of history. The creative responses of Judaism to the extraordinary pressures throughout the centuries have shaped this remarkable faith community. Similarly, the unpredictable, the chaotic, are the leaven within the teaching profession. Hansen points out that "those uncertainties, rather than being cause for anxiety, help account for why teaching is such an intriguing and attractive endeavor" calling, as it does, for a creative and individual (personal) response from every practitioner.

Use of metaphorical language continues with reference to another covenant, this time the Christian one. Writing on how to reconcile communities and dominant institutions through readoption of "metaphoric roots," Keiser and Keiser make pertinent observations about teaching in a personalist mode.

While the Hebrew story is covenant-as-narrative to which the community as a whole is bound to the Other (God), the Christian story is covenant-as-relationship with the Other in the immediacy of personhood. About being teachers, Keiser and Keiser write,

> We teach what it is to be a self in the world by embodying an image. We manifest, however unwittingly, how to respond to the world — in defense or openness — how to relate to ideas — as alluring or threatening; how to respond to each other — competitively or cooperatively. We show rather than tell... how to relate to time; what to do with the repetitive, the unexpected, our failures, memories, hopes, and the cycles of the year that include low energy and ebullient periods. And we teach, or fail to teach, how to learn to go on learning. Finally, we teach how to deal with any formal systems, be it mathematical, scientific, historical, literary, or artistic (p.109-110).

The personalist curriculum is a means to an end. The curriculum has, as its end, the shaping of a person who can engage others in mature relationships directed towards the furtherance of genuine friendship,as well as the satisfaction of personal and/or communal needs.

The Question of the Disciplines

In an early reappraisal of John Macmurray's philosophy, British philosopher Philip Conford, writing in *Radical Philosophy*, makes the observation that the Scotsman's work makes it possible to reassess the typical adult view of children as persons to be molded. Conford reminds us that Macmurray teaches that the artistic impulse is present in all people. and constitutes the emotional rationality which, when partnered with intellective rationality. makes us truly persons.

Conford reminds us that Macmurray said children "are not material to be molded...(t)hey are potential creators of society." (Macmurray, 1935. p.90). Conford argues that this change in outlook mandates curricula and methods "capable of educating the emotions." (Conford. p.19).

Conford then suggests the following: "...we would need to consider how far the cultural environment of society is a hindrance to the achievement of such an aim. So the question ceases to be philosophical and becomes instead practical, requiring solutions in the educational and political spheres" (p.20).

By "philosophical," Conford means, of course, "merely theoretical." He realizes that taking seriously the philosophical approach urged by Macmurray implies a commitment to the real social change which would be necessary to make personalist pedagogy flower. This is why the contribution of Noddings is so important. She offers a contemporary vision, accessible thanks to its grounding in a feminist critique of society. Now, given a certain openness to such arguments in academe and the larger schooling community, it may be possible to influence local leadership, professional and lay, toward a pedagogy of caring founded upon Macmurray's personalism. But to work as theory these personalist ideas must sustain and support a curriculum which will be recognizable as practical, useful, and relevant. Observes Conford: "This should not be surprising after we have been considering the ideas of a philosopher who took the unacademic view that the purpose of thought was indeed to assist us in solving the practical

problems presented by life" (p.18).

Noddings maintains that to be successful, teachers need to empower students. To do that, teachers need to be empowered themselves. They require, she says, "an integrated form of education, not a highly specialized education concentrating on one discipline" (1992, p.178). Noddings goes on to write that an overemphasis on the "discipline" character of curriculum-making (specific subjects such as History, Geography, Geometry, etc) detracts from an authentic education. While she values expertise, it cannot be permitted to occupy center stage in the classroom. In its stead she recommends,

> we should strive for a superbly well-trained capacity for inquiry and a Socratic willingness to pursue wisdom....It means...that teachers should be willing to discuss matters on which they have no specific training — all the matters pertaining to human existence — and help students to create and learn powerful methods of investigation (p.178).

A case study on art and education which both Noddings — from a feminist ethic of care — and Ewens — from a Macmurrayan personalist perspective — addressed separately, will demonstrate precisely how Macmurray's ideas can shape a relevant, contemporary pedagogy.

In 1985, the Getty Center for Education in the Arts issued a report on art education. The report called for Discipline-Based Art Education, or DBAE. Art education, the report says, should comprise aesthetics, art criticism, art history, and art production, and therefore look more like, and be structured along lines similar to, those of other academic disciplines. Many art educators approve of these recommendations, according to Noddings (1992, p.159).

Noddings chooses to address the reports recommendations at length in *The Challenge to Care in Schools* because "its current direction illustrates the major mistakes I have been criticizing throughout this book" (p.159). She considers the recommended changes "wrongheaded," because they go in precisely the wrong direction. She criticizes the approach as "highly cognitive (and appealing) to the same linguistic and mathematical/logical capacities that support the rest of the curriculum"(p.159).

She argues further that "students who are really talented in art will be disenchanted by the standard cognitive approach. The people who will do well...are just the people who do well

generally in academic courses" (p.161). Noddings articulates her concern in the context of art as being a refuge for many students who cannot adapt easily to cognitive models of learning. Their own aesthetically-grounded styles have gone unrecognized and unappreciated. All the disciplines suffer from such a narrow approach. And now the learning of art will become subject to a similar emotional straightjacket if the Getty Center recommendations are widely implemented.

> But I wonder, if you do this, what will happen to all those young people who for years have found the art room the only place in school worth attending, whose interest in art has kept them in school long enough to qualify for a chance at life's standard goods. Of course it is clear by now that I reject he disciplinary approach to general education, but the example of art underscores the features that worry me most (p.161).

For his part, Ewens uses Macmurray's personalism to critique DBAE. He maintains that there is a general misunderstanding around the notion of "discipline." Ewens broadens his approach to include science as well as art since, he argues (using Macmurray's phrase), both are "modes of reflection" (Ewens, p.3).

Ewens explains Macmurray's position in the following manner. Science and art share commonalities, the first being that they are both activities of reason. Of course we know that science is particularly cognitive, while art is closely bound to our emotional states. Ewens embraces Macmurray's understanding of reason. He argues;

> All our reflective activities are rooted in reason, not just our intellectual activities; the capacity for self-transcendence (the capacity to act consciously in terms of what is not ourselves), or objectively, is as characteristic of our emotional rationality as it is of our intellectual rationality (Ewens, p.4). He has a place for rigor; it is a task and a challenge, and its achievement, along with that of objectivity, "is a sign of success."

> Art and science are intimately connected, as we know Macmurray maintains. To repeat his view, the instrumental use of sense perception is as characteristic of scientists, as it is of artists. The various sciences are ways we have devised for seeking the means to achieve our purpose, hence, technology.

> But sometimes, says Ewens quoting Macmurray's argument further, "we live in our

senses instead of using them...[and] the sensuous activity is its own end," (p.5) [emphasis added]. Aesthetic/artistic sense perception is of this kind. The arts are sensuous: they both derive from, and appeal to, our seeing, hearing, touching, and movement and the emotional attunements that undergird them. Our relationship to our senses in the arts is thus much more fundamental and profound than it is in the sciences (Ewens, p.5).

Since the relationship is so deep it allows the artist in us, and our students, to attend to matters of fact. Artists, says Macmurray, are every bit as disciplined in their observations as any scientist. "The experience of value is not a different but rather a fuller experience than the experience of the fact which is valued," Macmurray writes in *Religion, Art, and Science* (p.32).

In his application of Macmurray's personalism, Ewens examines another element which should be addressed here, the matter of "contemplation." Macmurray's language is difficult here, but his argument worth following.

Ewens says that "contemplation" has two qualities: "looking" and "reflecting." The first is a looking "that intends to know the object itself, not to know about it." This is not scientific knowing, but a concentration of artistic energy "upon the individual existent in all its wondrous richness." He then uses Macmurray's words to explain that the artist's looking is "systematic, purposeful, critical, and usually prolonged" (Ewen p.7).

"Reflecting" is inseparable from "looking." "Knowing is an activity," he writes, adding: The reflective activity of the artist is strikingly different from the exclusively intellectual reflective activity of the scientist...It is not intellectual but emotional (which means) that the artist not only apprehends the object as matter of fact but that he also apprehends it in all its affective resonances as good or bad, frightening or alluring, and so on. The experience of valuing something is more inclusive and richer than that of merely apprehending it as a matter of fact (p.7).

That is why Ewens agrees with Macmurray that persons must trust their emotions and feelings even more than they trust their thoughts. Therefore, a pedagogy based on Macmurray's personalist principles will seek to educate children in how to use their emotions as tools for learning and growing.

Ewens writes that "things cannot be rightly or correctly thought unless they can rightly

and correctly be felt and, in that sense, rational thought depends on rational feeling" (Ewens, p. 8). This interpretation of Macmurray's thought surely meets with Noddings's approval. In her ethics of care approach, Nel Noddings has provided an ethical basis for this personalist pedagogy, as well as the systematic curriculum structures built around this theme.

In *Reason and Emotion*, Macmurray writes: "The emotional life is not simply a part or an aspect of human life....It is the core and essence of human life. The intellect arise out of it, is rooted in it, draws its nourishment and sustenance from it, and is the subordinate partner in the human economy" (p.75).

Conclusion

We have considered here the question of John Macmurray's contribution to pedagogical thought. Our survey of his philosophical stance, and its comparison to some strands of contemporary theorizing — particularly Nel Noddings's ethics of care — give a clearer picture of Macmurray's value to thinking about education.

Macmurray's personalism provides the architectonic structure within which specific issues in education, such as the concept of the disciplines in relation to curriculum design, can be creatively addressed. In *Reason and Emotion* Macmurray quotes William Blake's phrase "the refinement of sensuality" as the aim of a process of education where children are taught to feel for themselves, as well as to think for themselves. "The emotional life is inherently sensuous," Macmurray points out (1935, p.70).

More broadly, Macmurray's personalism is trusting, self-reflective, critical, readily accessible, and democratic. It opposes positions, particulary postmodern ones, which are distant, ironic, suspicious, mired in obscuring language, and solipsistic. A personalist pedagogy founded on John Macmurray's thinking may be called a "pedagogy of risk," or a "covenantal pedagogy," since the Other — and all "others" — are indispensable to the self.

With Macmurray, we "feel" our way to our own personhood through openness to what Macmurray considers the supreme value, friendship.

In friendship we are beyond law and obedience, beyond rules and commandments, beyond all constraint, in a world of freedom. But did not Jesus say, 'Ye are my friends

if ye do whatsoever I command you'? Yes, he did. We, on our side, are apt to miss the quiet humour of his paradoxes. 'These are my commandments,' he goes on, 'that ye love one another.' In other words, the friendship of Christ is realised in our friendships with one another. His command is that we rise above commandments, and therefore his obedience is perfect freedom. *Make service your centre, with its laws and duties and self-sacrifice, and life is a bondage. Make friendship the centre, and life is freedom* (*Quaker Faith & Practice*, s22.04) [emphasis added].

Macmurray's philosophy of personalism helps us recognize the moral compass each person possesses, and which each can help the other use as we all make our way in a moral, because personal, universe. Reinvigorated with the ethics of care advocated by Nel Noddings, the personalist stance provided by Macmurray transcends and overcomes the postmodernist doubt. It also corrects those positivistic pedagogies which are mired in a misguided understanding of rationality. By stressing the centrality of relationship, a personalist pedagogical praxis has as its goal, not only conceptual clarity, or advocacy of a particular form of school organization, but also a transformed, and liberating, way of life.

APPENDIX A: HISTORICAL SKETCH OF A PERSONAL UNIVERSE

A philosophy of education which aims at sustaining a particular pedagogical perspective has two objectives. It must first ground itself in a wider philosophical field, such as metaphysics, and it must detail how much a grounding in theory informs praxis — the practical aspects of teaching to be informed by the theory. The first element is a necessary broad framework which at least suggests that the philosophical ground staked out possesses enough depth and heft to deal with a raft of issues other than the narrow interests of pedagogy. The second is theory-in-action, the in situ demonstration that the framework is valid for both its wider purpose and the more specialized function it serves when informing pedagogical reflection.

John Macmurray (1891-1976) provides reflective educators with a framework within which a rich and compassionate pedagogy may be fashioned. It is grounded, or embedded, in a philosophical point of view called "personalism," which is devised to contend admirably with larger issues, as well as the pressing needs which learners, teachers, and administrators have in relating with the cultural contexts most familiar to them. Macmurray's personalism is the theoretical framework within which a comprehensive ethic of care can be sustained.

Personalism is not a form which philosophy takes, nor a particular school of thought. Personalist thinkers of all stripes, and certainly John Macmurray, maintain that it is the fundamental approach or position which philosophical inquiry should take. Personalism seeks to analyze the meaning and nature of all personal existence by setting *a priori* that the very meaning we seek and the very nature we enjoy are to be found in the personal. It is a perspective which assumes the validity of a real, authentic, genuine Self. Personalists of all stripes argue that this Self can be explored by philosophical inquiry and its hidden parts exposed to the light by the appropriate use of the human sciences.

To John Macmurray personalism is about action, not discussion, movement, not quietism, the practical, not the theoretical. The personal is the hallmark of being. In his writing, academic and popular, and especially in his many broadcasts with the BBC Radio Service in the 1930's and 40's, Macmurray stressed the necessarily practical effects of reflecting philosophically. But his withdrawal from a purely scholarly career came at a price. "The price he paid for believing that his subject is about the world, not words, is neglect" (Conford, p.16).

<u>Varieties of Personalism</u>

We need to acknowledge the varied sources of Personalism because, although this examination of Macmurray's ideas rests on a reading and interpretation of his original contribution to the field, the overall value of Personalism to pedagogy can benefit from the broader perspective.

The following sketch of the personalist scene sets the stage for an appreciation of the unique contributions which John Macmurray has made to the field.

Though some personalists are idealists, believing that reality is constituted by consciousness, there are also realistic personalists who hold that the natural order is created by God and not constituted by human consciousness. While most personalists are theists, there are also atheistic personalists. Among the idealists there are absolute personalists, panpsychic personalists, ethical personalists, and personal idealists, for whom reality comprises a society of finite persons, or an ultimate person.

On a broad view it is rather difficult to say where the philosophy of personalism begins. Some claim that the roots of the movement go back to the very beginnings of philosophy itself in the Mediterranean basin and the Greeks. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle offered considerations on the nature of the person. The first more concrete reflections on personhood are found in Boethius who famously defines the person *"est naturae ratinonalis individua substantia"* ("an individual substance of a rational nature"). The list continues through the early Church Fathers, and Augustine, to Thomas Aquinas, the Scholastics and neo-Scholastics of the Middle Ages, not excluding the Muslim thinker Avicenna.

Modernity in philosophical writing may be said to begin roughly with the writings of Rene Descartes and Thomas Hobbes (Lavely, 106). It has produced both rationalist and empiricist schools of thought. But this view is quite broad indeed. Narrowing the lens will allow us to focus on specific contributions by generations of scholars whose work has helped create the contemporary personalist perspectives to include Macmurray's own version.

Personalism's current expression has its roots in 19th century thought amongst European philosophers and theologians. Friederich Schleiermacher used the term *'Personalismus'* in his *Discourses*, published in 1799. John Henry Newman, the celebrated light of the Oxford

Movement who converted to Roman Catholicism took holy orders and became a cardinal prince of the church, was, by 1830, speaking of "the method of personation." Another British thinker, John Grote, called his metaphysical approach "personalism" [in *Exploratio Philosophica*, 1865] (Lavely, p.108).

Something like personalism can be found in the work of philosopher-psychologist Rudolph Herman Lotze's work *Mikrokosmus* (1856-1858), and in psychologist William Stern's *Person und Sache* (1906). These thinkers would be enormously influential in shaping the personalism found later in the United States. The German tradition of personalism was advanced by phenomenologist Max Scheler (1874-1928). This phenomenological approach to personalism was key to the thinking of several French philosophers later, and, incidentally, to the thought of the current Pope, John Paul II (Karol Wojtyla).

The French scene proved one of the most fruitful for personalist thinking. Starting with Charles Renouver's *Le Personalisme* in 1903, a steady stream of thinkers produced a coherent approach to the human condition which spoke movingly to many. The central figure of French personalism is Emmanuel Mounier who wrote *A personalist manifesto* in 1938 and other works throughout the 1940's. Mounier's development as a public intellectual in France during a time of great trial is an interesting parallel to John Macmurray's own career as respected popularizer of philosophical, and particularly ethical issues, during the Great Depression and the Second World War.

Gabriel Marcel, Jacques Maritain, and Emmanuel Levinas can all be considered personalists. Their intellectual careers in France and on the continent enjoyed a very high profile and so their philosophical ideas, whether clearly identified as personalist or not, served as patterns and models for further inquiry. The British scene appeared to be much less receptive to personalist trends and this fact served to isolate Macmurray even more than his unorthodox commitment to Christianity already had.

Personalism arrived in the United States at the beginning of the 20th century. It established a foothold at Boston University where it enjoyed preeminent status. The chief of American personalists was Borden Parker Bowne who had studied with Lotze in Germany. The Boston School, as it was known, became the principal defender and advocate of personalism in

the New World, at least among secularists and liberal Protestants. If French personalism was closely identified with the Roman Catholic Church and its institutions, the American cousin in Masachussetts definitely was not.

Macmurray's personalism, as with all forms of personalism, takes personal categories seriously. Macmurray declares that, in a technological age, philosophy faces a constant temptation to become a *techne*, a mere technique or formal method which addresses problems of no real significance to ordinary persons. Compounding the problem, nearly all philosophical discourse is carried out using a language inaccessible to most ordinary, intelligent persons. Personalists, says Erazim Kohak, maintain that too many philosophers, including those interested in educational issues, operate on the unspoken assumption that ultimate reality is impersonal. For them, he says, reality is either intrapersonal matter in motion, drives, and gratification, such as that found in psychoanalytic schools of thought, or it is suprapersonal, as in a Hegelian interpretation where all are subject to 'History' or 'System' and where no one person can count for anything since all are subject to the impersonal disposition of History (Kohak, p.6).

In other words, personalists tell us that most philosophers say we are manipulated by instinctual drives or manipulated by the forces of destiny. The problems that occupy many contemporary philosophers are again not the problems of persons, but problems of textual scholarship or of conceptual systems. The language used to present these matters is usually impenetrable; a highly-specialized jargon which may serve some purpose as a professional shorthand, yet too often is used as a barrier to prevent access and retain ownership.

Kohak has stated well how personalism denies that discourses of subpersonal processes or superpersonal forces are adequate for capturing the concept of the world and the structure of moral reality.

> Personalism is a philosophy predicated upon the irreducibility of personal categories, that is, the kind of categories that govern the meaningful interaction among personal beings — categories of meaning rather than cause, of respect rather than force, of moral value rather than efficacy, of understanding rather than explanation. While we recognize

that legitimacy of materialistic categories derived from the metaphor of matter in motion and of vitalistic categories derived from the metaphor of need and satisfaction of certain purposes, we regard them as derivative, special case theories legitimate within the basic framework of personal categories. It is moral categories we consider epistemologically and ontologically fundamental, not merely a peculiarity of human subjects but most approximating the ultimate structure of reality (Kohak, p. 8).

Macmurray, always cognizant of the obligation which a public intellectual owes the community outside academe, developed a style of communication which incorporated scholarly work, formal lectures, writing for the popular press, and radio broadcasting. The personalist project is a philosophical reflection, through metaphysics, into the constitution, status and dignity of the human being as person. The dignity and value of the person reside at the very center of Macmurray's philosophy, and provide the foundation for all his subsequent philosophical analysis: the meaning of history, the value of science, the play of religion, and the maintaining of order in civil society. Macmurray's interpretation of this 'personalist universe' shows us how persons becomes autonomous moral agents through the interplay of subjectivity and autonomy. Macmurray's personalist perspective is also a theological anthropology. Although various of its parts or elements may be detached and examined for their contributions to other disciplines, i.e. political science, sociology, and historiography, our concern here is with the value of persons. To Macmurray such value is grounded in a theistic understanding of human action in history.

Anthropology is the science that deals with the origin, development, and customs of humankind. Theological anthropology has precisely the same interests, but narrows the focus to a central concern for the human person and the transcendent qualities which each person shares with others, and with God. Subjectivity and autonomy, human dignity, person-within-community, participation and solidarity, all are themes proper to inclusion within the discipline of theological anthropology. Cultural perspectives and value-making are recognized as having both immanent and transcendent qualities. It would be impossible to appreciate John Macmurray's authentic contribution to pedagogy without accepting that these insights are grounded in a theistic personalist perspective. In any event, Macmurray did not doubt that the split between philosophy and theology was quite unnatural. As he writes in *Religion, Art, and*

Science, the division between the two disciplines is "accidental" (p.70) and, further, an authentic philosophy should issue in a new kind of "natural theology" (1961, p. 224).

But before philosophical reflection and analysis comes that huge collection of human experiences and experiments called "history." As a Christian, albeit an unorthodox one, Macmurray understood human history to have meaning. This meaning is worked out through time and space and allows a consciousness of purpose to be recognized by persons acting as singulars or, more frequently and creatively, in communion. Specific civilizations have played their part in this eschatological drama.

The Historical Triad

In his *The Clue to History* Macmurray outlines how the historical development of the Jewish, Greek and Roman civilizations in the Western world has produced conditions appropriate for the rise of personalism. Our cultural heritage is composed of all those institutions created to administer empires and states, the services designed to address the needs of populations and, with the rise of the nation-state, the citizenry, and of course the ecclesiastical communities charged with the most important message of all, as Macmurray saw it, the continued transmission and further elaboration of the redemptive power of God's real action in the world.

Macmurray argues that an understanding of history is necessary for a true appreciation of the value, place and agency of the human person. History is a process which has inherent meaning because of its revelational quality. It is both more and less than we imagine.

History, to borrow a definition, is a systematic discipline which aims at producing a knowledge of past human experience as a whole continuous with the present. The proper object of study is human action (Harris, p. 456). Events matter to the historian primarily because they comprise the ground upon which human persons act as willing agents. There is an understanding that those events can themselves act upon persons, of course, so although they are derivative of human willing and purposing and therefore secondary, they are still important.

History is, in its own way, like philosophy (and for analogous reasons), all-inclusive.

Its ideal is to present the past as if it were the complete and adequate memory of a single experiment. "As memory is by its very nature integral to present experience," writes Harris, in a review of Macmurray's *The Self as Agent*, "the continuity of the past with the present is essential for history." Furthermore, Harris adds,

> And it seeks not only to chronicle but also to understand this past, which it can do
> only by comprehending the continuity of human intention exhibited in a multitude
> of past acts both with one another and with the present (p.456-457).

Harris continues by pointing out that this approach gives us a "model for a metaphysical conception of the world as one action." At this point in *The Self as Agent* Macmurray points out that action is the integration of the movement of the agent with those of the *Other*, (the *Other* being God or other persons) so that they form a unity which is intended.

There is a useful visual imagery available to us for a better understanding of that play of historical forces and ideas which Macmurray examined. Imagine a Venn diagram with three interlocking circles, each one representing a civilizational grouping. The point where they meet is the personalist perspective. It is a point of integration where the values each culture brings is harmoniously integrated. The three civilizations which have largely shaped the Western world are the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman. Each civilization brought out or nurtured qualities of action which have been brought down to we contemporaries. The instruments used vary from purely abstract ideas, such as varieties of philosophical speculations, and legal concepts, to the instrumentalities of science and technology. Macmurray saw three very different civilizations with very different qualities.

The Biblical Covenant

The Hebrew civilization was religious, communal, and practical. The Greek civilization was theoretical and aesthetic. The Roman civilization was technical and pragmatic. Macmurray is not saying that the ancient culture of the Jews could not be pragmatic, or that the Greeks of the Periclean period were not communal, nor that no Roman creatively provided the world with theoretical sophistication. He does maintain that the most recognizable, dominant, and important traits evident to us in our observation of the past of these cultures allows us to

conclude that each civilization had its own particular mix of genius.

The "personalist balance" which Macmurray tries to strike in his writing is found in an understanding of how this triad of civilizational qualities operate today, within both individual persons and the communities which they come together to create. Macmurray did not regard the ancient Hebrew view of human existence, and its corporate expression of covenantal existence, to be primitive in any derogatory way. The Hebraic expression of society necessitated the combination of two constituent elements that in forms of communal life elsewhere were usually kept apart: the idea of sacredness, and the concept of personhood expressed as a form of citizenship inseparable from membership in a religious or spiritual community.

For Macmurray, no primitive society has, properly speaking, civilization as such. The ancient Hebrew religion and culture of Israel were integrated. There was no distinction between the religious and secular aspects of life. In short, there was no "atomization of life," no damaging division. Ancient Judaism, the Judaism of the generative era when the Torah was taking shape, when the sophisticated approach to legal interpretation found in the Talmud was in its first stages, was the environment which provided a way of living the whole of life. Particular modes of thinking about the world, of interpreting the human (Hebrew or Gentile) were instrumentalities serving much larger purposes. Thought was therefore "always subordinate and contributory to action," (1938, p.29). God was a living God related primarily to the problematics of existence, not of conceptuality. As Hwa Yol Jung (1970) has commented, "for Macmurray religion represents something whole and truly living...[and he would] consider the Old Testament not a collection of static theological doctrines but rather a dynamic testimony of the community of men in their living relation to the absolute Other (p.539). The idea of the covenant is central. A covenant, though it may be interpreted as a legal instrumentality with a practical purpose only, enjoys a much richer texture when placed in its Biblical context, just the context in which Macmurray valued it. While the Hebrew covenantal relationship obviously included legally-grounded obligations, was contractual in nature, the basic and underlying value was that of trust. The creator of the universe is trustworthy; the word of God can be counted upon.

The foundational quality for relationships between persons is *friendship,* says Macmurray. The friendship between the Creator and his Chosen People, the Hebrews, is symbolic of what Macmurray will always mean when he uses the term *friendship.* This friendship is multifaceted and deep and is much closer to a theologian's use of a term such as 'agape' or 'philia,' terms reserved to discuss aspects of the relationship between human persons and God. To Macmurray, the Biblical covenant of the Jews with God is a perfect example of the action orientation that authentic friendship adopts. "Friendship is a community of souls. Two souls enter into a union and form one whole " (1936, p. 45). The Mosaic covenant is the instrumentality through which the Jewish people, in the individual *and* in the collective,— bound themselves to God. Breaking of the covenant could be accomplished by either a personal or national betrayal. The Pentateuch and historical books of the Bible are replete with examples of both. Betrayal, again either in personal or collective terms, constituted sin, "that wrong which breaks fellowship between persons. Whatever brings two persons into contradiction or opposition with one another is sin" (1936, p. 45). And almost always the sin is the absence of action, rather than a lack of belief. Intellectual assent to the giveness of God hardly figures at all in the matter. The outrage God is said to feel is based on the absence of righteousness, the not-doing of the right thing. The offence may be the refusal to carry out a seemingly harmless task, say a minor sacrifice, or the more serious matter of not providing hospitality to strangers, but it appears always to be based on the absence of action on the part one of the parties to the covenant. Action, for Macmurray too, is intimately connected to friendship, the supreme covenantal relationship.

Martin Buber once remarked that "God does not make theological statements." God in Macmurray's understanding is not a theological concept or merely an object of thought. God is an agent. In fact, God is Action itself. God has covenanted with Israel. God has concluded an understanding with the Jewish people which is both legal and personal in character and quality. Their is a reciprocity at work which provides the parties with mutuality of satisfaction. Macmurray considers that God is primarily a worker and thus must be understood in terms of action. Ancient Jewish culture never believed in leisure or contemplation as the goal of life, for the world is God's very act. In Macmurray's view the Jewish view is the correct one: God and human persons are creators, indeed, co-creators.

Not only is God primarily an agent but man also is primarily *homo agens* rather than *homo sapiens*. Reflection or knowledge arises from and is always related to the problematics of everyday action or nexus of interpersonal relations. For Macmurray, reflection, as a matter of fact, is a temporary suspension of living and thinking is not living at all (Jung, p. 542).

Macmurray admired Jewish tenacity and resilience in the face of the millenia-long Diaspora. This "nation" was itself comprised of peoples belonging to dozens of different cultures and cultural subgroups. Speaking different languages, living under vastly different regimes within startingly dissimilar social structures, they nonetheless kept a central or core tradition alive. The Jews were also able to demonstrate the two principles of unity he suggests are necessary to maintain the cohesiveness of society: fellowship and co-operation. The articulation of law and the practice of religious obligations varied somewhat from region to region. However, what the Tradition was comprised of maintained a high degree of uniformity amongst scholars across the world. Macmurray could argue that the integrating factor was "friendship," as he applied the word.

He draws the inference that religion cannot be idealist because the Jews were not idealists. Conford writes that Macmurray saw idealism as seeking "to remove the possibility of a just society from this world" (Conford, p.19). The human project is precisely to achieve such a just society worldwide. The Judaeo-Christian tradition, when it fails to seek justice on earth, betrays itself. The seeking of justice for all beings within human purview was not an objective sought by the Greeks and Romans.

Athens and Rome

In *Conditions of Freedom*, Macmurray explains how the development of the primitive group towards civilizations inevitably dissociates the two bases of unity. Fellowship and co-operation no longer define the same group. Macmurray argues that the institution of slavery is a primary reason for the deterioration of fellowship. Slave populations are not generally considered part of the spiritual unity of fellowship which characterizes the dominant group during its rise. Slaves are included as co-operating members of society because of their usefulness to the

economic stability of the state; they are excluded from the spiritual fellowship. With the rising of a strongly agricultural economy and increased urbanization comes territorial boundaries and an impetus to the growth of the idea of property in land. Increases in trade and other forms of exchange further complicate, even compromise, both types of unity.

> This process is well exemplified in the history of ancient Greece, and it produced the situation which created the imperialism first of Macedon and then of Rome: and in the city states of Greece, as in Hitler's Germany, it gave rise to the reactionary ideal of 'self-sufficiency,' the vain effort to re-establish the primitive coincidence of co-operation and fellowship within the territorial limits of political independence (p.42-43).

Understanding Greek civilization provided Macmurray with another perspective on the human project and one writer has been correct to say Macmurray's aim is to "de-hellenize" Christianity (Jung, p.533), at least philosophically.

The Greek genius lay in contributing speculative thought and the beginnings of science to the world. The contribution to communal life is less ambitious, according to Macmurray. He argues the Greeks maintained local structures that integrated fellowship. This worked on a small scale, in an exclusivist manner. Any free person not part of the collective of the city-state, any outsider, could not be part of the fellowship, which was as important spiritually as it was civilly. Its effectiveness was in its proximity; there was no applying the communal structure of the Greek city-state to any larger conception of community. As argued earlier, the Greeks could not accommodate themselves creatively to the political and social implications of burgeoning economies and large slave populations; both conditions leading to unanticipated connections.

Roman ideals provide, like Greek ones, some useful contributions to the building of the just society, but they offer more in the way of an object lesson on the use of fear and terror. In *Conditions of Freedom*, Macmurray draws his conclusion as to the value of Roman gifts,

> The Romans created...the modern idea of the State, as a unity of society based wholly upon law and administration, and so providing a framework within which co-operation can be organized and developed. The State, so conceived and constructed, has pragmatic justification only. It is not concerned with culture, with units of fellowship, except in so far as they threaten to disrupt the system of co-operation which it maintains. Its business

in this field is the negative one of "keeping the peace" (p.54).

The Romans opt for this policy after abandoning the attempt to combine the two principles of unity. The Roman unity is one of "organized co-operation within which religious and cultural toleration allows older unites of fellowship to maintain themselves and new forms of fellowship to develop autonomously" (p.43). Efficiency, then, becomes the most valued principle, the yardstick by which all else is measured and "not the binding force of a sense of fellowship which is direct and personal" (p.44). Part of the efficiency is to combine the symbols of the state with that of religion. The twinning carries over from Imperial Rome to the Christian era. The Christian Church, as the now-dominant social institution in the West, patterns itself after its predecessor. Rome was deified, its Emperor become the personal symbol of the State. Eventually Christianity is adopted for similar reasons, as a unifying factor.

> So there was created, in the society of the Roman Empire, what has remained the ideal
> pattern of social unity for West-European civilization. The two principles of human unity
> are recognized as functionally separate. Church and State are charged with the care of the
> inner and the outer unity of society respectively (p.44).

The Church's original mission was to transform the unity of co-operation into a unity of fellowship. The fall of the Roman Empire reversed the situation and the Church then fought to reestablish the unity of co-operation. The spiritual unification of Europe was the point of Christendom. Its political expression in the Holy Roman Empire was not successful, however and when the medieval world gave way to the modern, writes Macmurray, "the new, protestant forms of religion shrank within the framework of the new independent states and modern nationalism was born" (p.44).

Macmurray outlines the current difficulty in creating an effective framework for "world-unity,"

> We should remember the relative dissociation of fellowship and co-operation in the
> process of social development, and the variety of possibilities which their interrelation
> affords. In particular, we should recognize and oppose, in our own modes of thought and
> speech, the atavism wich infects our modern tradition, and which has been so powerfully
> reinforced by the influence of biological and evolutionary metaphors. The organic

society, with its fusion of co-operation and fellowship on a basis of blood-relationship, lies not at the end, but at the beginning of history. It is what we are moving away from. The patterns of unity in fellowship no longer coincide with or correspond to the political patterns of economic co-operation. Nor is it either possible or necessary that they should (1949, p. 45).

"Growth," "development," "symbiotic," "organic"; these are words drawn from the vocabulary of the life sciences, the various disciplines subsumed under the heading of biology. They are frequently used in all manner of contexts, often outside of strictly scientific applications. A child can be said to "thrive" and "grow," "develop" and "ripen." Macmurray spent considerable time reflecting upon the metaphoric uses to which scientific terms are put. We will see later how the unreflective use of such terms helps create an intellectual and bureaucratic environment which persistently misreads human needs. This misunderstanding of the human condition, as Macmurray saw it, was epitomized by Western philosophy's critical mistake: the undercutting of the "personal" with the adoption of Cartesian dualism.

At this point we turn to what British radical philosopher Philip Conford, an admirer of the Scottish metaphysician, termed Macmurray's "Copernican revolution" in philosophy.

Macmurray and Rene Descartes

Despite his many references to God and the ultimate meaning of the Christian movement through history, John Macmurray's personalism is not strictly, or exclusively, Christian. The proper question, to Macmurray, is not, "Does God exist?" but rather, "Is what exists personal?" The question could be asked another way: "Is the universal Other, from which the community of persons distinguishes itself, and which is the same for all persons, a personal or impersonal Other?" (1961, 215). In other words, Does the universe have authentic and genuine meaning for persons? Is it only an object of observation, an arena for our cognitive faculties? May it not also, and principally, be the context in which we receive our meaning as living beings?

Macmurray obviously understands the need for questions. Revising previously held views must be undertaken once these views are no longer compatible with the best available, legitimately-gathered evidence. But the philosophical project cannot succeed with reason alone,

at least not with the sort of "reason" as has come to be accepted by the philosophically sophisticated since the impact of Rene Descartes (1596-1650).

From the start of his public life as a philosopher in the 1930's, Macmurray argued for a realistic assessment of philosophy's potential for advancing human understanding and happiness. He also cautioned about the innate limits of the discipline.

The study of philosophy is apt to resolve itself into an experience of progressive disillusionment. Ever since Socrates awoke to the vision of his own ignorance and proclaimed that at last he knew that he knew nothing, his successors have found themselves liable to the same humiliating discovery. They have found that the most painstaking endeavours to find the truth brought them no nearer to the knowledge which they set out to explore. and that all they had earned by the sleepless labour was the bedevilment of the certainties with which they started. It is the experienced philosopher, not the novice. who finds himself entangled in the question. "What is philosophy. and how does one set about it?" (1933. p.7).

Macmurray is not calling for the abandonment of the philosophical project. Far from it. But he does know that all to often a lack of humility and an over-supply of hubris have excited a zeal in one theoretical direction or other. To be blunt: the first point for Macmurray is that philosophy has to be useful; its purpose is to serve human beings as they travel life's journey. The second point is connected to the first. Valuable as sound philosophical reflection is. it is second to action. An easily-recognizable Macmurrayan theme is that the *vita contemplativa* must serve the interests of the *vita activa*. Philosophy is directed toward action and has a practical end.

With Rene Descartes, French mathematician and philosopher. European philosophy found itself on the cusp of a new age. The verities of medieval scholasticism had long been wearing thin when Descartes' *Discourse on Method* appeared on the scene.

Descartes is credited with introducing a highly-theoretical skepticism regarding the assertion of doctrinal verities. He challenged orthodoxy's claims upon the human mind by formulating a series of rules designed to reinforce individual critical reflection on received values and truths, propositions and assertions, and even physical reality. Descartes maintained that the

method of doubt must be universally applied, with even the evidence of the senses rejected as uncertain. The real existence of one's own body may be questioned as illusion or dream. Yet there is a foothold. I who doubt, says the Cartesian, I who am deceived, at least while I doubt, I must exist, and, as doubting is thinking, it must be true that while I think, I am. (The famous Latin formulation is *Cogito, ergo sum*, "I think, therefore I am.") The certainty Descartes recognizes is of the self-evident individual. From this cornerstone Descartes derives all philosophical propositions.

The idea of God, he argues, implies the real existence of God. No finite or imperfect being like man could have produced the idea of an infinite or perfect being. God has revealed himself to humankind. Since the body can be so easily doubted, and yet the mind self-evidently enjoys real existence, it must be that the two are radically distinct. The body is subject to mechanistic or biological explanations. Descartes famously observes that animals, not sharing with human beings the qualities of "mind," are mere automatons subject to instinctual reflexes and drives.

Finally, the universe consists of two different substances: minds, or thinking substance, and matter, which is basically quantitative and theoretically explainable in scientific laws, procedures, and mathematical formulas. Only in human beings are the two, mind and matter, joined. Thus Cartesian dualism is introduced into the vocabulary of the Western mind.

There is no doubt Rene Descartes's was a bold statement for human emancipation. It was an intellectual tour de force which enabled others to pursue creative avenues of thought, particularly in scientific research. The distancing which it provided to the observer from that which is observed proved useful to the carrying out of practical research. The subject-object dichotomy was now in place.

But as subsequent intellectual history illustrates, the Cartesian idea of radical doubt or skepticism soon developed into a program which probably outstripped the intentions of its originator. A methodical doubt came to be applied to the very ideas of purpose and meaning themselves and not merely to the intellectual instrumentalities created to develop or explore them.

By the time Macmurray came on the scene, much of British, Continental and American

philosophy was still being formulated within a Cartesian context, either in assumption of that context's complete validity, or in some degree of opposition to it. Descartes had certainly set the agenda. Macmurray did not accept the Cartesian cogito as the most appropriate or even a sufficient starting point for philosophizing. He did not deny its importance or significance, merely its validity. The *cogito* had been singularly influential amongst thinkers for centuries, especially in many if not most quarters of the scientific community. It would not be lightly dismissed. Macmurray acknowledged that Descartes had recognized an authentic philosophical problem and had addressed it creatively, if erroneously.

The problem of logical representation of the self has been a central problem of modern philosophy. Macmurray argues that by representing the self as a substance in terms of a schema of mathematical thought, Descartes is thereby making the "self" something which can be "thought about" and "manipulated." Cartesians miss the mark completely. They turn person into thing; person into object, (1933, p.122-123). Elsewhere Macmurray criticizes all forms of idealism as damaging to the integrity of the human experience. Their error, he argues, is that idealist philosophers always divide the physical from the emotional/spiritual.

> Now to make the reflective activity primary in such a fashion necessitates a dualist
> philosophy, as one can see both in Plato and in Descartes. 'Body' and 'Soul', in Plato
> or 'Matter' and 'Mind', in Descartes exclude one another. This implies that the life
> of the mind...any reflective activity, is self-contained and has no inherent reference
> to practical activity or to the bodily life. It has its meaning in itself, and so must be
> understood in terms of itself. In action I am in direct contact with the things which I
> perceive, I operate upon them. But when I reflect, I 'withdraw into myself', and I
> operate upon ideas — either Platonic 'forms', which are non-sensible objects of
> aesthetic contemplation, or 'concepts' as they are for Descartes (1961, p.46).

The main offence in both Plato and Descartes, and with idealist thinkers generally of course, is that they isolate thought, divorce it from action, provide it with a working space which for Macmurray is unreal because it is detached from lived experience, in other words, artificial. If, he adds, "theoretical reflection is a solitary activity" then it assumes an appropriate [meaning evident] separation from other persons. No such separation is justifiable. In particular, it

deprives religion of its proper claim upon human action.

It [idealism] leaves no room for religion as a mode of reflection at all. For at the heart
of religion there lies an activity of communion and fellowship. Unless we have persons
in relation there is no fellowship; for whatever else fellowship entails it entails a union or
togetherness of separate individual people. The withdrawal into reflection, if it is an
entry into a purely spiritual world...is a withdrawal from fellowship, and so from the
experience which constitutes the central point of religious experience (1961, p.47)

The religious moment of personhood will be examined in some detail later. The reference
to the singular importance of fellowship for Macmurray is important for what it suggests about
the creation of community generally, and learning environments such as schools specifically.
There are significant pedagogical implications which arise from Macmurray's ideas about
"fellowship" and, especially, "friendship."

The entire approach which claims superiority for cognitive functioning, or rationalism is
not exclusive to Descartes. Macmurray the historian saw the rise of the physical sciences,
particularly astronomy, from the late Renaissance on as matched, step-by-step, with
philosophical developments, with Rene Descartes and later David Hume as primary examplars of
the latter. *Thinking* becomes of primary significance and the models of human behaviour which
it leads to are mechanical, instinctual, almost automatic. The approach is strengthened as
experimental science meets with increasing success. Macmurray labeled this mode of viewing
human experience as "the mechanical metaphor."

Macmurray and Jean-Jacques Rousseau

A response to this mechanical view of things made its presence felt in the work of
thinkers, both philosophers and scientists, who believed in rationalist methodology but
disbelieved the conclusions which had satisfied earlier investigators.

The Romantic movement in Europe was characterized by an investment in feeling and
emotion. If the truths discoverable by science could not be denied, they still could not provide
persons with reasons for living. Such reasons can be found principally in the appreciation of
beauty, wherein lies truth. Forms of creativity and spontaneity, especially through exaltation of

the self, the perspective of the artist rather than that of the scientist are hallmarks of the romantic temperament.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) epitomizes the Romantic personality. His work, *Emile,* is a charter for a form of education which stresses the careful adaptation of the individual's developing needs and so follow "the natural progress of the human heart." Rousseau, like Romantics everywhere, believed in the innate goodness of people and that evil is a social construct. The purpose of education was to allow the natural to occur, for the child to evolve into the being which Nature intended it to be. Like gardeners who gather wild flowers then manipulate them through domestication, so had education, traditionally, taken what was natural and "given" and molded it into artificialities, ("Magistrates, priests, and gentlemen," as Rousseau would have observed).

Macmurray understood the Romantics as creating another metaphor for the human person, this time an "organic" one which stands in opposition to the "mechanical" one. The organic view has developed such a comprehensive view of persons and society, has provided such elaborate structures of interpretation that it has dominated virtually all forms of reflection about persons.

> Its influence was intensified and broadened by the development of evolutionary
> biology, and the consequent popularizing of evolutionary modes of thinking beyond the
> strictly biological field....[W]e tried to understand the world, human history and society,
> by means of biological metaphors (1961, p. 49-50).

This has not been entirely beneficial. Macmurray explains that an inappropriate response to the claims of biological science by "foolish and misguided ecclesiastics and others" created a contest of wills which religion was perhaps bound to lose. The church presented believers with an either-or proposition. Either they remained loyal to the truth of human existence as interpreted by dogma, or they repudiated the certitudes of the church — and the possibility of salvation — in order to embrace the new thinking. The consequences were devastating for the church, and they were just about as devastating for the health of science and philosophy

According to Macmurray, "If we use [the concept of Nature] to cover all the world of our empirical experience, then we leave...out...all that distinguishes us from animals, all that is more

than biological in human life, all that makes us persons and our experience a personal experience" (1961, p.50). This position is not entertained because Macmurray is reluctant to provide the spirit of scientific enquiry with a proper place in human life. Quite the contrary. Macmurray himself was deeply respectful of science, having devised a novel scheme of studies while an undergraduate student. University regulations at the time maintained that a student could be enroled in either Arts or the Sciences, but not both simultaneously. A precocious young Macmurray finagled his way past those obstructive rules and created for himself a program which allowed him to read both philosophy and geology. It is reported that he bested the science students at their own discipline.

He would later write that "science will go on, and should go on. It is only at the beginning of its triumphs. It seems particularly important to me that the social sciences should be encouraged and that their conclusions should be put to practical use" (1961, p.28).

When writing about mother-and-child relations in *Persons in Relation*, Macmurray makes a telling argument against the organic metaphor. "It was assumed," he writes," that this way of conceiving human life is scientific and empirical and therefore the truth about us. It is in fact not empirical; it is a priori and analogical...it is not, in the strict sense, even scientific" (1961, p.45). Extrapolating from data gathered during the study of animals and plants cannot apply to humans except analogically. Analogies cannot be the truth, *per se*. The implications for making the analogy the truth about persons are most damaging, Macmurray avers.

> The practical consequences are in the end disastrous; but they do reveal the erroneous character of the assumption. To affirm the organic conception in the personal field is implicitly to deny the possibility of action; yet the meaning of the conception lies in its reference to action. We can only act upon the organic conception by transforming it into a determinant of our intention. It becomes an ideal to be achieved. We say, in effect, 'Society is organic; therefore let us make it organic, as it ought to be.' The contradiction is glaring. If society is organic, then it is meaningless to say that it ought to be. For if it ought to be, then it is not (1932, p.56).

He points out further that an organic view of people ends in the creation of "the totalitarian state." Macmurray strenuously maintains that "we are not organisms, but persons"

and the complex of human relationships created in the webbing of society is not organic but personal.

> Human behaviour cannot be understood, but only caricatured, if it is represented as an adaptation to environment; and there is no such process as social evolution but, instead, a history which reveals a precarious development and possibilities both of progress and of retrogression (1961, p. 46).

There are two "modes of reflection" in which persons engage. One is the "emotional mode" and the other "the intellectual mode," or science. Science, Macmurray says in *The Self as Agent*, is "a determination of the World-as-means" (p.198). It is an instrumentality which allows us to categorize and analyze the forms of order and disorder which we find in the natural world.

> In reference to action [Macmurray's chief value] it provides an improvement in our technical knowledge, in particular by the great extension of anticipation which it makes possible. By means of systematic intellectual reflection, and its expression in generalized information, we discover increasingly what we may count on, with greater or less probability, as the support for our actions, or as the means to the realization of our intentions (1961, p.198).

Because of its status as an instrument, science cannot provide persons or communities with values. It is "completely unbiased, unemotional, disinterested" (1932, p.15), and has no purpose "except to understand facts." As an "indifferent" instrumentality it can serve either good or evil ends. Actions "cannot be disinterested [because] action depends on what we want, on our choice of what is worth doing" (1932, p.23).

The Response of Idealism

One of the most effective challengers to Cartesianism was the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant. Macmurray maintains that Kant's Critical philosophy came closest, among philosophies of the modern period, in creatively engaging Descartes's work, and in bringing balance back to the philosophical enterprise.

However. Macmurray argues that Kant was ultimately unsuccessful because his own version of idealism could not provide a satisfactory reconciliation between the private and public

aspects of personhood.

Kant objects to the attempts by Descartes or the British empiricists, such as David Hume, to use, in the first case pure reason, and in the second case sense experience to understand knowing (epistemology). Kant maintains that sense experience is necessary in order to recognize the presence of a real object 'out there', **and** that inner categories of the mind (reason) allow the perceiver to understand what the object is. Kant appears to combine elements of both modes of perception. Despite this, knowing is a complicated thing because. Kant argues, we know only through categories which exist in our mind, not because of anything in the object perceived. This means that we can never know things 'in themselves'. We can deal with and understand the world of phenomena, our everyday reality, but not the 'noumenal' world. the authentic world which is behind the phenomenal world.

Knowledge is a combination, or synthesis of what we can know about the world of phenomena, and those concepts of thought which we then impose on the perceived phenomena in order to give it meaning. We are always looking for connections and patterns.

Kant's inability to reconcile the object perceived with our understanding of it as "the thing itself" poses a real problem to Macmurray. There remains the bifurcation between the understanding or comprehending mind, and all that exists which that mind can perceive. Macmurray words his objections this way:

> Knowledge is, in some sense, the discovery of what exists independently of any activity of ours. If we construct our knowledge, if it depends at all upon a spontaneous, inventive activity of the mind, then there is no escape from the conclusion that we can never know the world as it is in itself, independently of our ways of apprehending it...Reality as it is in itself is unknowable. This is the famous doctrine of the Thing-in-itself, of the noumenal world, and it is Kant's denial of knowledge (1957, p.46).

There is an intolerable condition created, as Macmurray sees it, if the real world of our senses cannot be apprehended and comprehended completely by our minds. The Kantian perspective condemns the person to alienation from lived experience no less so than does a Cartesian point of view. Macmurray says both their points of view are errors. Kant continues the dualism by insisting upon the person as *thinker*. The alternative, Macmurray points out, is to

overthrow the view of person as thinker, and install the person as *agent*, to move the ground of philosophy from *thought* to *action*.

APPENDIX B: RELIGION-AS-LIBERATION, SOCIETY AND COMMUNITY

Religion as a Form of Liberation

At the core, the very heart of John Macmurray's philosophical perspective of personalism is the belief summarized in this statement from his *The Self as Agent*, **All meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action and all meaningful action for the sake of friendship.**

Friendship, community, and the spiritual perspective which informs the relationship between them is precisely how "meaningful knowledge" is created so as to permit "meaningful action" to take place. Conceptual thinking about friendship, community, and religion or spirituality are treated at great length by Macmurray, and they are central to his program. A survey of these ideas is useful for our purposes, as each idea looms large in the formulation of any pedagogy informed by Macmurray's thought.

There are several purposes to what Macmurray calls 'friendship.' The first is that friendship, which can also be called love, makes us truly human persons. The second purpose of friendship, or love, is to enable persons who can love to create communities. The third function of friendship is to being single persons, through communities and the building up of communities, with God. This triad of person-person, person-community, person-God is recognizable in most other forms of personalism. This perspective tends toward theism.

All creative human relationships, including the building of community, are embedded in a properly understood religious matrix. Despite the pluralism and cultural relativism which are now hallmarks of contemporary Western culture, the vocabulary of Christianity still has the power to evoke and provoke. The Christian interpretation of history and its analysis of culture are part of Macmurray's personalist philosophy-making and they are here used to further his arguments.

The function of religion is to extend the family unit's monopoly of affection towards its members into ever widening circles, so that greater numbers of persons can be included within a community inspired by *philia* — love of brothers and sisters — and *agape* — love of God. Macmurray goes on to argue, in *Reason and Emotion*, that the authentic mission of religion is compromised when its vision is circumscribed from the social to the individual, or he realm of the private. If the privatization of religion occurs, as is typical of any society which has become

secularized, then religion is no longer "a matter of real mutuality," but becomes instead "a relation of the individual in reflection to his own ideals and aspirations," (1936, p.102). Religion is no longer the vital, living force which helps persons make communities, but a form of narcissism perhaps harmless in itself, but now hampering mutuality.

The trinity of concepts mentioned earlier, (person-person, person-society, person-God), is a mirror reflection of the Holy Trinity which is the central symbol of God for all forms of Christianity, ancient or contemporary, Eastern or Western. The relationships which the Holy Persons enjoy with each other within the Godhead have long served as exemplary models to express deep-rooted needs. For centuries the Church has explored this model, applying it to the formation of political and spiritual communities. The exploration of the "person" of Jesus and the "event" of Christ has long been studied through the theological discipline of Christology. Understandings of "friendship" and "community" from these sources will be used to illustrate the general personalist perspective.

For Macmurray, it is axiomatic that persons not only live in relationship with each other, but the very reality of persons *qua* persons is defined by these very same relationships. Another personalist philosopher offers an insight which does justice to Macmurray's own views, especially those which he expresses about Christianity in his book, *The Meaning of History*. In referring to the use of the Holy Trinity as a model for personhood, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger writes on the Christian discovery of what Macmurray's had earlier described as the "kernel of the concept of person," (1938, p.132). Maintaining a position not very different from Macmurray's own, Ratzinger writes that "a person must be understood as *relation*...the three persons that exist in God are in their nature relations. They are...not substances that stand next to each other, but they are real existing relationships...Relationship is not something added to the person, but is the person itself" (quoted in Vitz, p.25) [italics in the original].

To Macmurray, as well, the "Self" simply does not exist without reference to the "I." He elaborates the point in one of his key texts,

> In ourselves we are nothing; and when we turn our eyes inward in search of ourselves
> we find a vacuum....It is only in relation to others that we exist as persons: we are
> invested with significance by others who have a need of us; and borrow our reality

from those who care for us. We live and move and have our being not in ourselves but in one another, and what rights or powers or freedoms we possess are ours by the grace and favour of our fellows (1961, p.211).

The grounding of personalism in religious thought is essential to the integrity of perspective. The Biblical imagery evoked is not meant for mere stylistic flair or effect. A later writer might point out that Macmurray is using the Bible as a meta-narrative in precisely the manner in which some postmodernist critics consider invalid. These concerns, and their pedagogical implications, are examined in Chapter Two. Macmurray's point of view, his orientation, though it may be useful to a great degree by non-theists, admittedly cannot itself be divorced from its religious commitment. This commitment, however, need not be formal membership in a Christian community. It may be satisfied quite well with a person's private valuing of Biblical humanism, of the kind espoused by Martin Buber, a Jewish writer and existentialist philosopher.

Revelation is a theme at work in Macmurray's writing. It operates in different ways. There is, firstly, the revelatory message of Christianity as the understanding of God's presence with humankind. This is accomplished through the redeeming life and death of his son, who creates a "new and everlasting covenant" between God and man. A second element of the revelation is the Church's memory of this event, encapsulated in its teachings as in the Roman Catholic understanding of this, in its *magisterium*, or teaching authority. There is also Macmurray's own understanding of revelation as that action which takes place between persons fully in relationship. "All knowledge of persons is by revelation. My knowledge of you depends not merely on what I do, but upon what you do; and if you refuse to reveal yourself to me, I cannot know you, however much I wish to do so" (1961, p.169).

Macmurray severely criticized any attempt to emancipate the person from the context of the network of personal relationships which constitute the very being he is. The process of philosophical independence absolutizes itself eventually. The philosophy it produces is like that found in Spinoza and Hegel. There, the ordinary person surrenders to an impersonal All, or Absolute, forfeiting his relationship to the rich Other, the First Person. With that rejection of the Other, of God, claims Macmurray, is also rejected one's dignity as a person.

"All inspired personalists have been biblically-grounded." wrote theologian Urs Von Balthasar (1986, p.20). Macmurray is no exception to Von Balthasar's observation. In *Self as Agent* he writes of God as the universal 'Thou,' again in language reminiscent of Martin Buber.

> Now the form of religious experience involves the distinction between the first and second persons. The idea of 'God' is the idea of a universal 'Thou' to which all particular persons stand in personal relation. The question of the validity of religious belief is a question of the validity of this form. Consequently, a philosophy which does not formally recognize the distinction between 'I' and 'You' cannot even formulate the religious problem; and a critique of religion is thus rendered impossible (1957, p.72).

Macmurray also warns that an attempt to evade the moral obligation imposed upon us by our very nature as persons will result in some other 'Thou' being substituted for God. We cannot live without an Other, and if we cannot recognize God as that Other through our relations with other persons, then we will create one in our own image. The obverse of personalism is idolatry.

All theistic personalists agree with Macmurray that only two choices are open to the individual who, in the words of Denis de Rougemont, "tears itself away from the dark sacredness, from the terror of the tribe" in search of authentic personhood. De Rougemont adds,

> There are two possibilities: either artificially reconstruct the sacred (racism or communism of the state) or accept an always urgent vocation that distinguishes the human being and binds him at the same time to his neighbour and founds the church. Only in such a community does the person exist truly. Person, act, vocation become for me virtually synonymous. The act is concrete obedience to a transcendent vocation: the vocation brings forth the person in the *individuum*. Hence this new definition: the *individuum* is the natural man; the person is the new creature, as (Saint) Paul understands it (quoted in Von Balthasar, 1986, p.25) [emphasis in original].

Macmurray joins other personalists in warning that the human tendency to separate is a temptation which can have but one conclusion, and that one evident since Descartes: a solipsistic isolation from others and from the real. In the words of Von Balthasar, "The world situation today shows clearly enough that whoever discards a Christian or at least biblical view (in theology or philosophy) must in one way or another find in a personless collectivism or

individualism (which converge upon one another) his downfall" (p.25). Macmurray came face-to-face with such a "personaless collectivism" when he realized that the Soviet experiment in Russian socialism, which he head supported in its initial stages, had been, with its Stalinist terror, corrupted into a totalitarian absolutism.

The primary demand of religion is for a personal integrity. It provides the integration of the inner life with the outer, says Macmurray. It is "a unity of reflection and action," a coincidence of motive and intention" (1961, p.172). Working from within the embeddedness offered by religious or spiritual motivation correctly understood, the person as independent moral agent, engages in "action which is at once moral, spontaneous, and consequently, free" (1961, p. 183).

To be noted as well is that Macmurray believes the religious perspective to be accessible to all. There is no unbridgeable gulf between faith and reason. Unlike the approach of various dualisms which see the religious experience as "irrational," Macmurray maintains that ordinary human experience provides an alternative view. Rather than being an illusion, religion and the spiritual are an integral part of our humanness, and necessarily so.

> The view that there is no path from common experience to a belief in God; that
> religion rests upon some special and extraordinary type of experience apart from
> which it could not arise — this seems to me hardly credible (1957, p.19).

As we have seen, religion is the chief characteristic which distinguishes human beings from other biological life forms. Our social natures do not make us unique because there are many social animals. Religion is the mixture for bonding persons to each other. That is done through first achieving an understanding of one's own being.

> Only in a fully personal relationship with another person do I find a response at my
> own level.... My self-consciousness is my consciousness of myself as a person, and
> it is only possible in and through my consciousness of a person who is not myself
> (1961, p.133).

Macmurray maintains that self-consciousness is not a primary form of knowledge but secondary. We first know the Other and if this Other is a person, then we know him as another agent. Then Macmurray looks at the ambiguity of human relationships and the great threat

presented to their ripening by the base emotion of fear:

> The primary problematic of the relation is whether he is for me or against me. But an
> agent is also a subject; and in knowing him as an agent I know him as a subject; and in
> knowing him as an agent I know him as a subject for whom I am an object. Now if I am
> in full fellowship with him...my consciousness is centered upon him and my interest
> and attention have the other as their focus. If...a constraint lies upon me in the relation,
> I fear his hostility, and am to that extent thrown on the defensive against him. The
> reflective aspect of this is that I become self-conscious...of myself as an object which he
> may value negatively, as an object of possible hostile criticism. He may judge me
> inferior, beneath his notice, and I must be ready to justify myself in his eyes. We may
> say then that self-consciousness is potential in the relation of persons at all times,
> but becomes actual only when there is a failure of freedom in the relation, so that it has
> to be maintained by an effort of will (1960, p.160-161).

The pedagogical moments we experience as educators may all-too often be those which
can be characterized by Macmurray's description of this intrusive and destructive self-
consciousness. This self-consciousness would then stand separate and apart from something far
more constructive, say self-awareness.

One writer has said he views Macmurray's whole project as a gloss on the idea of love
developed by Saint Augustine. A.R.C. Duncan argues that *Freedom in the Modern World* is an
attempt "to find a philosophical expression for at least one interpretation of the Christian
morality of love" (Duncan, 1990, p.103).

> The whole argument virtually amounts to a commentary on Augustine's famous advice:
> *ama et fac quod vis*, love and do as you want. The sting in both Augustine and
> Macmurray lies in the word 'love'...[N]either Augustine nor Macmurray simply says
> that everyone should do what they want...First love, then and only then, do what you
> want. Macmurray maintains that 'only a real person can ever do what he pleases.'
> The crux of his argument is the conception of a real person, and what it is to be a real
> person is to be understood through the concept of friendship (p.103).

> The foundation for authentic freedom is friendship with God in obedience to his

commands; the second great commandment, preached in all modesty and simplicity by Jesus, is that thou shalt love they neighbour as thyself. This would appear to bring us back into the realm of compulsion to law, this time a moral one rather than a social construct. How can compulsion to moral obedience be a basis for freedom? Macmurray strongly objected to Kant's categorical imperative, that one should never do what one could not wish to see become universally applied. Macmurray thought Kant's approach too much based on rationalism. Macmurray attempted to extricate the divine commandments to love our fellows from notions of service and obedience and the quality of compulsion they bring with them. He argued, according to Duncan, that "we can achieve our own reality as persons only through entering personal relations with others" (p.105). It is as if God were granting us our freedom despite an innate yearning for security. Like the Hebrew slaves of Exodus, we are free; free even to hanker after the recently-deserted fleshpots of Egypt.

One's own personal (as it were) relationship with God is also connected with community. After all, if we are real only inasmuch as we are for others, then how much truer of our being for God? Macmurray encouraged the individual's relationship with God by reminding his readers that its ultimate purpose is to return, spiritually enriched, to serve the community.

> The individual phase of personal relation, the necessary withdrawal into the self
> and so into solitariness, refers to the return to community and is for the sake of that
> return. Its religious aspect must always have relation to corporate religion if it is to
> function religiously. In formal terms, a relation with God which is not a relation
> to my neighbour is unreal. The withdrawal of the individual into religious solitude,
> into prayer and meditation, not self-examination and self-dedication, is an affirmation
> of his personal dependence, not an escape from it (1961, p.69-70).

With the integrity of our personhood vouchsafed we can proceed with the great project mandated to us, the building of the just society. Religious spirit may be particularized within smaller or larger, pluralistic or ethnic communities through time, but it is universal, and "the development of religion reaches a point at which this potential inclusiveness is realized, and the universal religions appear" (1961, p.60). The implication of all religious reflection, that the basis of human community is common humanity, become recognizable across cultural and religious

barriers. It is possible to see the Other, different as he may be, in the I.

> With this, religion takes on a new task — the realization of the unlimited community,
> the brotherhood of mankind. So religion becomes prophetic, and its reference is not to
> an actual community merely, but to the community that ought to be and is yet to be.
> The universal fellowship in one common life is the correlate of monotheism (1961,
> p.60-61).

As religion involves the total person, the entire human being and not a slice of particular or intimate insights to be cherished in the privacy of one's mind, its outcome is to be communion and the shared creation of society through willed action (1961, p.47).

Macmurray was all too aware of the importance of politics. Political life attempts to regulate forces which may hinder or assist religion's project of community-building. He treated the subject as seriously as any critical social observer does, but Macmurray knew that politics exists for functional purposes only. Politics is about co-operation, not friendship, as it works through the compelling authority of law backed by the threat of force, police and military.

> The politician must take men as they are and cannot assume that citizens are prepared to
> sacrifice their private interests for one another. Rather he must assume that all will stand
> upon their rights; and must aim at justice for all...It is certainly the case that decrease
> in fellowship in any nation must be balanced by an increase in compulsion. Political
> freedom *presupposes* personal community; it does not produce it. To think otherwise
> is the real utopianism of our time (1961, p.66-67) [italics in original].

Society and Community

There are two forms of human organization: *society* and *community*. The society has a membership whose individual parts cooperate to achieve a common purpose. Each actor is dependent upon the other only to the degree that he requires his fellow's cooperation to meet his own objectives. The actor cedes his freedom only to the extent that in so doing his desires are satisfied. The relation between individuals here are functional. Each plays his allotted part and this form of social organization is "organic." It is what Macmurray called "an organization of functions" (1932, p.157-158).

The *community* is organized otherwise. It is first of all a "unity of persons as persons."
A community will not be defined in terms of functions or assigned roles, though these may be
present; nor shall it be defined by any shared objectives or common purposes, though these may
in fact be shared by the membership. Macmurray explained,

> It is not organic in structure, and cannot be constituted or maintained by organization,
> but only by the motives which sustain the personal relations of its members. It is
> constituted and maintained by mutual affection... The structure of a community
> is the nexus or network of the active relations of friendship between all possible
> pairs of its members (1932, p.158).

Macmurray did not see this portrayal of social structure as either unrealistic or
unattainable. He recognized that it lay at the heart of just about every universal religion. Therein
lies the hope. If such has been the yearning for generations of persons, then perhaps that hope,
grounded as it is in a vision shared by millions over many centuries, is not forlorn.

Society and community are not mutually exclusive terms with Macmurray. Society may
be characterized as a "unity of friendship" but its overwhelming aspect will be a functional unity.
Since friendship cannot be organized, and does not express itself in a functional differentiation,
or division of labour, it is not likely to be found in institutions or social structures which operate
on the assumption that such divisions are necessary to efficient and effective management. The
equality evident in the understanding of how members of a *community* are to behave toward each
other is not based on the equivalency or "sameness" of persons, Macmurray warned.

> It is not to say that they are equally clever, or equally strong, or equally good. Personal
> equality does not ignore the natural differences between individuals, nor their
> functional differences or capacity. It overrides them. It means that any two human
> beings, whatever their individual differences, can recognize and treat one another
> as equal, and so be friends. The alternative is a relation between an inferior and a
> superior; and such a relation excludes friendship. It is a relationship of master and
> servant (1949, p.51).

The need to recall a personalist interpretation of community is a quite contemporary need.
Writing in a volume of essays on the theme of community, Gibson Winter calls for a searching

again of our "root metaphors," (Winter, 1985, p. 122). These are the essential analogies which have been discarded for a form of mechanistic thinking which has availed Western society the marvels of technology, but to some significant degree has also quietly sapped its moral imagination. Winter explains,

> The indicator of such a crisis is the failure of mechanistic thinking to open horizons of creativity in dealing with environmental, economic, international, and spiritual tensions. The other side of the crisis·is the tendency to regress to organicistic forms of life. This is regressive because the spiritual world, the world behind the world, which supports the organicist world, has been eclipsed. An organicist imagery without such support becomes a collective will to impose a traditional order on the chaos that is being engendered by an outworn mechanism (p.122).

He goes on to add that root metaphors provide networks of imagery "through which a people interprets and lives its foundational symbolization" (p.122). If we take seriously Winters's observation that "a people dwell symbolically on earth" (p.121), then we readily see the connection between this critique of contemporary nowhereness with a Biblical imagery — so important to Macmurray too — that situates persons in their communities in a very concrete covenantal relationship with the Other, or God.

Freeing the individual — and we recall that we use this term as a political concept, as opposed to the moral concept which is the word "person" — from family and tradition requires socialization into the disciplines of work and bureaucratic life. Winters maintains that,

> It is also the instrument for developing skills that would be useful in the industrial machine. Schools teach skills, but more importantly they inculcate the mood of conformity to the imperious system of production. Freedom and individual autonomy were the promised goods at the end of the road. And for many immigrant people the the schools did provide a means of upward mobility. However, for most, the dream turned to ashes. Schooling and work became a path to alienation and subordination (p.125).

In this much, at least, Macmurray, Noddings, Winter, and the postmodernists agree: Bureaucratized structures have long dominated most schooling in the western world. One of the

chief failings of industrializing the process of learning, according to Macmurray, is the absence of a real sense of history.

The personalist perspective suggested by Macmurray maintains that if the ruling metaphor of *covenant* does no replace by ideas of *production, innovation*, and *expediency* or *efficiency*, all authentic communities will continue to suffer deeply.

The Keisers point out that "real" community is temporal as well as spiritual. "My real community extends backwards to my origins and forwards to my end. My origins fit within a past that goes back to the beginning of my country's history, the origins of humanity, of organic life, to the ultimate origins of the cosmos" (1985, p.102). It is the personalist teacher's task to be aware that his covenantal responsibility to students is to nurture just this awareness, just this connectedness to past and future. Meanwhile, the Keisers warn against investing hierarchy with more authority than it deserves. Its function "should not be the means for discovering truth — that is, what to do and be as a group and why — but for organizing operations" (p.106).

That last observation recalls Macmurray's useful distinction between a "group," which always has utilitarian aims, and a "community," whose purpose is for shaping friendship. "Truth should arise in fellowship and be implemented through hierarchy," write the Keisers (p.106). Drawing the context directly into schooling, it seems clear the function of administration is to organize the operation. Goal-setting and imaging the purposes of the school, adopting a curriculum, must be a deeply cooperative activity. Keiser and Keiser elaborate,

> Productivity, for example, is only acceptable as long as it can be pursued while fellowship
> is sustained. While efficiency is subordinated, involvement is enhanced, maximizing
> the quality of the goal achieved. To see hierarchy as part of an ongoing dialogue is
> to understand that authority finally comes from participation in the dialogue rather
> than hierarchical position, from the perceptiveness of the questions asked and the
> fruitfulness of the answers given (p.107).

It should be realized that the important metaphors discussed earlier (the *mechanical* and the *organic*) have each influenced a number of pedagogical schemes. Even today we are able to classify current pedagogies, as well as older models, according to whichever metaphor of human understanding informs them. The Macmurrayan model developed here is patterned on the

personalist theme central to the Scottish moral philosopher: friendship.

By way of summary, Macmurray rejected the dualism introduced into philosophy with the ear of Rene Descartes. He did not believe that there was a mind-body division that even warranted discussion because such a split set philosophical reflection on the wrong path. Mind and body are one and indivisible. Human persons are not "only" bodies, or "only" minds. They are both, and because of that, they are more than the sum of their parts. The moral imperative of being human is that of creating just communities of persons using a healthy family as model. Finally, within the community, each person is Other-regarding when acting as a moral agent. To Macmurray, there can be no moral action without first reference to real, existing persons. It is from these real persons that one draws one's very own being and identity.

How these key aspects of Macmurray's perspective of friendship have been used as the basis of a lived pedagogy was the subject of Chapter One. There, we surveyed the experiences of teachers and students at Wennington School, a Quaker-sponsored residential school in Britain which attempted to create a learning environment informed by many of the teachings of John Macmurray.

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