Greetings M&CE Members:

I trust you are all taking good care of yourselves and of others and are in good health. I’m also hoping you’re able to see family, friends and colleagues from time to time. I added the picture above which shows one of my little friends who visits me often. For the peanuts I suppose but still it’s lovely to see them.

As with everyone, things were, to put it mildly, somewhat disrupted here for me and consequently there has been a bit of a Newsletter holiday. And being on sabbatical, I was much busier with various new projects than I would have been during a normal year. York will be delivering all teaching remotely with only a few exceptions for such things as lab work, so now I’m also dealing with the challenge of learning the technology. Not fun for a right-brain person.

And speaking of the right-brain, one of my projects is writing a book utilizing the research on the functions of the right-brain and left-brain hemispheres in personal and cultural development. That research provides a powerful argument for the importance of the humanities disciplines in academe as well as elsewhere and so the Think Piece in this Newsletter offers a very brief overview of that research. I confess, it’s a bit on the long side but I wanted to give as clear an account as possible. I do hope you find it of interest and would be pleased to receive your feedback. We also have some very interesting papers, a new issue of the JIS Journal and an upcoming free event with Noam Chomsky. Details all below.

As we are now all going back to teaching, in one way or another, I hope that folks will contact us at the Mindfulness and Contemplative Education Website http://www.contemplativeeducation.ca with announcements about the various projects and publications you have so that we can post them. Our contact details are below.

Also, don’t forget to let your students and colleagues know that we are welcoming new members and will be pleased to post their work on the website and
give it mention in the Newsletter. We have an international readership so this is a good way to get the word out about your work and also contact folks with interests in common with yours. Please be in touch!

Sincerely,
Deborah Orr, dorr@yorku.ca
Amanda Hohmann, manda.hohmann@gmail.com

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Journal of International Students, page 14
Why we need the Humanities
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As members of the M&CE Website you are most likely involved with teaching or studying one of the Humanities disciplines and so you are well aware that they are under siege. The arguments for this range from ‘they’re of no use’ to ‘students aren’t interested’ to ‘they ought to be taught that sort of thing elsewhere’ and beyond. In what follows I want to make the argument that the Humanities are not optional but essential to any academic process that aims to educate students to be fully functioning and humane citizens of society. When students are told, whether directly or by implication, that the Humanities don’t matter, what matters is only taking courses that contribute to their own ‘success’ in life, and incidentally support those who profit from their work, then they are not only encouraged to ignore what the Humanities teach, they are being socialized to repress their very capacity to understand and act in a humane manner. I’ll base my argument for this and for the necessity of the Humanities on the recent work of Iain McGilchrist and Karen Armstrong.

McGilchrist’s *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (2019) discusses the functions of the two brain hemispheres, the right-brain and the left-brain, and explores their influence on the development of human beings and the formation of their culture, in particular in the Western world. His overall argument is that, while they have different functions, both hemispheres work together most of the time (2 – 3), it is not so much what each does but how they do it; “the most fundamental difference between the hemispheres lies in the type of attention they give to the world” (4). It
is the relationship between these two hemispheres that supports a person’s relationship to and their behavior in their world.

To put his position very succinctly, the right hemisphere’s attention is holistic. It has a holistic understanding of the world to which it sees itself connected; it focuses on the body and the body’s place in and connectedness with that holistic environment. Fundamental to this and to the oral cultures which developed out of it is the person’s spiritual experience. Karen Armstrong (2019) stresses that by ‘spiritual’ is not meant adherence to a deity but the experience of something beyond the day-to-day trials and tribulations of life, sometimes called the transcendent. The right-brain is also crucial to the formation of the self which includes the development of empathy and a sense of justice. It is the center of creativity including spiritual practices and traditions as well as the morality that informs one’s life and actions, the oral and representational arts, the creation of music and in all of this the creation and use of metaphor.

The left hemisphere utilizes “the three Ls, language, logic and linearity” (McGilchrist, 228) and so, while it depends on the right hemisphere for its information, its input from the world, it is able to analyze that information and so to break it down into separated parts. Its attention is no longer holistic but fractured and focused. It also has the power of argumentation and so is in the position to be able to challenge and discredit the right-brain ways of attending to and being in the world. Thus, McGilchrist states that, “My thesis is that for us human beings there are two fundamentally opposed realities, two different modes of experience; that each is of ultimate importance in bringing about the recognisably human world; and that their difference is rooted in the bihemispheric structure of the brain. It follows that the hemispheres need to co-operate, but I
believe that they are in fact involved in a sort of power struggle, and that this explains many aspects of contemporary Western culture.” (3) This thesis statement makes it sound like some sort of internal Machiavellian shenanigans are going on in our brains but that is not the reality. That it is not so is illustrated by the many powerful examples that he analyzes which are informed by psychology, ideology, cultural developments including values, capitalism, hyper-individualism, consumerism, etc., etc. all of which influence human life. While the left-brain may, at the expense of the right-brain, provide the tools and functions to dominate, it is human beings who decide which of them to use, when and to what purpose.

Karen Armstrong’s *The Lost Art of Scripture: Rescuing the Sacred Texts* (2019) draws heavily on McGilchrist’s work. Her emphasis is on oral culture spirituality and the literary Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, while McGilchrist focuses primarily on Western culture and the literate culture religions. Her overall argument is that early oral culture expressed the sacred in the form of art, more specifically performance art, which was metaphorical and reached the individual on the level not of intellect but of intuition, emotion, instinct, of their spirit. Its function is to inspire, not primarily, or at all, to inform. Thus, spiritual practice was a matter of performing rituals, chanting or using music, sharing myths and being in the natural world and connected with it since both that world and they were an integrated whole. Another important point about oral culture spiritual practices is that they were open to change and development to meet the changing circumstances that people were faced with. Their expression as oral metaphor rather than written literature fostered that flexibility.

When oral cultures and the arts they produced were recorded in writing their function and meaning hardened and they were understood as the transmission of
settled information, ‘eternal truths’, dogma. But, Armstrong says, “we have all known moments when we are touched deeply within, seem lifted momentarily beyond our everyday selves, and inhabit our humanity more fully than usual – in dance, music, poetry, nature, love, sex or sport as well as in what we call “religion” (5). Thus although we are currently a highly literate, left-brain culture and current academic foci enforce this, the experiences of the right-brain, which include it’s development of empathy and a sense of justice, remain with us. We have seen these capacities expressed dramatically in the overwhelming responses not only in the United States but throughout the world to the horrific killing of George Floyd and to the multiple forms of oppression of many peoples which have now gained broader attention. We have also seen it in the responses, mostly by youth, to the work of Greta Thunberg with regard to environmental exploitation and destruction.

What I draw from this is that the right-brain is alive and functioning in many, especially youth, but that it is repressed in many others by the precedence given to left-brain function and production. With regard to the current covid-19 crisis the response of leadership in the United States provides yet another example of the detrimental effects of left-brain takeover.

In other words, as Iain McGilchrist has shown at great length, on the cultural and academic levels the left-brain has at this point in history won the struggle with the right and is now largely dominating both academe and the broader culture. My first point in response to this is that the left-brain win was not something going on simply in peoples’ heads, it was effectuated by our buy-in to current ideological messages supporting the importance of success, defined as wealth, power and status, and what is necessary to achieve it. That necessity lies in utilizing left-brain
activities no matter their consequences and grounding that utilization in narcissism and competition.

The second point is that in order to effectively address the multiple crises we face, including environmental issues, ongoing conflicts across the globe, human suffering and displacement owing to both of the former, radical income disparities, social and political disruptions and others, we need to achieve a more balanced relationship between the two hemispheres. For instance, the moral stance that would preclude dominating others for one’s own power and profit is not something that will be arrived at by utilizing formalized ethical principles such as those developed by Immanuel Kant in the 18th century or John Stuart Mill in the 19th. These are left-brain processes that do not utilize right-brain moral capability. They do not incentivize people to act for change in the way that witnessing the death of George Floyd did, action that was supported by right-brain empathy and morality.

What I propose is that a greater, not lesser, focus on the Humanities, not only in academe but throughout the educational process, would support the development of a citizenry that would seek the changes that would alleviate suffering, from that of the youngest displaced child to that of the polluted and defiled earth. Which would, in fact, challenge the contemporary definition of a successful life. At the same time we will also need those with the left-brain technical knowledge to produce the products, from alternative energy production to human-friendly city planning to sustainable and wholesome agriculture and much more, that will support the change in moral focus of the population. What this calls for is the balanced and cooperative hemispheres that McGilchrist endorsed. This may be able to support not only a more humane and caring world but the very existence of a world in which those humans can survive. This solution is neither
simple nor easy and we have very little time to implement it but it is the only real hope we have.
1) ACADEMIA

Reclaiming the Educational Through Embodied Narratives of 'Know Thyself'
By Oren Ergas, PhD
Senior Lecturer
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Beit Berl College
https://beitberl.academia.edu/OrenErgas

The past decades have been characterized by several accounts of a moral crisis in higher education. External forces, such as globalization and neoliberal trends are often highlighted as main causes for this crisis. This chapter suggests that these ought to be seen as the symptoms of the problem; not its cause.

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2) ACADEMIA

Mindfulness in education at the intersection of science, religion, and healing
By Oren Ergas, PhD
Senior Lecturer
Faculty of Education
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https://beitberl.academia.edu/OrenErgas
This paper investigates mindfulness as a case study of a ‘subjective turn’ in education reflecting a postsecular age. The practice of mindfulness originates in an ancient Buddhist teaching prescribed as part of the path to enlightenment. In spite of its origins, it is becoming widespread within diverse secularly conceived social and educational settings. The paper offers a historical review of this phenomenon and analyzes why and how mindfulness has become the spearhead within a burgeoning ‘contemplative turn’ in education. The thesis suggested is that ‘normal education’ follows ‘normal science’, yet science itself is now being shaken by its own venturing into the ‘dangerous’ waters of the religious experience. The paper reflects critically on the prices and merits of mindfulness in education as a practice shaped by its becoming measurable. It locates these processes as depicting the postsecular age’s blurring of boundaries between religiosity/secularity/education, subject/object, and science/healing/education.

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NEW ISSUE ANNOUNCEMENT

Journal of International Students
Volume 10, Issue 3

With a Special Event with Noam Chomsky

Explore the 10.3 issue of our 10th anniversary series. The cutting-edge research and analysis published in the journal continues to be critical as we navigate new realities of the COVID-19 global pandemic together.

*Read on to learn more about a special evening with Noam Chomsky, an open-invitation to our annual board meeting, our special collections, and more!*

**Explore the New 10.3 Issue Here!**
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*We just crossed the 2,000 follower mark on Twitter – help us reach 2020 followers in 2020!* Follow us on Twitter and Facebook to see alerts when new issues of the journal are published, calls for papers, and other updates.

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**10th Anniversary Essays**

Issue 10.3 continues our yearlong celebration with essays from influential voices in the field who highlight the importance of supporting international students and immigrants in these challenges time, the diversification of students, and teaching and engaging international students.

[We are More Than Your Paycheck: The Dehumanization of International Students](#)
in the United States
S. Castiello-Gutiérrez & X. Li

Let us stand with Julia! International Students or Immigrant Workers in the United States
K. Bista

Vulnerability and Resilience in a Mobile World: The Case of International Students
H. Forbes-Mewett

Teaching and Engaging International Students: People-to-People Empathy and People-to-People Connections
L. T. Tran

International Students in the Trump Era: A Narrative View
K. N. Laws & R. Ammigan

Academic Elites or Economic Elites: The Diversification of Chinese International Students
Y. Ma

A Basic Formula for Effective International Student Services
D. L. Di Maria
New Journal Metrics

We are excited to announce new journal metrics:

- Our Scopus CiteScore increased from 1.5 in 2018 to 1.8 in 2019.
- JIS is now the #11 journal in Higher Education according to the GoogleScholar metrics – up from #16 in 2018 and #19 in 2017.
- We remain the #2 journal in international education, and the #1 open-access journal in higher education.

We are the only journal in the top 20 that is gold-level open access, which lets us be freely available to scholars around the world and charge no fees to our authors.

We are proud that the journal continues to diversify the regions, countries, and contexts, as well as the epistemological perspectives and methodological approaches that we publish.

Research Articles

“Don’t Change Yourselves": International Students’ Concepts of Belonging at a Liberal Arts College
C. Bjork, A. Abrams, L. S. Hutchinson & N. I. Kyrkjebo

What Do International Students Need? The Role of Family and Community Supports for Adjustment, Engagement, and Organizational Citizenship Behavior
D. S. Chai, H. T. M. Van, C.-W. Wang, J. Lee, & J. Wang
Exploring the Lived Social and Academic Experiences of Foreign-born Students: A Phenomenological Perspective
A. Selvitopu

Knowledge, Use, and Perceived Value of University Student Services: International and Domestic Student Perceptions
C. J. Perry, D. Lausch, C. A. McKim, & J. Weatherford

Saudi Female International College Students’ Self-Identities Through the Use of Social Media in the United States
T. Alruwaili & H.-Y. Ku

Join us for our annual meeting!
You are invited to attend our **Annual Board Meeting on August 20, 2020 at 6:30 pm ET** (*New York*). This meeting is open to all editorial team, advisory board, and peer review board members. Authors, readers, and reviewers are invited to attend to learn how to get more involved with the journal.

In the meeting, we will highlight the latest books published by our board members, tips for publication, and opportunities to get more involved in our community. A recording of the meeting will be sent to anyone who registers but cannot attend live.

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Are International Students Getting a Bang for their Buck? The Relationship between Expenditures and International Student Graduation Rates
*A. Schmidt*

Examining International Students’ Attitudinal Learning in a Higher Education Course on Cultural and Language Learning
*W. R. Watson, S. L. Watson, S. E. Fehrman, J. H. Yu, & S. Janakiraman*

Exercise Motivations: Differentiation of International and Domestic College Students
*D. Cho, S. Beck, & S. K. Kim*
International Students' Willingness to Communicate in English as a Second Language: The Effects of L2 Self-Confidence, Acculturation, and Motivational Types
T. Aoyama & T. Takahashi

Russian Students' Use of Social Network Sites for Selecting University Abroad: Case Study at the Russian State University for Humanities
N. Rekhter & D. Hossler

Insights into Saudi Female International Students: Transition Experiences
A. K. Arafeh

Sociocultural Factors That Impact the Health Status, Quality of Life, and Academic Achievement of International Graduate Students: A Comprehensive Literature Review
R. J. Y. Vakkai, K. Harris, J. J. Crabbe, K. S. Chaplin, & M. Reynolds

Study Abroad Reflections

Faculty Development for Teaching International Students: A Seminar Series Approach
Z. Burke, J. Haan, & C. Gallagher

Reflections on Teaching Abroad: How Berlin Remembers Trauma and What it Means for American Sense-Making of the Past
R. Looft

Book Reviews

The Impact of Education in South Asia: Perspectives from Sri Lanka to Nepal
S. A. Namalefe

Senior International Officers: Essential Roles and Responsibilities
A. Ogundimu

International Encounters: Higher Education and the International Student Experience
Y.-C. Wu
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