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## Foreword

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Everything teaches. Or may teach. Every field is a potential learning field. But the fields of family, school, culture, and nature intersect and overlay each other in complicated ways that both spur and bar knowing. Any reform of public education must take fully into account how these fields do interplay now and how they might do so differently in the future.

Part 1 of this book, “Not Wanting to Know,” uses a case history of school censorship as a lens to examine societal and cultural fields as they relate to the field of schooling.

Part 2, “Wanting to Know,” critiques formal investigation as a way to discuss cross-cultural fields of learning and to overlay these with psychic and cosmic fields.

Against the background of these broader contexts, Part 3, “Arranging to Know,” considers the subject fields of disciplines as they do and may relate to the total field of education.

In so shifting among smaller and larger fields of learning, the book switches among past, present, and future. I have attempted by these oscillations to illuminate current problems of public education and to envision some ways in which it should evolve as the movement to reform it matures.

So far, this movement has not situated education within contexts broad enough to permit thinking about it most profoundly and creatively. This results in proposals that are overly conventional and circumscribed. Most educators today advocate a more holistic approach, but how far this goes depends on how encompassing are the wholes one has in mind.

What I have tried to do here is go the whole holistic way in the sense of situating learning within “wholes” that include not only the totality of subject fields and of American society today but also “Western” culture and the pluralism of cultures past and present. This search across time and space for the biggest whole culminates in cosmology, which takes us back inward, as matter leads ultimately

back to mind, to fields of consciousness that are coextensive with the fields of culture and cosmos.

The truest way to treat this ultimate holistic learning, it seems to me, is harmonically, by setting up resonances across fields. Consider consciousness, culture, and cosmos as octaves of reality spanning from infra to ultra. Then thoughts about one field will reverberate within another. The frequencies of these overtones differ across fields but only as integral multiples of each other, harmonically. Thus a note struck one place will resound in another in the terms of that other, sometimes loudly nearby, sometimes faintly afield, in just the way that learning something in the physical, emotional, intellectual, or spiritual domain affects all domains at once, each according to its register.