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# Addressing Gender Equity through Artistic Process

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ADDRESSING GENDER EQUITY THROUGH ARTISTIC PROCESS

A Thesis Presented

by

JANE P. RANDO

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies and Research,  
University of Massachusetts Boston, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 1999

Critical and Creative Thinking Program

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## ABSTRACT

### ADDRESSING GENDER EQUITY THROUGH ARTISTIC PROCESS

AUGUST 1999

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Directed by Professor Delores Gallo

In our society, girls and women face unique physical and psychic dangers. There is insufficient support for respectful surfacing and articulation of voice, neither are there sufficient tools with which to combat the socio-environmental phenomena of “hitting the wall” and “going underground.” (Gilligan 1983). While the creative process is full of risk-taking and challenge for all, it presents additional problems for girls and women.

This thesis identifies and explores the issues and factors that influence female voicing, with a focus on artistic process as a voicing tool. The reader is offered a selective review of the literature on gender equity issues in education and literature on critical and creative thinking in the theatre arts. Drawn upon are the works of Elizabeth DeBold, Peg Orenstein, Mary Pipher, Judith Logan, Richard Paul, Dr. Delores Gallo, Karen Warren, Suzanne Langer, Uta Hagen, and Viola Spolin among others.

Also presented is an original performance piece, 'Rosa Mystica.' Following the performance piece is an analysis of its evolution in relation to described conceptual models, including a scene which models the performance of a writing/theatre studio group. The central focus of the piece is on the mother/daughter relationship. The text of the play offers perspective on issues of gender equity in relation to creative performance.

The paper concludes with a brief look at Irondale, an effective, existing arts in education program based on values I share. And finally, I offer a model of the essential frame of the writing/theatre studios, an integrated arts in education program for fostering artistic process, which offers a forum for developing critical and creative thinking skills, writing skills, a sense of best performance and a sense of vitality and community for all participants.

## DEDICATION

To Mom and Dad who are not here for this occasion but who gave me the freedom to find out who I am at a time when it was not 'the thing to do.'

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am pleased to have this opportunity to express my thanks to the Critical and Creative Thinking Program at the University of Massachusetts Boston. This is truly a place to celebrate the joy and challenge of learning as it should be.

My thanks to Pat Davidson for her support. What a pleasure to find warmth and hospitality in a program at a large university.

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I have great memories to keep with me of many people in the program. My appreciation to Donna Letteriello for wrestling through the early stages of this paper with me and helping me to believe the topic was a viable one.

My gratitude especially to Delores Gallo, an artful teacher, for holding the light at the end of the tunnel for such a long time. Thank-you...

My love to my husband, Carl, whose life has been upside down for quite some time because of this quest. Thank-you...Let's have some fun!

My love to my son and daughter, Christopher and Catelyn, who will inherit the world we leave behind. Wear your minds open and may your hearts always be as full as mine is now...



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

“...Keep writing in the dark a record of the night, or  
words that pulled you from the depths of unknowing,  
words that flew through your mind, strange birds  
crying their urgency with human voices,

or opened  
as flowers of a tree that blooms  
only once in a lifetime:

words that may have the power  
to make the sun rise again.”  
-*Denise Levertov* (from ‘Writing in the Dark’ 1982)

Girls and women face unique physical and psychic dangers in our society. There is little support for respectful surfacing and articulation of voice, nor are there sufficient tools with which to combat the socio-environmental phenomena of ‘hitting the wall’ and ‘going underground.’ (Gilligan 1983) While the creative process is full of risk-taking and challenge for all, it presents additional problems for girls and women. This thesis identifies and explores the issues and factors that influence female productivity, with a focus on artistic creativity.

I chose to write a performance piece entitled, ‘Rosa Mystica,’ which addresses the gender issues documented in the literature review. This form has given me the opportunity to exercise my own voice, to take the ‘leap of faith’ which I expect from my students when I ask them to write and speak their work. I have chosen to focus on female creativity and gender equity as the central theme of the performance piece.

In Chapter 2, I offer a critical review of theoretical writings from the fields of

critical and creative thinking, education, theatre, and women's studies in psychology and philosophy in support of the proposal. Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls by Mary Pipher, Mother Daughter Revolution by Elizabeth DeBold, and Schoolgirls, by Peg Orenstein frame the issues facing girls in social, school, and family environments, beginning as young as nine years of age. These works document that there is a marked loss of voice physically and psychically. I draw from the works of Judith Logan, William Glasser, Dr. Delores Gallo, Richard Paul, Karen Warren, Suzanne Langer, Peter Brook, Uta Hagen, and Viola Spolin from the fields of education, critical and creative thinking, philosophy and theatre to construct a frame for empathy, imagination, reason, and artistic intuition within which girls and boys may discover each other as people with thoughts and ideas.

Chapter 3, 'Rosa Mystica,' is a performance piece. It takes place in the present in the waking scenes and in the fifteenth century in the dream sequences. In exploring the theme of female creativity, I give 'center stage' to the mother/daughter relationship. The play expounds the joys of self-expression and voicing, being mindful of the danger to strong voicing in girls and women. Through the metaphors of the mystic rose and the unicorn, I have expressed that certain shadows of fifteenth century philosophy are still with us today.

In Chapter 4, 'The Context of Artistic Process,' I document the evolution of the performance piece, 'Rosa Mystica,' and relate my process of writing to Teresa Amabile's "The Social Psychology of Creativity: A Componential Conceptualization" (1983). I discuss the text of the play in relation to the theoretical materials found in the literature review on issues of gender bias. I also discuss staging techniques for the stage set and the elements of light and shadow. I have incorporated techniques, which can be used in any number of configurations in the studios to accompany the written work. It is

a frame for the articulation of empathy, imagination, reason, and for creative intuition through the development of the work.

I have found a number of similar matrices within these fields which lead me to believe that a strong argument can be made in favor of a structured writing/theatre studio frame to increase metacognition, for the purpose of exposing misconceptions, oversimplifications and biases. This creative work establishes a vital sense of community among the members of the group. To retain the practical focus of this paper, I will correlate my research to the issue of gender bias in public schools as a condition, which is detrimental to both girls and boys. In Chapter 5, I will offer concrete support for the premise that writing/theatre studios which promote process writing, respectful dialogue, and practice to best performance can counteract biases not only at secondary school age, but at any age. The basic premises of the studios remain constant for any age group. The frame is defined yet open. The studio is a place to cultivate empathy, imagination, reason, intuition, and a sense of artistic community.

Ishi, aYahi  
loved matches,  
how easily they strike fire.  
Words on paper  
have no apparent glow.  
Ishi called them birdtracks on white bark.  
But words on white paper  
can move from mind to mind  
like flames from roof to roof in wind  
not one word spoken.

-Susan Wooldridge

## CHAPTER 2

### A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR ARTISTIC PROCESS

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about by those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized.

(Lorde 1977, 36)

This essay reviews a selection of theoretical literature from the fields of critical and creative thinking, theatre, and women's studies in psychology and philosophy, education and theatre delineating the conceptual frame within which the work is held.

Teresa Amabile's "The Social Psychology of Creativity: A Componential Conceptualization," (1983) is the psychological cornerstone of the work. Dr. Delores Gallo's is a socio-psychological source in support of holistic education which evokes empathy, imagination, and reason. Mother Daughter Revolution by Elizabeth DeBold, Schoolgirls by Peg Orenstein and Reviving Ophelia by Mary Pipher address the socio-political issues involved in the development and expression of female voice. Renee Cox's 'A Gynecentric Aesthetic' offers a 'matriarchal' interpretation of the creative impulse to which this thesis adheres. The creative voice of Uta Hagen in A Challenge for the Actor and of Viola Spolin in Theatre Games for Rehearsal offer expert process techniques for performance. Suzanne Langer's Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling defines the element of artistic intuition. The performance piece, 'Rosa Mystica,' is a synthesis of concepts from these works.

In "The Social Psychology of Creativity: A Componential Conceptualization," Teresa Amabile offers a componential model of creativity that is composed of three parts: domain relevant skills, creativity relevant skills and task motivation.

Amabile defines domain-relevant skills by the following framework: “knowledge about the domain, technical skills required, and special domain-relevant ‘talent’... These depend on ‘innate cognitive abilities, innate perceptual and motor skills, and formal and informal education.” In my work, the domain-relevant skills are written and verbal skills which were acquired under the more general domain of high school and college education, theatre studies and professional work as a teacher and actor. This range of skills constitutes my response possibilities, which will enable me to synthesize new responses and begin to explore new cognitive pathways with which to address the task. Having the required domain-relevant skills will aid me in perceiving existing paradigms regarding the work and allow me to construct one of my own if the need arises. With a complete spectrum of domain-relevant skills, I am able to perceive existing and potential ‘performance scripts’ as frameworks for the creative product, seeing which elements are applicable and which are not. My ability to visualize a staged version of a piece, from the written script, would qualify under the heading of ‘technical skills.’ In considering an interpretation of ‘special talent’ in the domain, my teaching, performing, and writing skills will come under scrutiny.

Although domain-relevant skills are a necessity, they cannot, by themselves, generate a creative product. For the creative product to come to fruition, creativity-relevant skills must be in place. Amabile defines creativity-relevant skills as, “appropriate cognitive style, implicit or explicit knowledge of heuristics for generating novel ideas, and conducive work style.” These skills depend on “training, experience in idea generation, and personally characteristics.” Attributes, which have been found to characterize a creative cognitive style, are the ability: a.) to break perceptual set, which is being able to see things in other than their original context; b.) to break cognitive set, or exploring new cognitive pathways, this being the ability to restructure unsuccessful

problem-solving strategies in order to create avenues of new solutions; c.) to keep response options open as long as possible, which translates to comfort with ambiguity; d.) suspending judgment, numbers of options are absented before they are even considered if one's approach to set is judgmental; e.) to use wide categories, one element under consideration may have a wide range of possibilities; f.) to remember accurately, retaining and recalling large amounts of information to enhance problem-solving; g.) to break out of performance scripts, the ability to look at problem-solving algorithms critically, increasing the likelihood of seeing a new way in which they can be used. These components of creativity-relevant skills express the need for an open mind frame and a comfort with ambiguity. Once domain-relevant skills are acquired, creativity-relevant skills must accompany them in order to achieve the largest and most varied set of possible problem solutions. Also, the solutions will be more articulate and detailed if the problem solver has remembered and can recall a substantial amount of relevant data.

Amabile refers to a heuristic as, "any principle or device that contributes to a reduction in the average search to solution" (Newell, et al., 1962, p. 152); which when applied will pry open the usual problem solving set to allow for more novel ideas. Successfully applied heuristics allow for informed rule breaking.

Elements of a creativity conducive work style include, "an ability to concentrate effort for long periods of time," (Campbell, 1960; Hogarth, 1980), and "productive forgetting"—the ability to abandon unproductive search strategies and temporarily put aside stubborn problems: (Simon, 1966).

In an important way, creativity-relevant skills depend on personality characteristics related to self-discipline, ability to delay gratification, perseverance in the face of frustration, independence, and an absence of conformity in thinking or dependence on social approval. ( Feldman 1980, Golann 1963, Hogarth 1980, Stein 1974 )

This is a most vital piece of Amabile's creativity-relevant skills structure. Domain-relevant skills and other creativity-relevant skills must be housed within a conducive personality in order to come to fruition. The formation of a genuinely creative product within the confinements which daily obligations, and social and environmental factors can present, is an imposing challenge to say the least. These restrictions can be of an actual or of a psychic nature, and require a tremendous commitment to the work if they are to be overcome. Here, in support of these existing creative personality characteristics, is where task motivation reveals the true extent of its impact.

Assuming that all domain-relevant skills and creativity-relevant skills are in place, how does one spark the creative product? These skills, as extensive as they may be, are apt to lie dormant if the necessary task motivation is not present. Task motivation is either intrinsic or extrinsic by nature and "is responsible for initiating and sustaining the process; it determines whether the search for a solution will begin and whether it will continue, and it also determines some aspects of response generation" (Amabile, 1983, p. 367). In considering the relationship among domain-relevant, and creativity-relevant skills and task motivation, Amabile gives a concise explanation:

Domain-relevant skills are the material drawn on during operation; they determine what pathways will be searched initially and what criteria will be used to assess the response possibilities that are generated. Creativity relevant-skills act as an executive controller; they can influence the way in which a search for responses will proceed. (Amabile 1983, 367)

Task motivation must therefore be present as the 'ignition' at the outset of the sequence and as the 'driving force' which 'propels' the process to begin, attempt task completion, and begin again. These elements, as Amabile represents them, are multiplicative in that they 'recycle,' finish and begin over and over again, at varying



levels, in proceeding with the work. Each 'run' of the sequence relies heavily on creativity-relevant skills and task motivation. The level of task motivation determines whether or not the sequence will be reactivated and in combination with creativity-relevant skills, determines how varied and original the number of pathways to solution will be. The introduction of salient extrinsic constraints, such as the promise of reward can adversely affect the level of creativity with which the solution is pursued:

A person is said to be intrinsically motivated to engage in an activity if such engagement is viewed as an end in itself and not as a means to some extrinsic goal. (366).

A researcher performing her experiments, hoping for a breakthrough and an artist intent on a new work both know the meaning of intrinsic motivation. No movement can occur without sufficient task motivation. According to research, the higher the intrinsic motivation, the higher the creativity level of the product. The product itself must embody the primary value of the work in the mind of its creator. An extrinsic motivation such as a reward, acts as a constraint and can actually lower the creativity level of the product. If task motivation is in fact reduced below a certain necessary minimum, the process will terminate entirely. Ideally, the product itself is the motivating factor and the reward.

A most vital component of Teresa Amabile's theoretical framework is its inclusion of socio-environmental factors within the sequence, and its focus on specifically intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. An intrinsically motivated person values the work as a goal in itself. This valuing maintains the process. Not only does the introduction of extrinsic motivation adversely effect the creative process as Amabile frames it, there is support for the proposition that extrinsic motivation decreases intrinsic motivation thereby undermining potential creativity:

Amabile's socio-environmentally sensitive framework applies particularly well to the topic of the survival of women's and girls' creative process. Her survival is in part defined by a girl's definition of original voice, definition of freedom, and definition of personal power, which are being elicited within a male based social structure. "The outcome of a given run through the process (success of failure or partial success) can directly influence task motivation, thereby setting up a feedback cycle through which future engagement in the same or similar tasks can be affected. (369)

Intrinsic motivation, as Amabile theorizes, is necessary to the functioning and continuation of creative process toward a goal. Intrinsic motivation requires valuing the work as goal.

If in a public school setting, girls are 'submitting' their 'work' within a socio-environmental climate where the origin of the 'work' and the 'work' itself may be perceived as inferior or secondary to 'work' of male origin, what is the criteria by which a girl achieves a successful 'run'? How might we define the salient extrinsic influences to which she is subjected?

### **Defining and Retaining Voice**

How might the vigilant address of a girl's original voice, definition of freedom and perception of power through communal, artistic, heuristic tasks beginning in elementary school more fully define and retain her full potential?

Case by case in Mary Pipher's book, Reviving Ophelia: Saving the Selves of Adolescent Girls, we see the dangers of being young and female. These accounts make clear the limitations and pitfalls in a girl's path to self-definition:

Many young women are less whole and androgynous than they were at age ten. They are appearance conscious and sex-conscious. They are quieter, more fearful of holding strong opinions, more careful what they say and less honest. They are more likely to second-guess themselves and to be self-critical. They

are bigger worriers and more effective people pleasers. They are less likely to play sports, love math and science, and plan on being president. They hide their intelligence. Many must fight for years to regain what they have lost. ( Pipher. 1994, 264 )

Early adolescence is when many of the battles for self will be won or lost. They are fierce battles often against invisible enemies. Surface behaviors do not tell us enough of the inner turmoil which girls experience. Feminist voices have put language to this personal struggle to retain selfhood. Pipher offers an array of definitions:

Alice Miller would say that strength in adolescence requires an acknowledgment of all parts of the self, not just the socially acceptable ones. Simone de Beauvoir would say that strength implies remaining the subject of one's life and resisting the cultural pressure to become the object of male experience. Betty Friedan would call it, "fighting against the problem with no name." Toni McNaron calls it a "radical subjectivism." Gloria Steinem calls it "healthy rebellion." Carol Gilligan refers to it as "speaking in one's own voice." and bell hooks calls it "talking back." Resistance means vigilance in protecting one's own spirit from the forces that would break it. (264)

In their book, Mother Daughter Revolution, Elizabeth DeBold with Marie Wilson and Idelisse Malave, draw generously on a number of sources in the field of women's studies to paint a picture of power and betrayal in the lives of girls as they run headlong into 'the wall' of society's vision for them. "The wall" is a term coined by Carol Gilligan to name a culture which values men over women. The American Association of University Women is also a primary source for supporting information and research. The book detects different struggles and forces, which diminish girls' power and voices beginning at as early as nine years of age. Through specific examples from AAUW studies and from their own experiences, the authors refer to research and personal accounts to portray a picture of the loss of self suffered by girls as they enter adolescence.

At the point where young girls' bodies begin changing, they are subjected to an increasing awareness of their 'position' in the world, a position that in the 'public,' as

opposed to the 'private' world, is secondary to men and which exposes them to an array of abuses. It begins to seem advantageous to a girl to alter her potential voice, submit to narrowing her freedom, and admit to having less power than boys. These choices can appear to improve her socio-environmental status as she explores the relational world of boys. This is a formula for loss of original voice and will eventually invite the very abuses which it was intended to subdue. Elizabeth DeBold states:

We begin to realize that raising a daughter is an extremely political act in this culture. Mothers have been placed in a no-win situation with their daughters. If they teach their daughters simply how to get along in a world that has been shaped by me and male desires, then they betray their daughters' potential. But, if they do not, they leave their daughters adrift in a hostile world without survival strategies. Being stubborn and/or hopeful and/or naive, we persisted: What if mothers and daughters were to join as powerful allies in withstanding the pressures on girls to give up or give in? We smelled the potential for revolution. ( xvi).

Marie and Idelisse, who are, respectively, the president and vice-president of the Ms. Foundation for Women, along with Elizabeth who is a member of the Harvard Project, shared research on what's happening to girls with a group of women who, after having read the work, began to reclaim memories of their own girlhood courage. A chord was struck within each of the authors:

What if girls were to keep their psychological strength, courage and voice? What would the world be like if women said what they knew and said it with authority? What if women paid attention to what they wanted and moved with confidence and joy toward their deepest desires? What if we really said the truth? (xvii)

Girls' internalization of pain and distress during their gradual subjugation of self, makes their distress harder to hear and easier to ignore, unlike that of boys which is more likely to be quite vocal and physical. "Troubled" behavior in girls goes unheeded

longer because its manifestation is less likely to be socially harmful; rather it is harmful to self, as in instances of bulimia and anorexia, more self destructive than socially destructive. This bears direct correlation to later life when a girl's 'place' is still expected to be more the private than the public forum, the self and relational world, rather than the public, individual world of boys and men. This social framework is the context in which girls and women must do their creative work, "attempt a successful run." In order to maintain a full "network of possible wanderings," (Newell and Simon 1972, 82) they must "break set" with society's expectations, articulate for themselves the extrinsic factors which would deny and diminish their work and its value.

Mother Daughter Revolution offers the initiation of fundamental change in the way we, as women, see our relationships to one another. In our society, as is reflected in our media, the portrayal of women is still shallow, negative, incomplete. We are still the bitches and nags if we break silence to state our case or express concern or frustration. Even in popular music, Melissa Brooks who sings her personality as diverse and inclusive of anger, rather than as the homogeneous 'nice,' calls herself a bitch; "I'm a bitch, I'm a mother, I'm a child, I'm a lover..." Where is the positive terminology for being aggressive and for daring to voice one's opinion when one is a woman?

But we can practice being gentle with each other by being gentle with that piece of ourselves that is hardest to hold, by giving more to the brave bruised girlhood within each of us... We can love her in the light as well as in the darkness, quiet her frenzy toward perfection and encourage her attentions toward fulfillment. Maybe then we will come to appreciate more how much she has taught us, and how much she is doing to keep this world revolving toward some livable future. (Lorde 1977)

We must diligently practice 'reclaiming.' "Reclaiming is the first step in women joining girls' resistance to their own disintegration. Reclaiming is simply the process of

discovering, describing, and reappropriating the memories and feelings of our preadolescent selves before we became, as activist and writer Gloria Steinham has said, 'female impersonators.' ” (DeBold 1994, 101)

Where language and naming are power, silence is oppression, is violence.  
(Rich 1979)

Is there a way to more fully retain our preadolescent selves so that we do not suffer so much loss, so that there is not so much reclaiming to be done? Can constant observance of the imagination and its origin fortify girls against society's depiction of them?

Mother Daughter Revolution proposes that reaffirming and retaining the importance of the mother/daughter relationship is at the heart of their treatise for social change. Many conversations between mothers and daughters, from the authors' studied, are cited. On the surface, these conversations contain nothing 'spectacular.' They are conversations about life, interests, desire, sex, questions about the mothers' choices and so on. However, the very existence of these conversations is vital to the daughters for 'sounding.' There is no better forum than the mother/daughter relationship within which to establish a whole definition of self. This is sanctuary for women and girls. The challenge to separate from the definition which society holds for us is monumental. Achieving a balance of survival skills within a patriarchy and the formation and declaration of a self- based on true origin is a profoundly difficult task. The true psychological discovery and development of a whole self for a girl in this society takes great personal courage. It takes a reinterpretation of the world within which we live:

Reinterpreting joins women and girls by enabling them to form a deeper, shared way of seeing the world. This double vision enables girls to look to and see

their mothers as authorities who possess critical information and analysis. From this perspective, girls can more freely negotiate the world around them. By reinterpreting, mothers can also present—or learn with their daughters—a positive group identity that comes from understanding the heritage of women’s struggles for liberation. “Within such education,” writes Adrienne Rich, “women have lived and continue to live in ignorance of our collective context, vulnerable to the projections of men’s fantasies about us as they appear in art, in literature, in the sciences, in the so-called humanistic studies.” Reinterpreting is an ongoing, conversational education that teaches us to see the difference between the accepted view of reality and the reality of women’s experience. Through reinterpreting the world for daughters in the everyday ebb and flow of conversation and media, women join with girls and all share in the heritage of their forefathers. Girls discover that they are not alone. (DeBold 1993, 188-9)

The importance of the mother/daughter relationship does not exist in an ivory tower.

The importance rests in day to day psychic survival.

A most powerful chapter in the text, as we consider reinterpretation is, “The Power of Desire.” Girls’ and women’s desire, in our culture, is defined within a male framework. Women’s desire in its original form, is the root of our personal power.

But desire in this culture is shaped by men’s wants. The cultural equation of power with dominance and superiority creates desire for control. Desire, rather than a life force that guides from within, becomes experienced as the thrill of domination or a compelling drive to be safe. The system of desire that rules in this culture channels desire for relationship into romance and desire for pleasure into sexual sensation without feelings. (201)

Girls are portrayed as either “bad” sexual girls or “good” marriageable girls.

Either way, girls are objects of desire rather than owners of desire. Sexual images leap from magazine covers, music videos and television commercials. The invitation to girls to become objects of desire is a powerful one. With rapes, abductions, and abuses of girls being an everyday occurrence, this road to a girl’s social acceptance by self-objectification is strewn with dangers. Vital to a girl’s survival is the reclaiming of the word desire with its passion for life, its call to us, as girls and women to be desirous

rather than desired. Ownership of our desire offers the possibility of a life of passion and vitality and unfortunately, danger.

Mother Daughter Revolution brings to the surface the absolute necessity of communication between mothers and daughters and states uncategorically that we, in surfacing, are inviting danger and conflict as we reveal our private selves in the public forum.

My goal in this thesis is to construct a safe public forum for girls and women, which establishes the importance of voicing and reminds us over and over again, in opposition to what we hear in the world, of the power and vitality we possess as human beings.

### **Finding Our Identity**

Because my own work has been in public schools, I found Peg Orenstein's book, Schoolgirls to be a valuable reference. Through statistics from AAUW research and her own conversations with girls, Orenstein cites the dichotomy, which exists between boys and girls in the public school setting. Girls' days are a series of challenges and unnoticed acts of courage. As a teacher with vivid memories of the gauntlet of my own days in public school, I felt more and more compelled to put into writing what I saw as the marvelous self-revealing potential of writing and presenting one's own work.

Echoing DeBold's chapter on "The Power of Desire" is Orenstein's chapter "Fear of Falling: Sluts," which discusses individual experiences of girls who must decide between the image of schoolgirl and slut, the only images available. Orenstein sat in on sex education classes at Weston Middle School, in Weston, California, as part of eighth grade science studies. Sex education is devoid of any consideration of female desire and focuses solely on male desire and avoidance of pregnancy. The entire tone



among the students of the sex education class is one where boys are “studs” for having multiple partners while the girls who have multiple partners are “sluts.” While the penis is identified, the clitoris and labia are not. In “family life,” a consequence driven curriculum, sexual exploration is then reduced to nothing more than fear of pregnancy of disease, a dismal, fragmented lesson. While the boys are very verbal and make many physical gestures during the class, the girls are silent. The teacher is unaware that this drama is playing itself out. The female is portrayed as object of desire:

From an early age, girls learn to stand outside of themselves, to disconnect and evaluate themselves as others might. As they mature, then, the question they begin to ask themselves is not whether they desire (a notion they quickly suppress) but whether or not someone would desire them...

When being desirable supplants desiring, sexual activity takes on a frightening dimension: it becomes an attempt to confirm one’s self-worth, one’s lovability, through someone else. This confused motive only intensifies the conundrum of the “slut”. She earns her peers’ contempt by engaging in the very activity she believes will bolster her self-respect. It may also, in part, explain why girls who have sex as young teenagers regret their decision at twice the rate of boys, and why, although sexually active girls have lower self-esteem than their nonactive counterparts, boys show no such difference. (Orenstein 1994, 63)

In the chapter, “Guys Protect You from Other Guys,” the male message is powerful. Part of life in and outside of John J. Audubon Middle school in Northern California is the infrastructure of the gang culture. Girls are forced into committing sexual acts with gang members as initiation into the gang. As a gang “member” they receive ‘protection’ from the members who have coerced them into having sex. Trying to find logic or fairness in this brutal power structure is impossible.

‘Bad’ boys exert power, ‘bad’ girls succumb. “Bad’ boys strike out, ‘bad’ girls get struck. (206)

You may argue that girls participate in the violence of these mixed gangs, however, males orchestrate the decision-making and again the males can exert power in the world of the gang and in the world outside the gang. The girls have no place where they are in power. Girls and boys are trapped in untenable roles. The boys' skewed roles carry a level of power, which they are not likely to relinquish. Although they are spoken of as 'members' they are merely pawns. Their mindset is to seek shelter, the paradox being that they seek shelter within the very structure, which is oppressing them. Their alternative is to live in a state of danger moving through each day with a level of courage and stress that goes unperceived.

This gang structure is a concentrated microcosm of a male-based society. Although many girls will be able to move through their school experience without facing the intensive gang situation, which exists at Audubon, few will move through their school experience unscathed by the basic inequity toward girls inherent in the public school structure.

'Hidden curriculum,' the social substructure in a gender mixed classroom, can give a much higher percentage of attention to the more vocal, more aggressive male students than to the girls. One Weston Middle School girl was quoted as saying, "teachers like us because we're nicer, quieter, and better behaved." Girls exhibiting docile behavior are more frequently praised as ideal students, yet,

In practice, educators reward assertiveness and aggression over docility, the very behavior that is prized in girls becomes an obstacle to their success. Furthermore, the praise girls earn for their exemplary passivity discourages them from experimenting with more active, risk-taking learning styles that would serve them better in the long run. As the author of one study put it, by adolescence, girls have learned to get along, while boys have learned to get ahead. (210)

The phrase 'exemplary passivity' is particularly striking. Of what use is the attribute of passivity in a democratic society? The equation of passive, compliant behavior, which is acceptable for girls, and the assertiveness and independence necessary for success, are incompatible to say the least. The 'perfect girl,' a self-image prevalent among white academically strong girls at Weston School is that of an always soft-spoken, kind character who, silences true feelings. This false self-image makes it virtually impossible for a girl to discover and explore her 'original voice' because it necessitates conquering personal desire. The acceptable social voice enhances others over self. Whereas it is acceptable for a male to move powerfully toward advancement of self, it is unacceptable for a girl. A girl who moves aggressively against this structure will frequently find her self-esteem spiraling downward as she meets with powerfully negative reactions from her peers. Attributes of the hidden curriculum for girls are unacceptable and are in complete opposition to the 'life curriculum' necessary for self-esteem and success in a democratic society.

"Bitches and Ho's: Sexual Harassment at Audubon" is a chapter which I found particularly striking. Hidden curriculum also teaches boys that they can get away with crimes at school that harm girls and women. If a girl does have the courage to report incidents of inappropriate language or manhandling it may well be explained away or dismissed altogether leaving her more frustrated and alone than before. Incidents of sexual harassment are usually given low priority for reasons of overburdening, believability, or proof. As the incident is treated as low priority, the girls who must endure this degrading behavior become a low priority as well.

Our language has many colorful, effective, degrading words for women, "bimbo, ball-buster, pussy, whore, ditz, dingbat, helpless, airhead, witch, bitch, man-hater, bra-

burner, dumb blonde, cunt, hag, weak, princess, broad.” This is only a partial list. Within this language, helplessness, weakness is equated with femininity. The most common, most cutting type of insult to a male is to equate him with females. These negative definitions, which often become self-definitions, are nothing less than dangerous, psychically and physically.

In the final pages of Schoolgirls, Peg Orenstein relates her classroom experience and conversation with teacher, Ms. Judith Logan. Ms. Logan is author of the book, Teaching Stories, in which she defines a curriculum of inclusion. Boys are asked to play the role of a woman in history. They are allowed to forego costumes. This empathic exercise affords the girls in the class the experience of seeing historic female figures given equal ground, while the boys have an opportunity to respectfully portray these women in an atmosphere where there this no more unusual than the girls portraying men. The conventional teacher-student relationship is turned around, as the students become “experts” and impart knowledge, while the teachers become the learners. The model is one of cooperative learning rather than competition and “right” or “wrong” answers. As Ms. Logan writes, “...women’s studies is not about ‘ruling over,’ it’s about ‘existing with.’ Feminist teaching is not about allowing a win/lose situation to develop between boys and girls.” The women to be studied must be treated as equal not ‘lesser’ figures or neither girls or boys would want to present them. The male students working within this framework struggle with equality which, as some female students remarked, the boys see as a loss. They call the class ‘sexist,’ where in a class that focuses solely on male figures, they see no problem, only that the ‘important’ figures happen to be all males.

The equalizing effect over time of Ms. Logan’s curriculum is immeasurable. It forces a crystallization of the boys’ resentment of presenting women as equal to men.

Where girls have always been immersed in male history in their classes, it is a relatively new experience for boys to immerse themselves in the study of a serious female persona. The empathic nature of the presentation is a vital link in boys' acceptance of girls as genuine equals.

The empathic nature of the presentations given my Ms. Logan's class is a key component of their importance as an exercise in working toward genuine gender equality. Role-playing when handled properly, challenges the student to internalize the experience of someone other than themselves. Previously held misconceptions are opened to a level of articulation, through imagination and reason, which they cannot survive.

An article which discusses the importance of empathy in education and its link to imagination and reason is Dr. Delores Gallo's article, "Educating for Empathy, Reason, and Imagination." In this paper, Dr. Gallo correlates attributes of empathic role-playing with attributes of effective critical and creative thinking, both exercising complex networks of skills and dispositions. Certain of these abilities are in contrast to one another, such as,

An ability to probe persistently, yet regularly to relinquish conceptions in the service of seeing things afresh... It is a posture of chosen commitments held concurrently with a willingness to be shown wrong. (Gallo 1989, 44)

There is, of course, the necessary tolerance for ambiguity, comfort with complexity, disposition of deferred judgment, and the drive for resolution and completion of the original task, this not being a complete list. In the development and furtherance of these complex abilities and dispositions, Dr. Gallo sees the goal and responsibility of education to be as follows:

Importantly, these contrasting abilities are predicted on a capacity to function with cognitive and personal flexibility and with an acceptance of the concomitant risks. Thus, fundamentally, the goal of education is the cultivation of the requisite antecedent traits and values: self-esteem and courage, a valuing of the pursuit of truth and the comprehensive, elegant address of complex problems. Therefore, education bears a responsibility for the development of the whole individual, values and voice, disposition and capacity to imagine and to reason well. The process by which this development occurs is the maturing process afforded by vicarious experience and the empathic identification with, both familiar and remote ideas, events, and persons. (47)

Empathy has a positive influence on the capacity to reason, and an empathic engagement with studies of ideas, events, and persons, promotes more complex reasoning. The value of empathic education is becoming increasingly supported by materials from the fields of philosophy and psychology. Dr. Gallo has chosen from the range of existing definitions, that of Carl Rogers, who defines empathy as:

The state of empathy or being empathic, to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy and with the emotional components and meanings which pertain thereto as if one were the person, but without ever losing the 'as if' condition."

Complex tasks are necessary to the development and retention of complex abilities and dispositions. The development and retention of genuine voice amid oppositional socio-environmental factors is just such a complex task, one which must repeat over and over again a matrix of metacognitive critical and creative thinking skills. When performing a complex creative task which requires metacognitive skills, the interplay between critical and creative thinking can be seen as two sides of a coin, one representing critical thinking, one representing creative thinking. Now, set the coin spinning. In the demonstration of a well-known "optical illusion," if a coin has an

empty birdcage on one side and a bird on the other, when the coin is spun, the bird appears to be in the cage. So, the two sides of the coin, when stationary, may be considered separately, but in complex thinking, we 'spin' them and they interrelate in a network of creative and critical skills, imagination, intuition, and empathy and reason. Gallo's work defines the theoretical union of reason and empathy. Having compartmentalized these aspects of ourselves since the time of Descartes, philosophically, we become whole again.

In a society where acts of violence, spontaneous and premeditated, are chosen as problem solutions to counteract losses of personal power and dignity, engaging empathy and reason as primary and necessary aspects of an holistic education is an idea whose time is at hand. Left unchallenged, myth takes on a life of its own. Youth may come to find more meaning in fantasy than in reality. Can we create a forum where students grow to understand the meaning and importance of forming a moral personal philosophy and where they may develop their ability to articulate that philosophy in words, written and spoken, and in communal actions? How many acts of violence could be prevented if the perpetrators' impulse were to think, to reason empathically and to share their reasoning before they acted?

### **Critical Thinking and Identity**

What are the benefits of teaching in such a way that our students become philosophical thinkers? Richard Paul's, 'Contribution of Philosophy to Thinking' gives us some insights:

An unphilosophical mind is at its best when routine methods, rules, or procedures function well and there is no need to critically reconceptualize them in

the light of a broad understanding of one's framework for thinking. If one lacks philosophical insight into the underlying logic of those routines, rules, or procedures, one lacks the ability to mentally step outside of them and, conceive of alternatives. As a result, the unphilosophical mind tends toward conformity to a system without grasping clearly what the system is, how it came to be thus, or how it might have been otherwise... The philosophical mind gives serious consideration to alternative and competing concepts, aims, assumptions, and values, enters empathically into thinking fundamentally different from its own and does not confuse its thinking with reality. (556-7)

Advocating, teaching philosophical thinking does not entail forcing students into sophisticated philosophical thinking before they are ready. However, through Socratic questioning and open discussion, each student can contribute something to a dialogue on her or his own level. Not all students will progress to the same place with their reasoning ability, however, discussions help them begin to:

1. see the significance and relevance of basic philosophical questions to understanding themselves and the world around them,
2. understand the problematic character of human thought and the need to probe it deeply,
3. gain insights into what it takes to make thinking more rational, critical, and fair-minded,
4. organize their thinking globally across subject matter divisions,
5. achieve initial command over their own thought processes, and
6. come to believe in the value and power of their own minds.

Philosophical thinking is vital to developing intellectual strength in our students. Where leveling or tracking are not issues, every student is free to develop to his or her fullest capacity. The traits developed in philosophical thinking are precisely those needed to prevent girls from going 'underground,' as the term is used in Mother Daughter Revolution. Articulate voicing can maintain surfacing when accompanied with ideas



and activities that are of value to the participant. Intelligence and emotion are recognized and active. Language retains more of its power.

Karen Warren advocates the importance of practicing philosophical thinking from a feminist viewpoint in her essay, "Critical Thinking and Feminism." Warren's research into the works of such writers as Elizabeth Dodson Gray (Green Paradise Lost, 1981) and her study of value-dualisms which are inherent in our society emphasizes the necessity of perpetuating the ability to think philosophically in girls and boys. Perhaps the open-minded frame necessary for genuine philosophical thinking, once it is informed, can assist in detecting social biases, thereby supporting more equitable decision making.

Warren's voice speaks in chorus with the voices of Richard Paul and Delores Gallo as she emphasizes the importance of empathy and passion to the process of critical thinking, as it is engaged in philosophical thinking. Girls and boys are capable of age appropriate philosophical thinking from when they're quite young. Children express their ideas from their own knowledge base and experience. Voicing in this manner from a young age with respect and frequency could assist girls in retaining original voices.

These critical and creative thinking skills, especially the metacognitive level skills, may serve girls in identifying 'the wall' as it is defined by DeBold and identify themselves exclusive of its biases. Also, the boys with whom they must interact on a daily basis, may be more well informed of the girls' intelligences and abilities. If so, any misconceptions they may hold are more likely to be dispelled or at least challenged and new misconceptions do not have an open field in which to take hold. What if the education system created students who knew how to educate themselves by articulating questions rather than by accepting predetermined, sometimes biased, answers?

After many years of experience as an actor and a teacher, it is my belief that awareness of and incorporation of one's intuition is vital to a whole self-definition. Intuition is the fundamental impulse for a creative idea, a mysterious matrix of knowing beyond knowing. As an actor and as a teacher, I use my intuition constantly. I will move from that intuitive impulse to inform myself from other sources, however, and this is due in large part to my artistic training, I trust my own 'intuitions.' I believe intuitions are vital to continuing the task motivational repetitions of Amabile's spirals. My intuitions become more informed as I increase my level of expertise in my fields. In Suzanne Langer's book, Mind: An Essay on Human Feeling, I believe she strikes on an excellent definition of intuition:

Intuition is the basic intellectual function. The word has been popularly used to denote some alleged possession of information without any demonstrable source-foreknowledge of rationally unpredictable events, factual knowledge without any access to the facts, etc.; it is also used as a synonym for instinct, which it certainly is not...Intuition is direct logical or semantic perception; the perception of (1) relations, (2) forms, (3) instances, or exemplifications of forms, and (4) meaning...

Perhaps the deepest change which the dawn of 'natural light' has made in man is the vast expansion of his emotional capacity, under the more or less constant stimulation provided by the play of significant imagery and spontaneous ideation that have become our nature. Sheer conceptions evoke emotions, emotions focus and intensify attention, attention eventuates in symbolic expression that formulates more conceptions and sustains or reshapes emotion; so the conceptual frame in which we feel our own activity and the impingement of outward events grows larger as long as the emotive and intellectual processes keep pace with each other in a dialectical advance, rhythmically self-sustaining like all major organic functions. Intuition lies at the base of all specifically human functions. (Langer 1967, 128-30)

If emotions 'focus and intensify attention,' intuition makes engagement in moral philosophical thinking possible. Intuition, according to Langer, sparks imagination.

'Natural light' is the phrase John Locke used in his 'Essay' and in many papers

thereafter because, use of the word intuition was forbidden by the church. I find the sense of the alternative phrase 'natural light' to be strangely satisfying. It relates to the quote by Audre Lorde at the beginning of this chapter. Intuition is a vital aspect of our self-knowledge as human beings and of our ability to make empathic connections with one another. Rather than accepting the phrase 'women's intuition' in a degrading 'light', we could embrace the power of intuition as 'the basic human intellectual function.' (128)

### **Educating Girls**

Ancient matriarchal art merged with astronomy and mythology; modern matriarchal art merges with philosophy, the humanities, and the natural and social sciences. ...Finally, matriarchal art is not 'art' in the patriarchal sense. Patriarchal art concerns the fictional, and has existed only since the aesthetic sphere was separated from the rest of life. It is thus artificial and dematerialized. Matriarchal art is the ability to shape life and so change it; it is itself energy, life, a drive toward the aestheticization of society. (Cox 1983, 45)

After discussing the aesthetics of Heide Gottner-Abendroth and Alan Lomax, primitive Renee Cox offers the following parallels between their interpretations of certain societies and her interpretation of a matriarchal aesthetic:

Emotion, magic, and dance serve to unite the individual, society and nature. There is an integration of art, healing and life; emotion, intellect and action combine to achieve an ecstatic state; process and continuous creation is stressed over objectification; there is a synthesis of the arts, and no division in the aesthetic sphere; the continuous cycle of life takes precedence over a focus on individual death; sexuality is responsibly free rather than exclusive; and everyone is included in aesthetic and other social activities. Significantly, however, this emphasis on synthesis, integration and unity is not so total as to eliminate the self: the group consciousness but seem, rather, to nurture and support it. This is not paradoxical, but analogous to the harmony of individual themes in a piece

of music. Relationships between individuals and with the natural world are subject to subject rather than subject to object. (53-4 )

Cox counters arguments that the matriarchal view of art would somehow reduce art as we now conceive it. However, in matriarchal language which is not hierarchical, there is not the perception of falling from high art, but rather a movement outward into society and an inclusion which could, in fact, allow more artistic potential from within the community to emerge:

The focus in the gynecentric aesthetic is on the process of continuous creation rather than on the production of art objects. The point is not that beautiful objects would not be made, however, but that they need not be made only for the sake of being beautiful. Perhaps the reason we place such high value on specialized art objects in contemporary culture is that aesthetic activity has been largely removed from everyday existence. Because workers cannot be concerned with making and doing things aesthetically when their jobs involve performing their duties as quickly and efficiently as possible, art and artistic activity in our culture has been delegated to the specialist, to the museum and the concert hall, and we are encouraged to satisfy our aesthetic needs by consuming beautiful objects. In the gynecentric culture envisioned here, everything done would be done with beauty. Art would not be separate from the rest of life, and the entire society would be aestheticized. (58)

This conception of an inclusion of art in community does not exclude special talent or the pleasure it gives. This aesthetic simply offers an inclusive invitation to the process of art. When more of us avail ourselves of our creative intuition we become more fully human. We hear the voice of imagination and reason from within ourselves and from within those around us. The work can be transformational for girls as they hear their original voices take form. Also, it is a forum for body awareness. Renee Cox's vision of matriarchal art forms involves communal dancing, rhythm and celebration. When dancers and athletes are part of the studios, they can lend their expertise in regard to connecting with one's body.

Uta Hagen, in her text, A Challenge for the Actor, expresses the necessity of being comfortable in one's body, a vital issue for girl's approaching adolescence:

I have already given many examples of ways in which the body is influenced by such things as changes in self-image, by clothing, by one's relationship to others, by weather and time of day, by physical conditions such as fatigue and pain, and by the psychological causes that 'prepare the body for vigorous action' as my dictionary so aptly puts it...I must remind myself that voice and speech, the soul and the mind, are not separate from the body but originate from it, emanate through it. Therefore, if the body is inert, unmotivated, and artificially positioned, the soul will also be deadened, the mind will freeze up, thoughts will become occupied with external irrelevancies, the throat will tighten, and we will produce mechanical or unintelligible words...Many physical destinations are consciously motivated by events, by basic wishes, by what is done to us and by demands of others...The influence of the surroundings on your physical life may also seem obvious, but they are manifold and often profound even in their subtleties. (Hagen 1989, 100-3.)

I find the correlations of Hagen's words with those of DeBold, Orenstein, and Pipher to be striking. Girls' 'physical destinations' are perpetually wrenched from their origins by social interpretations. Girls will often adopt more demure postures to avoid appearing too sexual or a more rebellious girl will try to appear as sexual as possible. Both choices are skewed from their original impulse. Hagen's techniques return us to our origins.

Studios are not an isolating experience. They are by nature communal and ultimately transformational encouraging empathy, imagination, reason, and the development of creative intuition. Uta Hagen and Viola Spolin, because their works are in the field of theatrical theory, do not write with a focus on critical and creative thinking, educational theory, or feminism. However, the languages mesh. Hagen's and Spolin's techniques demand a holistic approach as the immersed actor uses her or his mind, body, and spirit to develop the work. A focus on theatre games awakens the intuitive mind. Everyday events become scenarios for analysis and synthesis into art.

Life becomes a study for the art. Through engagement in artistic process, girls may see their physical, and emotional growth as well as the development of their work as a process of 'continuous creation' (Cox, 53) rather than one of increasing objectification. This also allows for retention of ownership of the work. Viola Spolin was the first to have theorized improvisation as theatre games. Under her guidance the theatre games become a controlled form of play that teaches communication skills and a method for approaching problems. In Viola Spolin's book, Theatre Games for Rehearsal: A Director's Handbook, she writes:

.The value of play and playing becomes increasingly apparent, the word 'game' displaced 'problem solving.' Notes on techniques, motives, etc., became unnecessary. The logical, rational brain seeking such information had been transcended by the theatre game focus...Playing together in this manner brings all players into the same space no matter how diverse their backgrounds or training...It cannot be emphasized too strongly that playing can pull many a director and cast out of a tight spot, freeing all of them from the fear-producing trap of memorizing, characterizing, and interpreting. This playing draws upon a very important, almost forgotten, little understood or utilized, and greatly maligned life-giving force-*passion!* (Spolin 1991, 1)

And there it is, *passion*. The studio members working with Spolin's methods become artisans of their own [theatre] education. The work becomes play a fundamental part of the creative process according to Amabile. Within the work, passion becomes a positive force for self-discovery.

In an article published in the Yale Drama Review, Lisa Diamond and Lynn

Lefkoff, the more practical, socially applicable benefits of Spolin's techniques are highlighted:

More people are becoming receptive to the notion that creative thinking can be personally healthy and professionally profitable. Creative problem solving techniques share common ground with systems of thought that promote

independence from imposed arbitrary social structures and a reliance on oneself as the primary source of information. (Diamond and Lefkoff 1992, 23)

Spolin and Langer are in agreement that intuition plays a vital role in achieving knowledge, which is not dictated by existing norms:

Intuition emerges in the right half of the brain, in the metaphoric mind, the X-area, the area of knowledge, which is beyond the restrictions of culture, race, education, psychology, and age. It is deeper than the survival dress of mannerisms, prejudices, intellectualism, and borrowings most of us wear to live out our daily lives. (Spolin 1991, 4)

Thinking back to Amabile's definition of a 'successful run' at the creative process, the nurturing of intuition and passion are vital components of task motivation to spark additional attempts at success, especially for adolescent girls who are pushing against a wall of salient socio-environmental factors in their pursuit of valid work. How do we retain a sense of the value of our work? Engagement in the artistic process given its inherent attention to mind, body, and spirit, encourages ownership, freedom, and a passion for the work of voicing which translates to power. Suzanne Langer writes:

The perception of the formal aspects of concrete realities makes logical projection or rendering of such realities in symbolic terms, possible and their recognition in those terms intuitive. Intuitive processes are not always immediate, and they may be selectively evoked, blocked, or modified. The understanding of language is of this sort. It dawns at some time within the first two or three years of one's life under conditions of hearing speech, although the meaning of every phrase and word has to be conventionally determined. We have no intuition of what this or that word means; our intuition is, rather, of the fact that the articulated utterances of man are not chirps, and cries, but speech—that is, we have an intuition of significance as such. (146-7)

If Langer is correct in her belief that our first intuition of language is of its significance, then our facility with language and our interpretive abilities in regard to use of language are of vital importance to our self-awareness. Language and meaning are power

In summation, this chapter has offered theoretical works in support of the premise that girls and women face special physical and psychological challenges if they attempt to engage in the creative process as defined by Teresa Amabile. Girls and women must struggle to retain a sense of value for their own voices in a society which does not value them equally with men. To confront this complex issue of gender bias, I offer the component of a writing/theatre studio, which is structured on elements of theatre arts and writing workshop techniques. Although the studios can be adjusted to any age, this thesis focuses on high school age girls.

These ongoing, non-graded, gatherings become a forum for all genres of writing, a framework for imagination and intuition, for exploring artistic process, philosophical thinking, and for thorough examination of topics which affect us by researching known sources and experts. The premise is that participation in a gender equitable, process-based forum for writing/theatre can contribute to articulation and reminding of original voice thereby challenging the held misconceptions inherent in gender bias.

The following chapter is the performance piece, 'Rosa Mystica,' an artistic interpretation of the premise of this paper.



## CHAPTER 3

### ROSA MYSTICA

#### scene i Introduction

*( The stage is set with acrylic levels. The rooms within which the play proceeds appear to be artifacts for us to observe and consider, like objects in an art exhibit. This is representative of the philosophical categories within which we most often confine our thinking. The rear walls of the room are scrim enabling them to act as the third wall when front lit and as dream when lit from behind. Lea is asleep on stage. Lighting gradually comes up to low. Gobo of tree branches moves from left to right across stage, like remembrance across one's memory. Distant wind, bells, silhouette of mother and daughter walking through hazy image of meadow grass, herbs, flowers, behind backlit scrim upstage right. A low voice calls, 'Marian, Marian,' an accompanying drumbeat is low and foreboding. The woman and girl startle and run. Phone rings. Lea wakes up from nap. Her room is upstage right. Teacher, director and performance poet, mother.*

*She is in rehearsal for a student written presentation being held at a local club in two days. Also, she's trying to complete a performance presentation on the Unicorn Tapestries and an academic paper in application for a grant. Her husband, Michael, a musician, is on the phone.*

LEA: Hi. I was taking a nap. Fine. No more calls...  
Michael, I am taking it seriously. He hasn't called again.... I can't cancel the performance. You know that better than anybody... There'll be people around the entire time...I know... I'll be careful. If you have one more minute, I have something to read to you..

I Love Best, with Talking, Touching...

seeing you, elegant man,  
when you are unaware.  
The gliding soft stone of your shoulders  
powers intelligent hands,  
teaching a language of pulses  
to ceiling and floor 'til they're dancing...  
life plays around, within...  
I love best, with talking, touching,  
to listen,  
to ride the rhythm of you.

LEA: (Laughs. He seems pleased with the poem.)  
Good...

I love you too. 'night.  
*Exits.*

CHORUS: (*As in Greek tradition, energetic speaking chorus. Very soft drum, just a whisper*)  
Meet me in my sacred place,  
and I will remember you forever,  
rustling the grasses of intuition,  
dreaming rosa mystica.

CHRIS: (sixteen-year-old brother to Mary)  
Mary. Mary? Mary! Where are the games I left on  
the table? They're not mine...I need them back!

*Mary is a bright six year old who loves art and music. Mary's room is set upstage left, and up on one of the acrylic pedestals. Beginning at stage right, moving left, a soft edged spot in washes of lavender and pink. It should imitate a stereotyped, exaggerated, 'ideal' little girl's play world; lavender and pink, stuffed animals, dolls, Barbies, lace, sparkles, etc. A little girl plays, sings a song like the ones children make up in their heads, part their own, part media input. The back wall scrim has been front lit like a wall, now this will be playing the video game Night Trap which features a woman in a slip being attacked by Ninja vampire characters. The child, who has been very animated until now, turns her back to the audience and stares. Her absorption in the terrifying*

*images, her stillness, her 'psychological captivity' if you will, should be chilling in contrast to her innocent playing and singing. After a few seconds the child will line up her Barbies as if in a shooting gallery and kickbox each one down in turn, shouting in a style she has learned from playing video games. She recovers one last toy, too precious to kick, one worn and invested with imagination. She gives the stuffed toy a hug and then extends her arms, stands with legs apart, and gives a loud primal scream. No fear. Strength and triumph. It is a social perception of her 'self' against which she rebels. Echo mike it to reverberate much larger than the size of the child. The film has faded gradually since the 'kickboxing gallery' began.*

*Note: This platform should rotate, as the reverse side is free of all the properties save the stuffed toy, bedside lamp, more realistic bedroom set.*

scene ii  
The Work

*A voice-over reads an excerpt from Lea's paper for us, in her voice. This should be prerecorded.*

*(The script which Lea needs here follows the set instructions.)*

*An acrylic podium is set down stage right whether lit by a soft spot or with an attached reading light which comes up as the voiceover begins to play. No one is at the podium. We only hear her voice. Perhaps show views on the back scrim of the different tapestries in the 'hunt' series, then closer and closer in shot of *The Unicorn at Bay*, I think to the leering man behind the unicorn with his spear poised, close in on the expression on his face.*

LEA: (voice-over)

Let us assume the Unicorn Tapestries, the purpose for their creation, is not as their scholars have determined. In a time of such fanaticism, "philosophical cleansing" if you will, it meant torture and death to forward the teachings of pre-Christian and early Christian high syntheses of religion. Ancient, respected, herbal practices and their practitioners were brought under suspicion and

with twists of language, demonic interpretations were placed on their practices by the church and prominent political figures. This era secured a Christian church altered from its origins and a modern medical profession, isolated and sterilized in comparison to its herbalist, midwife predecessors. Gods and Goddesses, the manifestations of our philosophical musings, who roamed the earth among us, were wrenched away to heaven in the form of one almighty God. The institutionalized church became his voice.

How would it be possible to preserve the truth of events of this period as seen by advocates of an earlier and more innocent philosophical synthesis of religions? What if the story were woven into a fine tapestry, one cloaked in allegory. Admirers and scholars of the tapestries would see the passion of Christ, while the artisans of the craft saw and would hold for posterity the violent intent of the church and politics of the day toward any philosophy other than their own. The populace was so vulnerable to the language of *The Hammer of the Witches*, giving the representatives of the church final say, as it was believed that they carried out God's will.

The unicorn, as it was intended here, is not representative of any single philosophy, but rather the unicorn is the embodiment of philosophy itself, a manifestation of attributes of earthly creatures and spiritual intuition. The unicorn itself is a philosophical idea, a synthesis.

*Simultaneously, the tree shadow gobo moves across the stage again, sound of wind, and bells supports speaking chorus. A projection of Lady with Mirror from The Lady with the Unicorn series is cast on the scrim upstage right.*

CHORUS: Incarnadine meadow,  
children severed,  
sweetly bleeding,  
ancient healing.  
The story yet will be revealed.  
The truest story has yet to be revealed.  
Children are growing  
rootless on the wind.

They seek their Mother also,  
seek the story.  
In their heart of hearts,  
they have not forgotten Paradise.

*( Image of Lady with Unicorn fades.)*

*Lea's writing area is set upstage center. In place of the film, a gobo of the interior wall of an apartment with a window onto the next building. This should be nearly plain scrim, like an artist's canvas. A table to the side of the window now occupied by Lea, writing. Books are stacked as though the writing is for coursework for school or the like. Correcting, muttering, she continues. It's something of some importance to her. Her close friend Susan, who lives next door is sitting cross-legged on the floor downstage of the writing table. Susan is in her fifties; we don't know her background. She's very supportive of Lea's work and is participating in the show at the club. Intermittent shouts can be heard from 'outside' in one or two places before the final 'outside' confrontation for sense-making.*

LEA: At school Monday, one of my girls told me, a boy followed her up the stairs with his hand on her pants, making lewd remarks. And it's not an isolated incident. She won't go to guidance. She's convinced they'll tell her her clothes are too tight. Still the "asking for it" mentality. She's worn baggy tee shirts for three days. That rape case in France was just in the paper last night. The rape could not be considered rape because the woman's pants were too tight.

SUSAN: Is she right about guidance?

LEA: It's getting better. Depends who she talks to. I told her she has harassment laws to back her report. I'm also trying to get her to join the performance group...She'd be fantastic... Philosophically, there are ways in which we've almost stood still for centuries. The more I study, the more I see it. Take the concept of original sin...

SUSAN: You mean trying to shop and discovering that

polyester bellbottoms, platform shoes, and daisy earrings are back in style? That's recommitting an original sin.

LEA: You're such a big help. I must admit though, I'm enjoying the work. It just raises more questions than answers Especially the dreams. And Mary, Tuesday night I was working on the narrative to accompany a piece entitled *Paradise* by Giovanni Di Paolo. That's for the grant application Monday morning. It has pairs of figures embracing, talking, some with angels. Most of them are wearing long robes. There are animals, flowers, trees.

Well, it was about 11:30 and I heard Mary call, "Mama!! Mama!!" She ran into my room. She had had a nightmare. Get this. Of a man in a long black cape and hood. He had a huge mouth wide open with large teeth and he was screaming at the woman in the dream. He had an axe raised and had placed a large wooden clamp around the tree next to him. He controlled everything with rage. Then, Mary started back to bed and turned and said, very matter-of-factly, "Oh, by the way, the woman married him." Susan, I haven't discussed anything like that with her. She's too young.

SUSAN: Something's connecting regardless of how you try to block it. Mary's very intuitive. What if these dreams of hers hold some answers? I wonder...

LEA: Moving in closer to the work is conjuring memories for me too...Bunny Shirt Brady?

SUSAN: Oh my God. College wasn't it? Isn't he the one the guys beat up because they saw him grab your arm when you refused to dance with him. Did something happen? I didn't think you'd ever seen him again after that.

LEA: Oh, yes. I saw him one more time. I was glad. It gave me a chance to apologize and let him know I had no idea what they were going to do.

SUSAN: Nothing like having half the basketball team for bodyguards...

LEA: I thought he had accepted my explanation. He smiled and lifted out his bridge with his tongue and showed it to me. They had knocked out his front teeth! I couldn't believe it. I think this whole thing came to mind because its the same

pattern. The protection. The violence. Retaliation.  
I see it all the time at school...

SUSAN: Lea, what happened.

LEA: Nothing happened...you don't have time...

SUSAN: Tell me what happened.

LEA: He was wearing his bunny shirt too, that white flannel one...we went for a drive...I felt badly about his being hurt and glad he wasn't angry...we drove up that road that went by the abandoned farm and meadows...I forget the name of the hill...I can still feel the sensation of the empty gin bottle hitting the backs of my heels as it rolled out from under the seat...I can hear him opening the console and I remember how slowly he drew out that bowie knife. It was like a bad horror film. It actually glinted in the moonlight...he showed it to me and said he always carried it now since that night...and I remember feeling *stupid*...for riding with him... he stopped and backed up onto the roadside so we could see the moon over that great sloping meadow...just me, Bunny Shirt, and a bowie knife... in the middle of nowhere...I said again I was sorry about his teeth...how I had no idea...He was so quiet. But he had hold of my wrist so tightly my hand was throbbing, like the night in the club...I felt stupid... a mist had formed on the meadow, silvery with moonlight...it was absolutely beautiful, angelic... then... a soft rumbling sound... and up from the lower meadow galloped a white horse... it rose up on its hind legs, called out...pawed at the air... shining in the moonlight...was suspended in the mists for a moment looking right at us...and then vanished... Without a word, Brady pulled out, put the bowie knife back in the console...and drove me home. I got out of the car and never saw him again...I guess he decided I was trouble... I don't know...I was so stupid.

SUSAN: SOMETHING happened...you *were* stupid... wow...white horse in the moonlight...only you... and what a waste...who would believe it.

LEA: And who would believe *my* calling it *nothing*... *I had put it out of my mind. Nothing happened.* Just because I wasn't beaten or raped. It's as though it was acceptable for him to have drunk a fifth of gin

and still be driving, to drive to a secluded place, to draw out a concealed weapon, to hold me against my will... You know better than anyone, it's not the worst thing I've been through...but to call it *nothing*. I still surprise myself. And the synchronicity haunts me.

SUSAN: (cheesy Rod Serling imitation.) *It was a venture into the Twilight Zone. Glad you made it back.*

LEA: Maybe I haven't made it back at all with these dreams I've been having. I hear distant wind and bells, a woman and her daughter are walking, walking, holding hands, laughing, across a meadow filled with flowers and reminiscent of the tapestries. They look toward me, I know, but I can't see their faces yet...and they're coming with more and more frequency.

SUSAN: Just don't quit the work. I've watched you at rehearsal. You wouldn't let your students give up on their work. Take your own advice.

LEA: I know. The performance group amazes me. The kids are so cool with each other. They've worked so hard. As for me, I just have to hit on my metaphor. It's screaming in my face and I can't hear it.

SUSAN: You will. It takes time. It has to deepen, hit bottom, the poem you wrote about fishing with your Dad when you were a kid, the feeling of that weight descending, descending, and finally hitting bottom... slow...patient descent...then waiting. Give it time. Maybe it's someone in a black robe...or the image of a white horse in the mist ...

LEA: Don't tease

SUSAN: I'm not...Give yourself the gift of time. You're not used to taking time for something of your own. *It's your passion. It is that which completes you.* And it's a valuable lesson to Mary and Chris. I'll see you at rehearsal.

LEA: Thanks. Love you my friend.

SUSAN: Oh...what about the phonecalls. Mike seemed really worried.

LEA: ...over zealous fan. I don't know. Could be anyone who's seen a flyer for Saturday.. I star 69'nd the last



call but it was from a phone booth.

SUSAN: Naturally.

LEA: Steve at the club said he'd keep an eye out for me.

SUSAN: And I'll be there.

LEA: So.. I'm golden. (Susan prepares to leave.

An argument can be heard from out in the street.

Yelling, cursing.)

SUSAN: What do you bet...sneakers or girlfriends?

LEA: Or boyfriends.

SUSAN: It works both ways.

LEA: Right.

(Mary comes in running as Susan is exiting.)

MARY: Hi! Bye!

SUSAN: Hi, Mary! See you girls later...

*( Mary ZOOMS in and snuggles so hard to Meg's side that the paper is jounced and the pencil sent flying. Lea picks up the pencil and tries to continue. This scene should be ELECTRIC with Mary's energy. She is indomitable, wonderful! This must come across as well as the closeness of the relationship. Mary is carrying a picture she has drawn and hands it to her Mom.)*

LEA: Whoa! Your brakes need tightening! How's my special girl?

MARY: Mama!...Ma...Ma! I think I need glasses. Every time I just get fog in my eyes. Do you get fog in your eyes?

LEA: No. Maybe you're getting a little sleepy. How about you relax on the couch a while and I'll read to you when I'm finished?

MARY: (pushing closer still as though Mom hasn't spoken) Chris is asleep already you know. I checked. This is for you. It's a woman with a kite...

LEA: Thanks. The colors are beautiful.

MARY: (Inspecting Lea's work...)

You have to write over here too? How come you write light not dark? How come you write in script? Do you have to write in script to go to Chinese school? Mum...Mum...answer me...

LEA: My script is still in English. Chinese is a whole other language. This is different from what the boy

was doing on Reading Rainbow. Is that what you're thinking about? (Mary shakes her head "yes".)

MARY: (still pure enthusiasm) Can I try writing in English script? Can I? Can I?

LEA: (trying to focus and still address her child) I'd like to finish this section then I'll show you. I have to do this before I go to bed because I have school, and rehearsal tomorrow. Just a few minutes, o.k.?

MARY: (Pauses a few seconds only. Lea is whispering what she'd like to get down on the paper, trying not to lose her train of thought quite yet.) Mama can I try? Mama! Mama! (Lea puts a finger to her lips, asking for quiet, hoping to finish this thought. Mary stops only long enough for a breath.) What are you talking for? What are you talking about? I can't hear you.

LEA: (concentration slipping, patience too) Let me finish. I'll only be a minute.

MARY: (touching the pencil, wanting desperately to be part of what Lea is doing, pleading) My turn! My turn! I'm never going to get a turn.

LEA: You will...just another few minutes...

MARY: When's Daddy coming home?

LEA: Friday night.

MARY: What day is this?

LEA: This is Thursday night. Tomorrow's Friday. He'll be home tomorrow night.

MARY: How long is that?

LEA: Only one day and we have a lot to do. Plus...he'll call, not tonight because he's playing now, probably tomorrow morning. And you could do a drawing for him to surprise him when he comes home.

MARY: O.K.. ( Mary dances away, finally satisfied, it seems, singing this song)

"I want to bite everything!  
 You just about drive me crazy!  
 You're just a cooty.  
 You're just a booty.  
 Nah! Nah! Nah!  
 Dooka Dah Dah  
 Da Dahla Dee Daw  
 No one wants me around!  
 Oh no!"

*( Outside, the sound of shattering glass, then angry shouting...Lea startles and looks toward the window without getting up, but Mary only moves subtly closer to Mom and keeps drawing. We should be struck by the mild reaction to rage so audible which should be frightening. This must not be the first time. )*

LEA: (Humor is necessary to avoid complete frustration, lays pencil down)

I'm finished for now...Come and write.

MARY: (begins to draw not write) I'm drawing the dark side of Pluto. See how dark I'm making it? Not much light gets there. This is the light side. This is the side where the sun is shining.

MARY: I wouldn't want to live on the dark side of Pluto. Would you Mom?...

LEA: (kisses the child on her head) No, I wouldn't. Let's go to bed.

MARY: I made a model of it with a tennis ball and some Of your black ink. It looks real! Actually, I made it For Dad, but you can have it...

LEA: Where is it?

MARY: On your pillow! Surprise!!! ( She runs to the bedroom laughing.)

LEA: Shower first!!!

*( Police sirens are heard in the distance. )*

CHORUS: (urgency in tone here)

What does it mean when a child  
gives acceptance to rage?

Calmly drawing within the sounds of violence...

What does this silence yield to future generations?

Where, might her art reveal, *is* the dark side of  
Pluto?

*Room darkens. Soft spot on phone. The phone rings. They can't hear from the bathroom. The answering machine takes it. The voice is eerie, breathy. A tone of sarcasm. Only the audience can hear. "Lea, I'm looking forward to watching you read Saturday. (pause) You're just too damned talented." Shadow gobo moves across the stage. Lights out.*

scene iii  
The Dreaming

*Dim spot up on Lea sleeping. Trembling light behind the 'wall' as her dream comes into focus. Play drums, distant, forboding. Should be very foggy. Color overlay, soft colors suggestive of a meadow of wildflowers and herbs at their feet, not unlike The Unicorn Tapestries. The characters in the dream are in fifteenth century England during the time when the Unicorn Tapestries were being woven in the Southern Netherlands. They are Marian and her six-year old daughter, Rose. Their good friend Marcus performs sleight of hand tricks in the marketplace. They are all in danger as the double-edged sword of church and state join to wield The Hammer of the Witches.*

*Marian and Rose move into view, picking herbs for their friend Old Beth. The light should suggest late afternoon.*

CHORUS: ( As the spot comes up on Lea. Soft flute and drums softly but intensely...)

For my mother rent, by blind philosophy  
No true mirror held the mind  
within her fine body.

Transformation is in the metaphor.

Emerging in Spring across each century...

The flowers, the herbs, offer still their gifts...

How may we see their faces differently?

Artisans of the craft shall weave and weave  
the truest story for all who are able to see...

*Listen! Look!*

Danger peers like an animal through the grass  
Beware the grasses rustling like tongues...

ROSE: Mama! Mama! Try to catch me!

MARIAN: Not now heart, we have gathering to do.

ROSE: But Mama...

MARIAN: Old Beth needs our help. Rose, look how  
beautiful.

ROSE: They have little faces, like tiny kittens.

MARIAN: Yes. And how many petals?

ROSE: Five! Mama that's too simple.

*Five like the rosa mystica.*

Like my name, Rose...

MARIAN: You have a good memory. I told you that Autumn, last. Let us give your memory one other test. Do you remember our plan if the men come? (Rose shakes her head, 'Yes,' reluctantly.)

ROSE: I don't want to talk about it. It scares me.

MARIAN: (holding Rose gently but firmly by the shoulders) We *must*. Now tell me what you remember.

ROSE: (Not at all herself. Very timid.) If the men come, I must run to the cottage, go down into the root cellar and into the tunnel which Marcus dug.

MARIAN: What else?

ROSE: I shall pull the false shelves shut to close the opening.

MARIAN: Go on.

ROSE: I must stay very still for a very long time.

MARIAN: And...

ROSE: What?

MARIAN: And I am not to...

ROSE: And I am not to come up no matter what I hear... by my oath. Mama, I'm scared.

MARIAN: You're doing wonderfully...I love you... Now, tell me the final part.

ROSE: After a long quiet time, I can slowly open the trap door out by the tree. If no one is there, I should run to the convent, squeeze under the gate, at the place where the rain scooped a hole, and call Sister Miriam. Call loudly for her and she will come.

MARIAN: And when you run...?

ROSE: Don't look back. (She starts to cry.) Where will you be, Mama?

MARIAN: I'll come later. Promise you will do this.

ROSE: Yes. Stop now. What is *rosa mystica*?

Tell me again Mama. ( She snuggles close to her mother.)

MARIAN: (Music.)

It is the most sacred of flowers. Before the thorned rose was a more simple rose with no thorns, and five petals, tinted with red, resilient to summer sun and to Autumn cold. They were worn in the crowns of the Kings

*men and women, any lovers, are meant to be.*

ROSE/MARY: Mama!

LEA: (Lea wakes. Back light down. Lea turns bedside light on. Sits straight up in bed.)

mystic rose...my metaphor...rosa mystica...

I'm coming Mary. (she goes to Mary's room)

MARIAN'S VOICE: ( A flutter of shadow on the scrim. Urgency in her voice.)

Rose

Rose my child

I write words for you  
to carry like a bouquet  
in your heart.

Remember the old ways...

Carry them in secret

They will remind you of your strength,  
refresh you again and again my beloved  
Rosa Mystica, tinted with fire.

MARY'S VOICE: Mama, who's Rose?

scene iv

Casting Shadows

*Next morning, Friday. Small spot on Mary who is ready for school.*

MARY: (playing with the answering machine) Oops...

( The breathy message has been erased before Lea can hear it.)

*Schoolbus stop.*

*Perhaps this scene is best played downstage right.*

*Mothers and kids gathering. Girls are walking and talking, moving toward the place where they line up for the bus. The girls actually arrive first at the que but they automatically take places back a few feet from what would be the front of the line, including a girl who has come with her two brothers. It should be clear that she has come this far with them and has become accustomed to taking second place. Only Mary steps right up to first place. Boys come screaming up to them swinging bookbags. The girls, all except Mary, step back even farther to allow the boys to stand in front of them. Boys bark and growl at Mary but*

*she will not move. The mothers, other than Lea, are standing in a semi-circle, arms folded across their chests, back to the children, talking, not watching. Certainly not intervening. The boy behind Mary taps her on the shoulder. When she turns around, he makes a loud roaring, growling sound in her face. She turns back around and does not move, so he steps in front of her, also hitting her in the leg with his bookbag. Mary demures to second place rather than confront him. Lea has hoped for some intervention from the boys' mother but there is none, so she herself intervenes.*

*The scrim is used behind this scene for a larger than life shadow enactment, dancelike, nightmarish, to invoke a sense of how disturbing these morning incidents are to Mary.*

MARY: (A little embarrassed by her Mom's intervention.)  
Mom...

LEA: That wasn't very fair was it. Mary was first. (Lea takes Mary's hand and guides her back around to first place. Now, catching sight of Lea talking to her son, the boys' mother walks over to Lea. She seems annoyed at having to bother as though Mary's the problem.)

MOTHER: Matthew, Mary was first...today. (to Lea)  
Boys will be boys!

*The bus comes and the children run offstage to board it. The boys' mother walks back to the other women who have been watching. Remarks are exchanged with glances at Lea, then they all leave except the boys' mother, an opportunity for Lea to speak with her.*

LEA: I was wondering if you'd be interested in trying that little different arrangement I suggested the other morning. Maybe they could simply alternate weeks. Girls first one week, boys the next. If we're late driving up, whoever is there would save their places. That way they'd all have turns regardless.

MOTHER: Look, I talked about this to the other mothers and none of us agrees with you. Everything's always worked out just fine. We've never had a

structure before.

LEA: (losing it a little bit) Yes, there is a structure.  
Growling in Mary's face or swinging sticks or  
bookbags at her because she still takes first place in  
line, that's the structure. The other girls have just  
given up already and fall into second place to avoid  
a problem. That's a structure.

MOTHER: Well, I'm not going to stand here and argue  
with you. (Walking away angrily, arms folded  
across her chest.)

LEA: I wish you would. (Lea walks off. Lights out.)

*Lea enters the apartment. She's alone, which is rare. She  
dances out her frustration at the incident, her concern for  
her daughter. Light comes up faintly behind the scrim to  
show Marian performing a similar dance. Lea and  
Marian mirror each others' concerns. Lights gradually  
fade to blackout.*

scene v  
Rehearsing

*That afternoon. Lights up. Chris is arriving home from  
school. This is the first time we see him. He is Marcus in  
the dreams. Chris is going to be drumming for Lea's  
performance group. He puts down his school things and  
goes over to a drum which he'll be using for the show. He  
practices a rhythm which, unknown to him, coincides with  
the chorus's poem. Then, a knock at the door. Lea comes  
out from upstage right to answer. There are props by the  
door to be brought to the club. She drops a notebook  
on the couch which she will leave behind when exiting.)*

LEA:(voiceover)

Young man, young man,  
what is your direction?  
Partway across the bridge  
from child  
the runestone of confusion  
has fallen across your path.  
A maze of newly felt power  
and emotion...undefined,  
opens onto the meadows  
and mountains on the other side.



Excitement in the challenge  
of its puzzles...wonderment  
in your journey. Take heart,  
and take the gift of time...  
I will listen, also, to you...  
I promise I will try.

LEA: ( Acknowledges Chris. Rushed. A knock at the door. Lea answers. It's Steve. He's come to drive the props and Lea to the club.)  
Hi, Steve. Thanks again for the help. You know Chris.

STEVE: Hi, Chris. My pleasure. (To Lea.)It's been interesting watching how the show has developed. Is this all of it? (Lea nods.) I'll just take it down to the car then.

CHRIS: Need help?

STEVE: No thanks guy, all set...see you downstairs Lea.

CHRIS: Mom, I'm starving. What can I eat?

LEA: ( Revealing a long brown bag. Obviously a sub.)  
Would this help?

CHRIS: Yes! (hug and kiss) Thanks Mommy...

LEA: You're welcome. Listen. Susan is picking up Mary  
Then she'll swing by here to get you. O.K.?

CHRIS: Sounds good. Is everything O.K.?

LEA: Yes. I guess I'm just getting a bit nervous.  
I'm so glad you're doing this. It makes it especially cool to have you be part of it. Did you write a poem to add yet?

CHRIS: ( Chowing on the sub.) I can't think of anything.

LEA: Maybe next time...I love you. 'bye. (Lea exits.)

*(Chris turns music up a few decibels. He's partying when the phone rings. It's Michael.*

CHRIS: ( Turning down the music.)

Hello? Hey, Dad, how's the job going?...She already went to the club...to check on stuff before the rehearsal...Yuh...Susan...Is Mom alone? No. Steve just picked her up.  
Dad, what's up with the phone calls? Mom wouldn't say. I'm not a little kid any more. you know. Is someone bothering Mom?  
It's not fine. I'm not stupid. Maybe if I knew what was going on I could help.

Yeah. Alright. 'bye. ( Slams phone down a little hard.) God...you'd think I was Mary's age. They still treat me like a little kid. (Drums furiously to get out his frustration.) I am not a child! And I don't like good old Steve. (*Lights out.*)

*( Silence. Pale spot up on phone. After four or five seconds the phone rings. No one home. The answering machine takes it. Same voice. "Lea? Lea, tomorrow's the night. Your work touches me, Lea. You touch me. I want to touch you." Lights out. Up on 'club' downstage left and opened out past center with scrim. Lea rummaging fiercely through her bag, a bit rushed with all the preparations still to be done. Steve enters.)*

LEA: ( Looking through her backpack.) I don't believe it.

STEVE: Forget something?

LEA: My stage notes. Kerry needs them for rehearsal.

I'll have to go back and get them.

STEVE: I'll go.

LEA: That's alright.

STEVE: That way you can keep going. I'll be right back.  
Where are the keys and what do the notes look like?

LEA: O.K. Dark blue notebook, probably on the writing table. (Gives him her spare key.) Here's my spare key. Just leave it on the table. Thanks.

*Club scene freezes. Dim lights up on Steve at the apartment. He looks for and finds the notebook. Seeing that the answering machine is on, he plays the two messages. One is the caller. The other is Michael and the voiceover plays: "Lea, I'm not going to make it back tonight. They asked us to do another show. Maybe you should stay at Susan's. Call me when you get in. Be careful. I love you. See you tomorrow." Steve erases the tape, turns it over in the machine and exits. He has kept the spare key.*

*Lights up on club.*

*The students in Lea's performance group, Pulse, are in their final preparations for a reading on Saturday night. Schoolmates, family and friends will be gathering for the special event. Lea is checking everything out. The club should be reminiscent of T.T. the Bear's. Students are working out the tech. Muslin forms move behind her, lit with spots of violet and red, pulsing, billowing, like pumping hearts, a sense of lifeblood and strength. Chris has begun some soft drumming, the readers hook into the rhythm as they prepare for a run-through. Here is a good place to get to know the readers a little. Improvise a little something with Chris. Goof around to relieve tension. At this point, the girls in the group can handle the whole show themselves and they've gotten to know each other pretty well. The girls and Chris are all friends and relate well to one another. There are no set characters here. This improvisation can vary with every cast and can also perform an entirely different set of poems. Lea and Steve are over to one side.*

LEA: Thanks so much.(She's pulled away by a couple of the girls.)

STEVE: No problem.

*(Before dress rehearsal, its very energizing to form a circle and join energy for the coming work.)*

LEA: Tomorrow night, Michael will be here to drum with Chris. Tonight Chris is doing the honors. Let's have a circle.

(Lea, Chris and group join hands.)

We're lucky to be here today with each other. Our thoughts to the people of Kosovo, all the victims in Littleton, Colorado, and to a promise to seek better understanding of one another.

We say it...time and time again in so many ways, in so many different situations. I think it's so simple

we miss it. *Little things add up.* Bothering to look the person who served your morning coffee in the eyes and saying, "Thank-you. Instead of staying buried in the morning paper. Writing a

hand-written thank-you note to someone instead of putting a message on their machine. Write that letter to the editor instead of muttering in the shower and leaving it at that...prepare...and speak up for something you think is a beneficial idea. Turn away from that screen to the other person in the room and have a conversation. Do the work of creating an intelligent response. Speak with confidence and passion. Poetry or prose We, as humans need to communicate, but in ways that move toward articulation and depth. We're too into slogans, quick fixes. What we're doing here is, in its way, vital to our survival. We need one another and we need to listen to one another, really listen, contemplate, and respond. Genuine listening is a full body and mind activity. We help ourselves and others realize the joy of being fully human.

If we work at voicing, in all its forms, we find ourselves, eventually. We are, all of us, like the *rosa mystica*. The world will never know our genuine voices unless we make them known, unless someone carries the story.

Audre Lorde placed this idea within a metaphor of light. She said, "The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized."

So...with our imagination, our reason and our passion, let's bring up the lights and realize some Magic.

(Drums begin. vigorous, exciting, invitation to the dance of the performance.)

*A dance would fit wonderfully here. Moving in and out of the scrim, in ancient staging techniques, moving in and out of the shadow world, in and out of realities as we believe them.*

ONE of the GIRLS: (Explain, in your own words, to the audience, the symbolism of moving in and out of shadow. It is so easy for us to lose ourselves within the

opinion which the world holds of us.

*The next scene may be different with each performance, different poetry, different set, as long as it moves with the philosophy of the performance piece which furthers equitable human communication. This is the movable frame.*

*Cloth forms are simple muslin. This time, a girl/woman, drifts, something of Chagall about it. Technicians can control it from either end like a kite. The lights are subtle, pulsing, some rhythm, perhaps flute improv. Whatever other elements are present, they must take second place to the words.*

*Susan reads the poems Friend and Listening Woman Moon.*

*During Stephanie Becoming/Stephanie Disappearing, the cloth figure can begin to be twisted or pulled tighter and tighter, pressure confusion, distorted self image. As the poems of strength are read, the form will begin to be released and can appear to fly or float free of these preconceptions. The form, lights and rhythm should support but not overpower the words. The reader of the Stephanie poem, seeing herself through social distortions, stands behind the scrim, backlit and front lit to alter her shadow.*

### Friend

You are a ghost in my mind's machine,  
thoughts like fingers,  
woven in prayer, your hand and mine.  
This subcutaneous closeness  
bothers me not at all.  
Holograms play in my daydreams.

I think the source is spirit,  
of little girls' laughter, of shattering secrets,  
never foolish, never silenced here...

( 'Listening Woman Moon' Is Printed at the End)

Stephanie Becoming/ Stephanie Disappearing

A genie in a bottle, popularity,  
films or t.v. mark my passage,  
the radio plays me.

Raven lips, pantomime eyes  
I've begun to build my puzzle,  
but the pieces may be lies.  
I am searching. I am not alone.  
I have friends now, someone's voice  
stronger than my own...

Pretty, pretty,  
the images haunt me.  
Mary, Mary,  
playing with wolves.  
Hollow, hollow,  
until you want me,  
porcelain fragile,  
thin as death for you, i Find  
Now my body fits the cut-out  
In your magazine mind...

Pretty, pretty,  
I'm disappearing  
Pretty, pretty,  
the voices I'm hearing,  
I am listening.  
Hazy now, crazy LOUD  
yet hardly a sound.  
I am listening for MY voice,  
nowhere to be found.

LITTLE GIRL: (*Little girl's voice plays over the sound system.*)

Mom, I need to wear lipstick to school today.  
My lips look too pale without it and the boys  
think it's pretty. They'll chase you more if you  
wear lipstick. (singing seductively)  
" You will crack my heart if you hit me again...  
I would die for you...I would bleed for you...  
I would sail ships for you...(speaking the next  
phrase) I like that part better...  
(finishes singing) I would sail ships for you.

Actually, I think I better sail my own ship.

### The Delight Song of Dee

I am a child with a new toy  
I am a flower on a spring morning  
I am the sun  
I am Tigger  
I am someone who feels like they're being followed by a  
stranger  
I am a rock on the edge of a cliff with the wind behind me  
I am an eagle  
I am a welcome mat  
I am the last pair of shoes on the rack  
I am the clown at the circus  
I am a mask with two faces  
I am someone who owns a black cat  
I am a race car  
I am a flower in the middle of a desert  
I am a blueberry in a strawberry patch  
I am a voice waiting to be heard  
I am a kitty  
I am a shark  
You see, I am alive, I am alive.

### Delight Song of Liz

I am the anguish of my mother's days  
I am the mess kept clean  
I am freedom in a jar  
I am love kept hidden  
I am burdened with individuality  
I am an engagement ring tarnished  
I am the giver  
I am the entertainer  
I am the ignored I am the unforgiven  
I am part of the mob  
I am forgotten when trying to be remembered  
I am the driver  
I am the last picked  
I am a trucker  
I am forceful  
I am darkly creative  
I am alone

You see, I am alive, I am alive.  
I stand in good relation to darkness  
I stand in good relation to loneliness  
I stand in good relation to being ignored  
I stand in good relation to starvation  
You see I am alive, I am alive.

CHORUS OF GIRLS ( They can take turns reading stanzas)

Where to I begin?  
Where is my ground?  
By right...Anywhere I choose.  
...Voice...  
Not someone's quicksand  
false lullabies the sound  
Baby, baby,  
a mannequin....a toy..  
Where do...I...begin?

What is pure? Where is sanctuary?  
My intelligence is precious to me.  
I am not from a bottle,  
I am not from a page,  
I am imagination, reason,  
and desire by it's real name

Talk with me...not at me...

I will listen.  
I will speak.  
I will hide when I need  
but also, I will seek...

Let me live...

I will  
nourish my body,  
nourish my mind,  
with style and power,  
I dare to question the status quo...  
to voice...

*Lea joins the girls to perform the following poems. For*



*the first, a projection of the fifth Hunt for the Unicorn Tapestry, the women in the rose-lined garden enclosure. The second piece, Patricia Feltham's art is cast on the back wall scrim. Patricia's works appear to be 'church windows' alongside the surviving portion of the tapestry. Music, Rosa Mystica begins.*

LEA: An extremely brief introduction. These are two pieces written in response to art. The first, from the fifteenth century, part of my studies. The second for Patricia Mary Feltham, an artist from New York. She died much too soon. Her art lives.

(selection from Rosa Mystica series)

The woman signaled not the hunter,  
she shielded the unicorn with her body.  
She is no betrayer, she is protector.  
As are the roses. Rosa mystica's  
heart, pierced by contriver's thorns,  
yet she knows the hunter will not succeed.  
The veil shall be lifted and the truth reborn.  
We will see afresh the face of rosa mystica,  
whose grace has withstood the flames  
and we shall reconsider the unicorn.

Patricia Mary Feltham  
Your art moves me  
closer to my fire. The cadre of your rose  
breathes through Lilith's lyre...  
I am inspired  
by the tumbling columns of your alphabet...  
You are Samson in the temple of our norms,  
resculpting with light-infused gyres,  
our philosophical forms.

LEA: This is for my daughter Mary and my son Chris.  
(*Lea performs Raging Grace with drums, which begins at a hushed level and gradually builds to the finish. Girls perform the piece in ASL.*)

Raging Grace

I am moving  
like a ball bearing on well-oiled track  
multiplied by chaos times itself  
I am moving.  
Ideas seek their niches,  
nestle in psyches and transform.  
Thousands of miles away,  
someone is spinning a tale of power and grace,  
another echo in the well.  
Hope and return again and again  
seeking language which moves beyond words,  
language held in a stone.  
I listen with Rich's wild patience,  
take communion with Levertov's bread  
and doors open onto hallways onto doors  
onto hallways onto fields glistening  
with the sting of shasta daisies  
whipping my legs as I run  
words which speak bits of truth  
sting as they run,  
like knives whipping past clotheslines strung  
shirts hung, with names of women,  
names of silent warriors, fallen to beloved others  
who could not hear friend, find comfort with intelligence,  
or speak the language of Also.  
Jennifer is gone, Krista, Leanne, Suzanne,  
their vibrations move across the surface of all waters,  
seeking freedom from wild voices, fists and knives,  
from footsteps coming closer and faster behind,  
from sanctuary defined as a dead bolt and a steel door.  
I am moving with raging grace, seeking safety for my  
children, seeking rightful passage in all places.  
Move with me if you seek the language of Also  
that we may truly speak,  
that we may one day surprise one another  
with bouquets of shasta daisies  
from some shared and glistening field.

LIZ

( The reading of this poem is shared by all members of the

group.)

We want you to listen...  
We want to say our mind...  
We want you to listen to each of us  
as an equal.  
I don't want to be interrupted  
I don't want to be made fun of  
I want you to listen.  
You have your opinions and ideas...  
I have mine.  
I listened to yours...  
why can't you listen to mine?  
I think you'll find it interesting...  
I have something to say...  
I haven't asked for much...  
I didn't interrupt...  
I'll only ask for one thing now...  
Please listen.  
I have thoughts worth listening to,  
like you...

*Each performer repeats the last two lines directly to someone in the audience, Susan, Mary, Steve.*

*Lights out. The group applauds, and is satisfied with the work. They gather to talk briefly with Lea. Improvise talk with one another about how it went, the readings, the lights, the movement, etc.)*

LEA: I like it. I like it alot. Get a good night's sleep. I'll see you tomorrow at five to set up. Goodnight...

CHRIS: How about a little food. I'm starving..  
I'll be home in an hour Mom, if that's o.k.?

LEA: O.K. Great job tonight.

CHRIS: Thanks.

(All students exiting.) Goodnight. Goodnight.

STEVE: Lea, you do nice work.

LEA: Thanks. But the beauty of it is, they do it all themselves. They own it.

STEVE: Don't you think they might get a little cocky if you tell them that? You know. The girls won't know their place.

LEA: Confident, not cocky. I don't think I understand what you mean by knowing their place...

MARY: Mama? Can we go now. I want to go to sleep.  
LEA: Sure. ( to Steve) Goodnight. Thanks again.  
(to Mary) Maybe Daddy's already home...  
STEVE: (after the door closes. Twists one of the  
cloth forms ominously)...Bitch. Get down on all  
fours and bark like a dog and maybe I'll listen.  
(Lights out)

scene vi  
Fire and Light

*At the apartment. Everyone's asleep. Dim light on Lea.  
The scrim trembles with shadow. The 'dream scrim'  
extends across the entire back wall from Lea's to Mary's  
room. Loud ominous whispers from the chorus.*

CHORUS: ( Drums. Flute.)  
Where is sanctuary? Where is reason?  
Both trapped in the flames of displaced  
passion.

*This scene is done in dancelike movement, for power, for  
imagery. Shadows dart like flames. Rose is terrified. The  
time has come for her to flee. Beth has been taken by the  
authorities and Marian will be next.*

MARIAN: Rose, the time has come. You must do as we  
promised.

ROSE: No, Mama! I'm scared! No!

MARIAN: You promised! I love you my brave heart.  
Now, go, close the shelves and wait long before  
you run to Miriam. I will join you soon. Run!  
( Rose hugs her desperately and runs.)

MARIAN: Please let her be safe. (She's crying.)  
I must find Beth. Maybe she was able to hide.  
(She hears the officials coming through the trees  
and runs.)

*Tree, leaf gobos cover the stage.  
She will run toward upstage center in a crazy zigzag as  
though through woods then back up toward the scrim. A  
gobo of a woman's body hung from a tree flashes onto the  
scrim in her path. She sees it is Beth.*

MARIAN: ( In horror and rage.) Beth! No!

She birthed babies! She brought life into the world! What crime is that! In your name...God!

CHORUS: Listen! Run!

Danger stalks like an animal in the grasses.  
Beware grasses thrashing like tongues! Run!

MARCUS'S VOICE: ( His voice is frantic. He suspects the worst...)

Marian! Marian! No! Rose!

LEA: ( Nightmarish. Tossing and turning. ) No!

*Drums. Footsteps are crashing through the woods. Marian will run straight through the scrim, the authorities appear and follow her down. They'll fall upon her down center stage. The scene is dancelike brutal as it plays out. The men may improvise what banter they think suitable. She dies at their hands. Lea will jolt upright in bed at one point, eyes closed. She may even reach toward Marian. The actor portraying Marian will remain lying there for the upcoming scene, as far downstage center as possible. Behind the scrim, Rose runs across, stage right to stage left, appears to crawl under a shadow gate, and calls to Sister Miriam. Rose is behind the scrim in Mary's room now and Mary sits straight up in bed as though startled. They see each other and Mary gets up and walks through the scrim to Rose. They stand in profile gazing at one another and reach out to touch. The light should be gauzy dreamlike as in the 'video' sequence. Misty whites, blues and lavenders.*

ROSE and MARY: (Simultaneously.) Who are you?

MARY: Mary.

ROSE: ( Breathing hard and crying some.) Rose.

MARY: What's wrong Rose?

ROSE: I want my Mama. She said she'd come as soon as she could. I must find Sister Miriam.

My Mama said I am her brave heart.

MARY: Oh. Is she alright? (Rose shakes her head, yes.)  
Where are we?

SISTER MIRIAM'S VOICE: (It is Susan's voice.) Go into the rose garden girls. I'll be right along.

*This scene should be eerily beautiful. Light is of the full*

*moon. The animal we are about to see looks like a product of Jim Henson's Workshop, so real, we believe...mists, like in Avalon.*

*The girls walk to upstage center, still behind scrim, in soft white light appears a unicorn sitting as in the final tapestry of the 'hunt' series. The unicorn looks at them and smiles. They move with caution and fascination to either side and begin stroking the beautiful creature.*

*Women's voices of chorus chant softly.*

MARY: How beautiful. A real unicorn. Is it a boy or a girl?

ROSE: I don't think it's either one. My mother said it was an idea, not real. Wait 'til she sees... Oh, Mary. We're surrounded by rosa mysticas. I can't wait until my mother arrives.

MARY: What are rose mis stickers?

How will my mother find me? I don't know where I am.

SISTER MIRIAM: All women know in their heart of hearts, how to find this place. Here, we are intelligent, capable, and deserving of respect, as we should be in the world, as everyone should be. Here, we are fully human and we contemplate Philosophy.

(She strokes the unicorn's neck.)

ROSE: Sister Miriam, I don't know what that means.

MARY: Me either.

SISTER MIRIAM: You will...Your mothers are women of character and courage. They are your guides.

ROSE: Where is my mother?

SISTER MIRIAM: She'll be with us soon my little love.

( To Mary. ) Time to return. Your mother is expecting you.

MARY: Can I come back?

SISTER MIRIAM: Yes. And, live here in your heart Mary. We are with you always. With you and your mother. With Chris and your father.

*Sister Miriam, Rose, and Mary embrace. Mary strokes the unicorn and embraces s/he around the neck. Abruptly, Mary is drawn some steps backward to the wall of her*

*room and downstage through the scrim and back into bed. Her nightlight and the moonlight shine and she picks up the pad and pen which are always by her bed and she begins to draw.*

LEA: ( Sits up in bed. She's been crying. She gets up and goes to her writing table and begins to write. )

*The apartment is lit as if in moonlight. We hear a key in the lock. Lea's table is angled slightly toward the window so her back is to him. It is Steve. He had not given back the spare key. He is the phonecaller. He's profoundly threatened by Lea's work and the spectre of girls and women speaking strongly. He has come to reclaim his strength in the way the world has taught him. He's as trapped in this skewed philosophy as are we. The following must be timed perfectly. All hail the excellent technicians. Our frail illusions cling to their expertise. Steve approaches Lea from behind. She raises her head from the work sensing him there and asks:*

LEA: Michael?

*As she begins to turn toward him and he draws nearer...A breathless split second...Black out...save the pale, tiny light of Mary's night light...all we hear is the child's voice...*

MARY: Mama, come see what I drew for you...a unicorn.

*The drums Now thunderous, lasting a number of seconds. Peak...silence...darkness...*

*A pale light comes up on the podium as in the beginning. Lea's voice speaks the final piece, but she is not present. Up on the scrim stage right, comes a projection of Giovanni di Paolo's PARADISE*

LEA: We can not consider that our knowledge of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the Unicorn Tapestries is complete.

As John Williamson, author of The Oak King, The Holly King, and the Unicorn tells us:

“It should be made clear that some of the original significance of the emblematic flora and fauna of medieval art has been largely lost... Therefore we may speak in the same ethnographic terms when dealing with the art of the middle ages as we do when discussing the iconographic implications of the culturally alien arts of Africa, Oceania or the Orient...It is both essential and inevitable that the ethno-symbolism of early and medieval Europe should finally find its way into the interpretation of medieval art.” (pp. 55-56)

In times of such terror as during the reign of The Hammer of the Witches, *much knowledge is lost in silence*. Blinded by power and religious fanaticism, state and church officials tortured and murdered thousands of laborers and common people in the name of a distorted Christian dogma. I am attempting to explore the silences. How might the artists of that time have chronicled the truth of these horrors? Certainly not in writing. Perhaps in a language which the church had become too self-possessed to recall, the language of a philosophy housed in nature. Visions such as that of Giovanni di Paolo's *Paradise* inspire me forward. Look at the people! See their faces and costumes. They converse with each other across, gender, race, possessions, religion, age...they embrace...it is here... Paradise!

*[Dependent upon the venue and time constraints, the performance can end here or Chris and Michael, our drummers can come out, offer an initial rhythm, the chorus can begin a chant for non-violence, for reconciliation. For the language of 'also.' And the audience is invited to the dance, to share food together and to converse with one another. We are invited to embrace the philosophy of the performance piece.]*

*Paradise...*



## Listening Woman Moon

This May is a cold one, mostly gray and forbidding  
bringing showers almost on the hour,  
blown in spray over emerald fields  
bringing the blues and blowing away joy.

There is much still dormant waiting warmer days.  
Yet the fields flaunt green, grow greener each day,  
spread out like Irish banners in spite of damp and cold.

Crows float through the air like tarpaper scraps,  
lifted by tatters of wind.  
High above the vulture soars,  
black wingtips tilted to steady his flight,  
as he eyes his still prey below.

Up in the woods the moose and bear  
leave muddy tracks by the pond.  
The trout lie in wait for the blackflies' birth  
and salamanders lay their eggs.  
The trillium grows three green leaves  
and displays three dark green petals  
while wild oat plants support pale yellow bells  
on stems that seem too fragile.

Roadside slopes are robed in green,  
embroidered with sweet white violets.  
At the house, the tulips budded a week ago,  
continue to lengthen their stems,  
They sway back and forth like long-necked dancers  
still hiding their colorful gowns from view  
under soft cloaks of green.  
The lily of the valley open  
like praying hands unfolding, lifting to the Light.

At last this evening, the sky begins to clear.  
The fretful wind has gone to bed, taking its blanket of

gray.  
The full moon rises in all its splendor,  
The Listening Woman Moon of May.  
A wisp of warm air is her breath on my cheek  
and I hear her whisper of hope.

(thanks to Shirley Erickson of Lakeville, MA for use of  
her poem, Listening Woman Moon. Her poem was  
presented for National Poetry Month at the Barnes and  
Noble Book Sellers, Braintree, MA in April 1999)

## CHAPTER 4

### THE CONTEXT OF THE ARTISTIC PROCESS

“In everyday life, ‘if’ is a fiction, in the theatre ‘if’ is an experiment.

In everyday life, ‘if’ is an evasion, in the theatre ‘if’ is the truth.

When we are persuaded to believe in this truth, then the theatre and life are one.

This is a high aim. It sounds like hard work.

To play needs much work. But when we experience the work as play, then it is not work any more.

A play is play.”

-Peter Brook (‘The Empty Space’ 1967)

This work has formed over a number of years in the settings of professional theatre, public school teaching, and the Critical and Creative Thinking Program at UMass, Boston. The process has become one of identifying, valuing and articulating elements of theatrical training, teaching techniques, and critical and creative thinking to the completion of an original performance piece and also into constructing a frame for artistic process. I have found within the field of women’s studies in psychology and philosophy, sound theories which advance a non-hierarchical incorporation of art within a community and which support this work’s interpretation of the importance of arts-in-education.

The purpose of this ‘process journal’ is to describe the evolution of the performance piece, ‘Rosa Mystica’. I begin by relating the premise, process and product of the performance piece to Teresa Amabile’s “The Social Psychology of Creativity: A Componential Conceptualization” (1983), as it is defined in the theoretical chapter of this paper, demonstrating my domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant skills and task motivation.

In brief, I define my domain-relevant and creativity-relevant skills as they manifest to link past and present knowledge to construct the performance piece. I explain how intrinsic motivation assisted in overcoming obstacles to the work.

Within the component of domain-relevant skills are included factual knowledge, technical skills, and special talents in the domain in question, those domains being, in my case, the classroom and the theatre. The set of domain-relevant skills is as Newell and Simon (1972) described it; my “network of possible wanderings” (p. 82). It is the information pool from which my responses will be synthesized and upon which, my response will be judged. Because I studied dramatic theory and history as well as having worked extensively in the theatre on-stage and in technical capacities, my domain-relevant skills set is broad based. I have experience in college, community, and professional forums as resource. It was at college that I fell in love with the theatre and decided to study acting. I acquired as much knowledge as I could in the domain-relevant skills of lighting, costuming, make-up, set-design, as well as on-stage techniques. My appetite for anything to do with the theatre seemed insatiable. As Amabile confirms, immersion in the domain is a well-known factor of creative endeavors.

The performance piece, ‘Rosa Mystica,’ is my own journey through the creative process. I challenged myself to choose an appropriate form through which to express the ideas inherent in the theoretical materials. As in the Peter Brook quote above, through believing the ‘if’ in ‘Rosa Mystica,’ we see other possibilities. It is my reasoning that, by attempting a ‘successful run’ of my own through the process with the writing of ‘Rosa Mystica,’ I can better internalize what it is I am expecting of my students.

I also bring elements to the set from the teaching profession, in which I have equally broad experience ranging from elementary to adult students. The most elemental and necessary skills of reading and writing were in place from my early education and I continued my studies to receive certification as a teacher in English. During my education as a teacher of English, I was, of course, exposed to novels, poetry, plays, and short stories, from many cultures across the centuries. I especially loved Ancient Greek Theatre, Jacobean plays, the plays of Shakespeare, Noh Drama, and Balinese Shadow Puppets. From the beginning, in retrospect, I think I was excited by the fact that the pages of dramatic pieces were created to burst into three-dimensional life on stage. The origins of my decision to write a performance piece lie here.

As Teresa Amabile addresses the component of domain-relevant skills, one reference seems particularly appropriate to my experience:

In what is perhaps the most well-known intuitive description of the creative process, Wallas (1926) suggested that, “the first step is the “preparation” stage which depends on the whole process of intellectual education” (p. 92). Similarly, Koestler (1964), referred to the importance of “ripeness” in determining whether the “bisociation” of two different “matrices of thought” takes place. “The statistical probability for a relevant discovery to be made is the greater the more firmly established and well-exercised each of the still separate skills, or thought matrices, are. (108).

This sense of two matrices of thought ‘ripening’ then meshing is my experience of this art thesis process. An interesting phenomenon of this ‘meshing’ is that once the union of the matrices has occurred, the pairing seems so obvious, effortless, and natural. Of course! As a public school teacher, following my years in theatre, I was trying to recreate an atmosphere of genuine listening, immersion, metacognition, respect, ownership of the work, joy, safety, equity, reminiscent of artistic performance. The relevant elements of both domains, theatre and school form a matrix which can be

articulated in the languages of theatre, teaching, and critical and creative thinking. Also, the components of domain-relevant skills and creativity-relevant skills must mesh to create an original product.

As I approach the component of creativity-relevant skills, I consider a popular saying in a new light. The more things change, the more they stay the same. During the process of writing 'Rosa Mystica,' I have drawn on elements of my theatrical and literary experience from college to the present. Having achieved some level of expertise in the form, I can draw on domain-relevant skills, allow creativity-relevant skills to enter the equation and with the passion of task-motivation, work at the creation of an original performance piece. I feel least capable at discussing this frame of Amabile's conceptualization. I think I need an outside judge. How can I evaluate my own product?

The matrix of my experience is rich with possibilities however, I don't think I can be objective as to the originality of the product. I take the 'set' of written script, lights, costumes and make-up, set, sound, actors and spin, spin. Do I land on an 'original' creative product? And if so, on what 'level'?

I feel confident in regard to my training and experience in idea generation. Improvisation was an important part of my stage training in studying with George Morrison, Uta Hagen, Joel Polinsky, and Elizabeth Appleby to name a few. My personality characteristics seem to have been appropriate or I believe I would have chosen some other avenue to pursue by now. Writing 'Rosa Mystica' has been a wonderful opportunity to reclaim and redefine my cognitive style, my process for idea generation, and my work style. Elements of my daily life with my family are combined with aspects of many plays which I have studied, played, or seen over the years to form this piece of theatre. I hope that it embodies a philosophy which is deserving of this

form of articulation, that being a philosophy of equitable relations between men and women, and the value of voicing as opposed to the oppression of silence. In the final scene, I give due respect to the tragic fact that strong voicing in girls and women can be a dangerous endeavor.

### **Intrinsic Motivation: Overcoming Obstacles**

This sense of the embodiment of a philosophy segues well into the component of task motivation. My task motivation for this work has been remarkable, beyond what I realized I was capable of. Two examples of obstacles which arose are described below. The more opposition I have encountered, the stronger my determination has become. I believe in the value of the work and remind myself that it is a gift for my son and daughter as I proceed.

My initial intrinsic motivation was to compile the work of students and create a performance piece. Now, that idea is held as a central celebration within the play, 'Rosa Mystica,' but the play has taken on the additional dimension of the mother/daughter relationship as it is addressed in Mother, Daughter, Revolution by DeBold. Risk-taking and courage are vital to the growth of original voices within this complex relationship. Socio-environmental factors challenge mothers and daughters at every turn.

Apparently, I have the ability to cognitively minimize extrinsic constraints. The following is a journal entry written in the wake of a refusal from a high school principal to house my artistic process studio. Teachers, students, and the department head were thrilled at the idea. I had taught at the school before he became principal. Not J. I had submitted all my papers to him by June 10th. By September 30th, he still had not returned my calls;

Appropriately, the last day of the month. Called J. yesterday, a rude, flat, "No. I don't want you to do it." I asked if we could at least meet or if he could give me a reason. "Just a gut feeling I have. I don't think it's right for us at this

time. Okay? Sorry.” End of conversation. After trying to get in touch with him since mid-June. Disappointment is not the word. It didn’t cross my mind to have sought out other schools, now I wish I had...no sense at all and the schedule for the whole school year is in place. Heartbroken. (September 30, 1995)

Apparently, I have the ability to cognitively minimize extrinsic constraints. The following is a journal entry written in the wake of a refusal from a high school principal to house the artistic process studio from which the student performance pieces was to emerge. Teachers, student and department head were

I believe that the focus on female student voices and their development was the reason for the rejection. Gender issues were documented at this school when I offered the program, and some day I hope they’ll allow me to do a performance project.

In Spring of 1997, I did do a small project with eight girls. They were members of a class I had substituted in for six weeks in Fall 1996. Their poems, ‘The Delight Song of Dee,’ ‘The Delight Song of Liz’ and ‘Liz’ are in the pulse performance scene of ‘Rosa Mystica.’ They transformed after our first meeting from nervous and silent to respectful and verbal. Their confidence was visible and they spoke with insight and strength. I had hoped for some feedback from their teacher but, she never returned my calls.

At this point, I opened the frame of the work to involve the mother and daughter relationship within a more established plot line, which would still house the work done by the girls and the vitality of the mentor/student relationship. I hoped to proceed more smoothly with the Spring 1997 project done; however, even with the girls’ poems in place to forward the work, ‘dailiness’ threatened to weaken task motivation at every turn. ‘Dailiness’ is defined here as the collective daily chores and responsibilities of home and family in addition to full or part-time employment. The following journal excerpt gives an honest insight into the early stages of developing this thesis:



It's a long time since I've sat in this seat to write. I have an oceanic expanse of time ahead and am in a clear, open, and excited frame of mind with which to use this 'gift of time'. (12:00 noon - 3:00 p.m.!) In our last meeting when I asked if the process journal could or should document both, all, thesis ideas as they move, rotate, collide in my head, Delores said simply that it should be honest...So be it...

A letter to Ithaka, the alternative high school in Brockton, may give positive results. I hope so. I will be typing my draft after this entry and mailing it tomorrow. I find it difficult to switch gears from the poetic writing to the journal. I think I'm putting too much into the journaling and should just be documenting, dry.

Viewing 'Discovering Women' tape today or tomorrow. How will the scientific findings relate to the concept of 'gathering', or of 'the wheel'? (Phone: Pastry order /tomorrow/ 4 p.m./ 10 dozen/ 2 trays/ thumbprints/ almond squares/ lemon squares/ fudge wedges/ cordials/ puffs/ eclairs...Should shop now, before Cate gets out of school...no money for ingredients!! Inventory what I have for ingredients after this entry. Do letter. Shop. So much for the gift of time.

Cannot isolate myself from Cate, Chris, and Carl. Disastrous to try. Must work within this web, thereby casting and gathering. They are my angels and I have begun to feel the relation more than ever. Angels and editors in this embrace can also pick me up and carry me off to some interest of theirs and away from my work. My opinion is of great value to them...Be aware which way the energy is flowing and find streams of practicality and fairness so we can all work and build our spirits. Plan writing workshop agenda for tomorrow night! Xerox. Claudia could use me at the restaurant tomorrow...I need the money...I also need the time...Go figure! ( February 26, 1996 )

Dailiness is a deceptive concept. Although the time entailed in accomplishing these tasks is substantial, the work itself is not valued in our society even though it effects, nutrition, health, child-care, and hygiene. It was a masterful task to make everything fit and to rearrange and rearrange for new and unexpected entries into the agenda. All efforts at sufficient outside help failed, even with good critical and creative thinking skills at work! The competing roles of wife and mother, graduate student and

owner of a small, home-based business by which the family was partially supported, made producing quality work very difficult. Flexibility was vital as work time was constantly usurped. I chose to write no more such journal entries because even they took time away from the thesis itself. I had to become more adept at carving out time for the work.

### **Reflections on Rosa Mystica: An Analysis of Themes and Techniques.**

As I immersed myself in the writing of the play, I realized how much of my motivation has come from my readings of Elizabeth Debold's Mother Daughter Revolution, Peg Orenstein's Schoolgirls, and Audre Lorde's Sister Outsider, among others. I chose to make the core relationship in 'Rosa Mystica' the mother/daughter relationship based on these readings.

Also, when Mary and Lea are snuggled together as Mary draws and they hear the arguing and the sirens, Mary hardly moves. Here I interject the 'speaking chorus', a persona I chose for 'Rosa Mystica' because of its ancient tradition and the voice it held in that tradition. The chorus has a 'bird's eye view.' The chorus can inform us of action we had not seen and they ask questions which we all might ask as we watch the performance. Sometimes they echo us. Sometimes they echo the centuries, 'neat trick.' I believe this and other such techniques hover in our collective other-consciousness and I feel the decision to add the speaking chorus' voice was a wise one. I would like its voice to add depth.

The contemporary mother and daughter are Lea and Mary. The mother, Lea, is a teacher, performance poet, wife and mother. She has begun work on a performance piece for which she has done and continues to do a great deal of research. Although it will be in the form of a performance piece, it will stand on its own as a scholarly work

by the time she is finished. She still has a long way to go, but the work has already created a very deep niche in her life. It has infiltrated her dreaming and that of her six-year old daughter, Mary.

The dialogue in the scene between Mary and Lea is authentic. I wrote what my Cate said to me as I was trying to work on the thesis. The connections which children this age make are astounding. Buds of philosophical thinking are already formed. I am appalled by the amount of violence to which these little minds are exposed in our society, appalled by our carelessness. As it happens, the history of the times during which the Unicorn Tapestries, both *The Lady with the Unicorn*, and *The Hunt for the Unicorn* were woven, were violent times of torture, persecution and death. This gave me a fitting backdrop on which to place the necessary courage of the mother/daughter relationship.

Research became an important part of creating a viable product. In reading Starhawk's books, *Dreaming the Dark*, and *Spiral Dance*, I acquainted myself with a new point of view in relation to fifteenth century Europe. The Renaissance had a dark side which is not well documented in the history books, that being the history of the witch tortures, trials and burnings. Also, I read all available scholarship on the Unicorn Tapestries. These hold mysteries which I will continue to explore beyond this paper.

The focus on mother/daughter relationship is reinforced by the mother and daughter, Marian and Rose, in the dreaming. They come to the dreams as *The Hammer of the Witches* comes into political power. Marian is an herbalist and is friends with the old midwife, Beth, who assisted in Marian's birth and the birth of her six-year old daughter, Rose. I believe there is still a great deal to be learned from the circumstances surrounding this time in history. With thought, we may consider that the mockery of a witch's costume is not much better than dressing in the guise of an Auschwitz victim,

although we can claim much less awareness of the medieval victims. We see this aspect of Lea's studies through her dreaming, also through the voice of the chorus. The scrim works wonderfully to reveal Lea's dreams to us. It is apparent that she and Mary are connected intuitively, as Mary is having dreams related to Lea's work.

Susan is a woman, perhaps in her fifties, a wise and good friend to Lea. She is a combination of my friend Susan and a woman in my writing workshop and a number of other women whom I've met. The scene between them gives us a chance to get some personal history on Lea. Susan is supportive and respectful of Lea's work, a voice to remind us how we should treat ourselves. She will appear in the dreaming as Sister Miriam. Sister will be responsible for Rose's physical and psychic well-being when her mother is gone. I think this dual use of the same actor deepens our respect for both characters otherwise, with so little time on stage, neither one would be very 'visible'. They are the same kind and wise persona surviving the centuries.

The male characters are Michael, Chris, Marcus, and Steve. They are on the periphery of the action. Michael is a voice on the phone, a voice of loving concern and protection. Lea and Michael's relationship is expressed as playful and loving by the poem she reads for him in the beginning of the play. Lea must ultimately handle the danger on her own because Michael is away in performance. This is from my own experience being married to a musician. My son and daughter and I have spent many nights home alone without my husband because his music has taken him away. It is not a problem. Lea and Michael's relationship is a positive aspect of the play which saves the message from becoming 'bashy' to males.

In an earlier version, the play began with Michael and Lea arguing. He wanted her to cancel the performance altogether because of the phonecalls. She accused him of treating her as though she were a child, and of not respecting the

seriousness of her work. Would he cancel a playing engagement? It's laughable. He has no such concerns. The scene seemed trivial. I could not get it to play right. The outcome you see went through many drafts. I think I still make my point that Michael is going about his artistic business unhindered while Lea is faced with harassment. This is a societal issue which plays outside their control. They handle themselves fairly well within its restrictions.

The son, Chris, is a 'good guy'. The same actor portrays Marcus even though Marcus is probably four or five years older. Using the same technique as for Susan and Sister Miriam, Chris and Marcus each gain more depth echoing one another across the centuries. Chris plays for the performance group, supporting their work. He feels helpless to defend his mother because he has not been included in the discussions regarding the phonecalls. He is in that hinterland between childhood and manhood as the chorus addresses in a brief poem. Marcus develops Chris by his, Marcus's, relationship with Marian. Marcus and Marian are confidantes and lovers in a time of extreme personal danger. Ultimately, he can not save her from the ravages of persecution. I have thought of having Marcus burst into the scene where Marian is being attacked. I still think about it...

Marian must be strong for her little Rose, for whom she has devised an escape plan when the authorities come for them. It seems inevitable. Marian has a position of importance within her circle. She is trusted with information as to people's whereabouts which could be a matter of life and death if their confidences were not kept. She imparts an element of Lea's theory, that the tapestries were woven to document the religious and political persecutions of the time. Their purpose is cloaked in allegory. During the 'Reign of Terror' in France when many works of art depicting nobility were destroyed, the peasants recognized the story being told in these tapestries and ordered them spared.

Steve is the embodiment of the old mindset, that women should know their place. That place is one of silence and subservience. He is functional on a daily basis and can appear to be courteous and helpful when all the while he is seething with displaced desire to put this woman 'in her place.' Steve becomes an 'Everyman' of this type by appearing in a cowardly fashion. I thought if the scene were not played out, it could at the point of his being behind her, represent many scenes which all too many of us have experienced.

As the stage lights are snuffed out, our own experiences begin to play in our minds. The actor who plays Steve is in the foreground among the man who attack Marian in the forest.

Because Lea is a writer, her words are the last thing we hear. What happened? What happened is what happens to too many women. We all play our own ending... I nearly had Lea saved by Susan and or Chris and Mary, and also by Marian. I'm still thinking about it. But this ending feels right. This way it's ending after ending after ending for each audience member for whom this scene is all too familiar. I wrote a poem which would fit nicely at that point in the play, a poem inspired by a Sargent painting at the MFA. I call it 'Passage.' Oddly enough, it didn't make it into the play as I had originally intended. It would have broken the action.

### Passage

Art is dangerous and necessary.  
Ask Edward Boit's daughter,  
the second eldest...  
In her eyes, she knows  
a secret passage  
out of the dark room

where she has been made to stand,  
among the virginal urns;  
one more bride, one more gift,  
Brahmin frame which absents her;  
elder sister's vision  
carved by the red dagger screen,  
bleeding shadows...  
dresses like pilgrims with no journey,  
faces, luminous baubles, poised, obedient.  
Brushes stroke, almost...we...hold hands..

vague movement

of light

conversational voices

floating, distant

dancing arm in arm

in and out

Art is dangerous  
seamless, (ask me)  
leaping past necessity  
into her eyes, and Out  
the secret passage...

I gave great importance to the 'small' incidents or, incidents which we are liable to perceive as being 'small', which happened to Mary. These are the 'video game scene' and the 'bus stop scene.' both of which place the contemporary six-year old child in 'unsafe' situations, the 'video game scene' psychically, and the 'bus stop scene' physically. Both scenes are life experiences. I use techniques of scrim and shadow.

Scrim is a wonderful cloth, like muslin, which when lit from the front on stage, can appear to be solid, but when lit from the back becomes transparent. It's a fantastic technique for shadow play which I use to show Mary's inner reaction to the bus scene as well as during other scenes in the play for emotional impact. It was threatening to her. It

should hit us in the gut that this behavior is not acceptable and with communication could be subtly altered to benefit all the children not only a chosen few. The adults must conduct themselves as such. The image in the video game, needless to say, is abusive. I use the staging techniques to heighten a message.

I chose the title 'Rosa Mystica' for its symbolism in relation to women. It symbolizes for me the loss of women's original voice. The original five petalled flower survives in legend as thornless, tinted with fire, and resilient to all kinds of weather. The thorns were interpreted by Christian Fathers to be a result of Eve's 'original' sin. Please...Where are our original voices? Women can draw the rosa mystica forward in the present with continued courage and voice in the face of bias and with attention to our own biases. There are many wonderful discussions ahead within the language of 'also,' as Lea said, 'that we may truly speak, that we may someday surprise one another with a bouquet of shasta daisies from some shared and glistening field...'

Lights and the rhythms are synchronized to the characters' intuition, dreams and inner states. Lights move us visually and emotionally from scene to scene. They support and heighten anything I may have written in words. Lights articulate between the dreaming and the reality of the play and they meld the two when appropriate. Lights give the work stage coherence. The dreamlike effect of the courtyard sanctuary where Mary and Rose meet, is created by light, the scrim, and dry ice. A gobo or 'cookie' may be employed. This is a stencil of whatever you want for effect which is placed in a particular lighting fixture and casts the shadow of the stencil onto the stage. This reminds me of the Balinese shadow puppets. Lights carry a rhythm as do the drums. The drums are in our ancient other-consciousness. They can be a celebration, an omen of doom, an anxious pulse. I use them as all three in various places to heighten emotion.



The final scene of 'Rosa Mystica' invites the audience to reflect, question and ideally, in the future, take action on gender equity issues. Rosa Mystica is ending...we've heard Lea's voice speak the final lines. A trembling, pale spot comes up on Marian lying downstage front and on Mary and Rose with the unicorn in the back. Shadow gobos drift across the stage. Chris and Michael come out with their drums as do the girls from Pulse. Lea joins them. We chant an invitation to the audience...let the audience join in...dance...share food and drink...converse....Paradise...

## CHAPTER 5

### IMPLICATIONS OF ARTISTIC PROCESS FOR ARTS IN EDUCATION

#### **Of What Importance Is the Arts Component in Public School Education?**

This final chapter offers a different way of looking at arts in education. There are always the handful of students who can draw or act or who play instruments. They may also play sports and enjoy glee club. These are exciting avenues for social interaction and growth. I want to look at a different purpose for art; art as method, not subject. To remain consistent with the theoretical material, I will focus on high school students. Gender bias can be addressed by girls and boys engaging with one another in this process, by listening and by hearing each other's voices.

As I set about this task, what is my purpose, my motivation? Coming to the teaching profession after spending ten years as a student of acting and as an actor, I was reminded of the lack of attention to the physical and philosophical environment in secondary public schools. Glaring fluorescent lights, cinder block walls, bad air and uncomfortable chairs set the ambiance for learning. More surprisingly, old gender biases in the language and action of both students and teachers still skew the lens through which students perceive their intelligence.

I asked myself, what is missing? Where is the empathy, imagination, reason and intuition which is an integral part of theatre studies? I asked myself, what is our idea of art that we house art in our most elegant architecture, celebrate and emulate art, then all but absent art from twelve years of public schooling, especially at secondary level?

How does viewing a live performance or viewing an art exhibit really acquaint a student with artistic process? Exposure is a beginning, however, what is the next step? There is no follow-through. Why are we so willing to allow this absence in education? If we really think about it, what value do we place on artistic process? More precisely, how do we define it and how do we define it in relation to ourselves? How do we perceive the process? And more importantly when in the realm of public school budgets, what is its use? Where does it fit? We emulate our artists. They speak our hearts. We let them speak for us in visual, musical, and literary voices so skilled that we fall silent in awe. Can we alter our perception of art that we might experience ourselves within its process?

### **Irondale: Arts in Action**

True education is subversive in nature, says Terry Greiss, co-founder of the Irondale Ensemble Project. The system is not really interested in educating kids. It's too scary a proposition. True education might give them enough power to change the status quo.  
(Jonas 1992, 36)

Irondale Ensemble Project Group, based in New York City, has worked with students in the most isolated communities, ESL, DD, LD, poor, homeless, AIDS, also with incarcerated juvenile delinquents on Riker's Island, abused women and children among them. Irondale has been working steadily since their inception in 1983.

Co-founders, Terry Greiss and Jim Niesen, are arts in education advocates, and firm believers in the power of arts as a cooperative tool in education. Irondale students exercise their associative imaginations as well as experimenting with self-conscious theatricality. Greiss is an extremely vocal advocate for arts in education and a respected

presence at many advisory panels in New York State. Hollis Hedrick, Director of New York State's Council on the Arts' Arts in Education Division, is quoted as saying:

The old 'art for art's sake' argument still holds. Art represents civilization and its endurance. When we talk about ancient Greece we don't talk about their math scores, we talk about the Parthenon. The more persuasive and urgent argument is that art is a viable alternative way of learning, with proven success. There is this misguided division between academic and 'other' subjects, which makes it easy to cut, but actually it is interdependent within a healthy matrix. Art is a 'learning modality' which can be used to teach other subject matter. You can teach math through architecture or musical composition or choreography. It's hard to make teachers appreciate art as a method, not only as a subject." Hollis is not convinced that most teachers could do what Irondale does. He finds teachers to be threatened by supplemental organizations. Greiss echoes Hedrick's remarks: "The whole educational system is so unresponsive. Bureaucracy pigeonholes. Teachers are compelled to teach controlled curriculum at students. The whole structure resists change. The buildings look like prisons, and the schools are places to which the kids are condemned, which operate in isolation from the community. Schools should be environmentally and spiritually welcoming. They should be full of art and activity, places where people of all ages can hang out, listen to music, watch videos, see plays. Schools should be the cultural and social focus of every community, and they should be open all night. (40)

Irondale established itself as a "research theatre," dedicated to experimentation and to the belief that there is not and should not be any division between art and education, or between performance and outreach. "After all," suggests Greiss, "an artist by the very nature of doing art, is in a constant process of self-education. Our performance and teaching feed directly into one another." (40 ) Within the Irondale model students learn to teach themselves. They learn that they can learn. The teacher/director becomes a facilitator.

This holistic approach to learning overcomes the greatest deterrents to learning: lack of interest, lack of confidence, absence of focus, and absence itself. Greiss's vision of an education for mind and spirit through art and the philosophy of community

connection are ideas inherent in Renee Cox's article, 'A Gynecentric Aesthetic.' Although Greiss does not use the language of matriarchal and patriarchal conceptions of art, the concept of community-based art-in-education is more compatible with Cox's matriarchal model than with the existing patriarchal model. The open form of the following studio suggestions, models my experience in the theatre and how we work.

### **On the Subject of Facilitator/Directors for the Studios**

Facilitator/directors for these groups, ideally have backgrounds in theatre arts, writing, and critical and creative thinking. Ideally they love and believe in the work. The students will know whether or not this is true. Remember, every meeting begins with a greeting. Face each other. Once the work has begun, get serious. This does not mean there is not humor. There are many humorous moments, but within the work and never at anyone's expense.

Define active writing and genuine listening with the group. This is vital or nothing will be accomplished. Establish the ground rules for what is acceptable work. This will begin to establish safe environment. Respect and courtesy are absolutes.

Plans for each session must always be very carefully constructed. When doing this kind of work, a frame can become so open that it falls apart. The facilitator must come to the session with a form and goal in mind so that s/he may observe the students moving toward that goal. Read Uta Hagen and Viola Spolin and others who articulate their work in exercises. Use these exercises! This work is physical also!

The purpose once the writing has been selected is to form a presentation around the writing. Some writing may lend itself to a more elaborate presentation while other

pieces should be spoken simply. An excellent text is Readers' Theatre: Toward a Grammar of Practice by Joanna Maclay. Rather than simply preparing a sparse version of usual theatre, Maclay offers specific definition of readers' theatre as a separate form. Read! Read! Read! You never know where a good idea may come from. Be in shape! Love the work! Participate! Your enthusiasm will draw your students to their work. One thing I remember from all my theatre work, we all always loved the work...no matter what!

### **How to Elicit Writing from the Group**

Writing is active. Genuine listening is active. How often are they so in school? Public schools' usual approach to writing is seldom conducive to genuine voicing. There is simply not the time. The artistic process studios are on-going during the students' high school years and the theatre/performance work is based on original writing produced within the group. This offers ownership of the work and a chance at empathic, imaginative learning with the natural development of philosophical dialogues and reasoning. Writing and listening become vital and powerful.

What is the best way to encourage original writing to be interpreted in the writing/theatre studios? I have used a specific approach to the writing component of my own classes for years and have found corroboration in the article, 'On Creativity and Social Change,' by Mary Clare Powell. The Chicopee Workshop is an example of a very simple change having a profoundly positive effect. As opposed to school where assessment is still largely grade, evaluation, and criticism based, these workshops begin with positive assessment only, by the participants. Find what is positive in the work.

Find what the group would like to hear more of. The working class women, who were social outcasts found their voices within their participation in the Chicopee workshops.

This technique of positive inquiry did not mean that the work remained stagnant. On the contrary, wherever the women in the class read, audiences were amazed at the clarity and power of the work. This is simply a different process, one which allows original voice to surface and form. The Chicopee Workshop met over a number of years. The studio is also on-going which allows participants to rotate in and out to experience even more fully, the transformations of being in the artistic process.

A number of new texts, by women, on the subject of writing, have been published over the past five years. Personal experiences and insights are offered to encourage the reader, but because these women are also teachers, each window into their experience as writers is followed by an exercise which invites the reader to a refreshing new topic. My current favorites are: Poemcrazy , by Susan Wooldridge, Writing Toward Home, by Georgia Heard, and Writing the Bones, by Natalie Goldberg. All three offer wonderful 'home remedies' for two common ailments in the studios, "I can not write!" and "I have nothing to write about!" Share these writings.

No writer should be judgmental about her/his work. Read it out. Let us see what you have. Judgmental thoughts can stop valuable work. Stay with the work of the group for a while, not outside material. It is vital to establish the voice of the group. When you determine the students know each others' work begin to research and enhance your work with the writings of known authors that seem to echo or contrast with something produced by the group. Outside reading is an ongoing, vital, component!

RESPECT must be a given. It is an important challenge of the group to learn where genuine power lies in their writing. Genuine power has no connection to foul language. Articulate thoughts well presented have power. All work is respectful of everyone present. This nurtures open-mindedness.

Students who speak English as a second language should be invited to contribute selections in their native tongue as well as their English work. A gift of the group is to enjoy the music of other languages. Do the ESL participants know someone who can accompany the work with the appropriate elements?

Focus on the writing, the product and process, not on the writer. Speak in terms of the narrator of the piece and the narrator's voice. This creates some distance for the writers and listeners to be more objective.

Environment plays a role. Bring fresh flowers or a freshly baked bread to share. Honor the space. If your space is lit by fluorescent lights, experiment with lamplight. Even use different watt bulbs. We are also physical beings and our surroundings affect us. Honor that fact and prepare the space to honor your awareness and the work.

### **Sharing the Work with Your Community**

You'll come to love this time together and the sound of each other's voices. Plan presentations of the work for neighborhood groups such as the elementary school or the COA. Invite members of the COA to a gathering or two. They are wonderful writers with marvelous stories to tell. I know from personal experience.

Invite a class of younger children to write with their teacher and when the work is ready, have them come and share the work with you. Decorate the space to honor



their visit and bring some food and drink to share. Make the session a celebration of their work. Honor yourself, your studio, and your community with the work.

In summation, our society imposes certain roles upon girls and boys, men and women. Frequently, it is the artistic community which rebels against these roles. Why is that so? In 'Rosa Mystica,' I wanted to offer the theory that members of the artistic community of fifteenth century England were secretly at work attempting a way to document the political terror waged against the peasant and laboring class by The Hammer of the Witches. Engaging in this artistic process has added energy and excitement to the past two years of my life as I worked on its creation.

It has been my experience that the creations of writing workshops such as the ones suggested above can be transformational for the students involved. Very quickly, participants see one another in a 'new light'; the light of empathy, reason, imagination, and intuition, perhaps in our best 'natural light.' Eventually, biases and misconceptions crumble under the intensity of this introspective light. Writing and presenting writing within the community once it has been brought along to the status of best work for the writer, is an exciting and vital experience for all involved. The artistic process studios are a way to truly know one another. This is why I have named my studio, Pulse. We are 'writing the bones,' that we may truly speak.

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