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A Philosophical Investigation of Maxine Greene's Aesthetics Theory for K-12 Education

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Karen L. McDonald-Currence entitled "A Philosophical Investigation of Maxine Greene's Aesthetics Theory for K-12 Education." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Education.

Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Joy T. DeSensi, Marcia Goldenstein, Ed Counts

Accepted for the Council:

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Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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Joy T. DeSensi

Marcia Goldenstein

Ed Counts

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Vice Provost and
Dean of the Graduate School

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**A PHILOSOPHICAL INVESTIGATION OF MAXINE GREENE'S
AESTHETICS THEORY FOR K-12 EDUCATION**

**A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree**

**Barbara J. Thayer-Bacon, Major Professor
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Karen L. McDonald-Currence
May 2008**

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ABSTRACT

Interaction with the world begins with each window we open or door we pass through. Potentially our interactions alter another's perceptions. Examining this premise through a philosophical investigation, this dissertation clarifies my position, roles, and the affect on the lives of my students by applying Maxine Greene's (1995) aesthetic theory. Due to personal experiences teaching in public and private schools, concerns for effective teacher preparation, and meaningful practice, my research began with the question: *What does Maxine Greene's aesthetics theory offer K-12 education and educational reform?* Theoretical underpinnings for this thesis were cultural studies, critical pedagogy, care theory, social justice in aesthetic education, and imagination. Each of these ideas filters the work of Maxine Greene in aesthetics education while leading me to add to aesthetics theory with my theory on imagination, the *Web of Betweenness*. The *Web of Betweenness* defines imagination as an electrically charged thought moving beyond the sense of self and into a multidimensional realm; imaginative thought spans from a personal thought into a creative action. The theory of a *Web of Betweenness* sees the imagination in a dual role helping a person discover who they are and who they may become.

PREFACE

As a child, I was constantly involved in art creating wherever and on whatever was available. Eventually, this natural passion developed from mud pies to ceramics and from scribbling to oil paintings. I evolved from creating art to include teaching art. While teaching at a nationally ranked high school my awareness of the problems facing modern education grew. In my classroom, I saw an ever-growing number of students who were challenged both socially and academically. The school demographics changed as the city's poor moved into newly constructed subsidized housing. During my search for answers, I studied school administration. While it pointed toward a part of the solution, many thoughts still troubled me.

In time, my practice led me away from the high school and into an inner city middle school. An inner-city school is defined by a set of issues that affect its students. It is often plagued with low-test scores, poor attendance, lack of resources, and little parental involvement (Johnson, 2006). It is a fact that a black 8th grader in the United States is four times less likely to be proficient in mathematics than a white 8th grader. (Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, Nation's Report Card: 2005). A fourth grader who qualifies for a free- or reduced-price lunch is two-and-a-half times less likely to be proficient in reading than a child who does not meet the income eligibility requirements. (Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, Nation's Report Card: 2005). A current example from my practice is found using a classroom test over color. My lowest performing class averaged only 25 points out of a possible 100. The students were surprised that they scored so low and most gave excuses about not knowing the material.

When I asked them why they did not study their study guide that we filled out in class, most just looked away, said they forgot it, did not understand it, etc. When I asked why they did not ask questions, several students were honest enough to say that they saw no purpose in knowing about art. It has no use for them. Results like these make me consider how to make their art time more meaningful.

An inner city teaching position can be a privileged teaching position. While it is difficult at times, when there is success the intrinsic rewards in teaching are rich. I interpret my position as an opportunity to work with some of our culture's best assets. Other teachers and I at the school think of our students as *diamonds in the rough*. Often the conditions in which these students live place the school in an elevated role in their lives. School becomes their haven. An inner city school serves many of the purposes that family or church once did. The students are taught social skills and life skills such as respect or honesty. A recent example comes from the gift of "tennis shoes" to students who are on the student leadership team. This team consists of students who were singled out to develop leadership skills. As a reward for their hard work a local business gave each of them a pair of shoes. A week went by, then two weeks. No student, when asked, had written to say thank-you. The school's attendance secretary took it on herself to speak to them about being thank-full. She instructed them not only in writing thank-you notes when someone does something nice for you, but also in their attitude of appreciation. Since then, several students have written to the business. This is just one example of the instruction once received from home.

While offering knowledge, we the staff are giving much more - care, security, and love. We teach about life and life skills. Teaching becomes more than educating as described in the following quote:

These men and women, teachers... mold the future citizens of our country, and we do not treat them with the respect or consideration, which their high calling deserves, nor do we reward them.... The school alone cannot teach citizenship, however, any more than it can really educate a child. It can do much in directing thought and formulating standards, in creating habits of responsibility and courage and devotion. (Eleanor Roosevelt)

The role of the teacher becomes a molder of the citizenry, a director towards standards and developer of habits. Education develops habits of mind and becomes a key for self-renewal, but the inner city student often does not know how to use the key of education to unlock their futures (Sergiovanni, 2000). My perspective in this investigation is that of a teacher in an inner city school operating an inclusive classroom. This type of class combines a variety of students from gifted to academically delayed. It places unique stresses on the teacher trying to meet the different learning needs of the students. Working in this setting is always challenging. Working in the arts becomes invigorating. It gives me a tremendous sense of possibility.

During this search for understanding, I “found” cultural studies. Cultural studies are a unique blend of studies and issues that seek to address social justice issues. It directly relates to my teaching praxis. Besides instructing art at a local school, I was also a graduate associate in the Art Education program at the University of Tennessee. My praxis was working to improve the level of teaching coming from the program while

trying to reach into the core of aesthetics education. One afternoon I met with the program coordinator for cultural studies, Dr. Barbara Thayer-Bacon. We instantly felt a connection. As I was trying to express what I was searching for, she felt that cultural studies could meet my need for working with aesthetics education. With this thought, I plunged into cultural studies courses. From my assigned readings began my tie with Maxine Greene. I was so excited to find someone who shared my thoughts and ideas. Joining the cultural studies program met a personal need to improve and empower my practice both in education and with aesthetics. The effect has been to gather a deeper understanding for my culture, its various theories and practices and to find continuing forms for my praxis. These lines help clarify my theme:

I dwell in Possibility –
A fairer House than Prose –
More numerous of Windows –
Superior –for Doors – (Emily Dickinson)

These lines speak to the possibilities that lie through the windows of our lives. We each look into our part of the world. As we open a window or step through a door to interact with the world, our experiences potentially alter another's perspectives. While my current practice is as an art specialist in public education, I want to clarify my position. The term art generally means visual expressions of creativity. The term aesthetics refers to the broader areas of creative expression such as music, dance, poetry, visual arts, and media. Both of these terms are more thoroughly defined later. The term *the arts* is occasionally used in place of the term aesthetics. I am choosing to look at the broad field of aesthetics and its implications for K-12 educational reform. While it is not possible to cover every aspect of aesthetics, it is possible to use examples from various areas of aesthetic experiences in K-12 education. Due to my experiences with teaching in

the schools, concerns for effective and meaningful teacher preparation, continued exposure to aesthetics and education on the national and international level, and my reflective praxis, I take up this project with the following question: *What does Maxine Greene's aesthetic theory offer education and suggest for K-12 educational reform?* In this section, I focus on brief explanations of terms, theories, and relative ideas. These ideas are cultural studies, critical pedagogy, care theory, social justice in aesthetic education, and imagination.

Cultural Studies

As I have already stated, my conversation with Dr. Thayer-Bacon opened the door to cultural studies. Because I take this field seriously, it is important that my dissertation be reflective of it. While it is not possible to define this field, it is possible to explain it through characteristics (Wright, 1995). This cultural studies project reflects a contextual and historical study (Giroux, 1995; Wright, 2000) – including *my* lived experience. It also concerns pedagogical practices influenced by popular culture (Giroux, 1995; Williams, 1971; Wright, 1995). It is *praxis* driven using an informed and creative theory (Freire, 2000; Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995; Wright, 2000). Finally, it is interdisciplinary bringing together disparate discourses (Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995).

Cultural studies seeks to combine political economy, communication, sociology, social theory, literary theory, media theory, film/video studies, cultural anthropology, philosophy, and aesthetics to study various cultural phenomena in various societies. Often cultural studies researchers concentrate on how a particular phenomenon relates to matters of ideology, ethnicity, social class, and/or gender. Richard Hoggart first coined

the term in 1964 when he founded the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. It is often associated with Stuart Hall, who succeeded Hoggart as director. It concerns itself with everyday practices. A cultural practice is the particular way people do things in a given culture. Within cultures, people use particular objects (from MP3 Players to handguns) and attribute meanings and uses to these objects and practices. Recently, with the spread of capitalism throughout the world, cultural studies have begun to critique forms of resistance to Western hegemony. Cultural studies emphasize the relationship between theory and practice. A natural fit for me, cultural studies allows the freedom to blend my practice as an artist and teacher, my degrees in art education and school administration with a focus on social justice issues.

Critical Pedagogy

My first exposure to critical pedagogy came during my educational specialist program in school administration. An excellent definition for critical pedagogy comes from Peter McLaren (1982).

A critical pedagogy examines schools both in their historical context and as part of the existing social and political fabric that characterizes the dominant society. Critical pedagogy poses a variety of important counter logics to the positivistic, a historical, and depoliticized analysis employed by both liberal and conservative critics of schooling – an analysis all too readily available in the training programs in our colleges of education.

(p.145)

Critical pedagogy has foundations in many theoretical developments including Freire's pedagogy of liberation, Che Guevara and other revolutionaries, feminist theory, and neo-Marxist cultural criticism. McLaren (1982) adds to his definition by saying it is, a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structures of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and nation state. (p.146)

Critical pedagogy has a historical basis from the work of progressive teachers, literacy workers, and other motivated people who saw the inequalities that existed in various parts of society and strove to defeat them. It was my sense of outrage at the inequalities that first motivated me toward school administration. It is my continued sense of concern for the illiteracy in the schools that motivates me now. American schools are struggling with literacy and this study offers to connect illiteracy with the arts with illiteracy in language. Both need to be addressed. Aesthetics literacy will improve language literacy.

Care Theory

Care theory comes from the work of Nell Noddings that uses a feminist approach to ethics and moral education (Noddings, 1984). Noddings believes that natural care begins in the home. Natural Care does not require an ethical effort to motivate it (although it does come from a response to emotional and physical needs). I have been deeply influenced by some wonderful teachers who crossed my path. These teachers gave me the extra attention and understanding that my creative temperament required.

Being gifted in the arts, I was often a bored student. My favorite educators saw beyond the regular academics and allowed me the room to grow through my window of creativity and continue a natural course of development. Influential to my theoretical development is the work of Nel Noddings. We share a sense of domesticity. She describes herself as ‘incurably domestic’ raising a ‘flock of kids’ (10 in all); I relate to this having raised my flock of six. We live our lives in conjunction with the lives of others (Noddings, 1984; Greene, 1995; Thayer-Bacon, 2003). Important to care theory is the question, “what are we like” when we are engaging in caring encounters?

We must be receptive, a form of special attention (Noddings, 2002). Besides receptive attention is motivational displacement. The carer’s ‘motive energy’ flows toward the ‘cared-for’ (Noddings, 2002). The result is that the cared-for responds. We learn to care from being cared for. My experience in inner-city school education places teachers in the role of caregiver. Figure P.1 shows an example of my caring for students before class. In this case, we are discussing a new school policy about clothing. Care theory reaffirms the ethical and moral foundations of teaching and schooling. Moral foundations of schooling include instruction in core values such as truth, love, peace, right conduct and non-violence. Ethical foundations use enculturated values of social democracy issues to ensure that the students have access to those understandings and skills that are required for satisfying and responsible lives. Educators who nurture the well-being and learning of every student while exhibiting competence and commitment to serving as stewards of the schools.



Figure P.1 Talking with students

Social Justice through Aesthetics Education

Aesthetics education for social justice is a component that drives my praxis. It is a move toward cherishing *diversity*, and understanding our *responsibility* for our students as *global citizens*. It should strive to maintain open lines of *communication* so that the voices of the many be heard and join in our conversations. I have struggled with how this should look in this project. In a conversation that I had with an aesthetics educator in Russia, (who works under the watchful eye of both government and Mafioso) the challenge is the same. The need is recognition of the arts not only for increasing intelligence and brain development, but also for cultural understandings (Eagan, 1997; Windt, 2005).

Every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. (Eagan, 1997,p.12)

We live in a world with a prior context (a history), which situates us within our culture (Greene, 1995, Dorn, 2004). Aesthetic education traditionally belongs to the economically privileged. In the twenty-first century it should be accessible to everyone. Social justice is complicated by government regulations that interfere with current research. Current research advocates alternate assessment techniques such as portfolio, however, the government with the No Child Left Behind regulations mandate standardized testing scores throughout the nation. This inconsistency works against true gains. Foundational to social justice is the work of Paulo Freire. Five aspects of Freire's work included in this project are dialogue, curricula, praxis, community, and social capital (Freire, 1972; Freire, 1985). *Dialogue* refers to cooperation, a sense of communication between those working with informal education and those who teach in formal education. An example of this dialogue is my recent trip to Russia, see Fig. P.2 above. During this symposium we discussed the differences of our cultures and their beliefs about the arts. In the Russian, culture there is a dialogue set up between the two types of education. The formal education represented by the arts teachers in the schools, the informal education represented by the after-school programs. These programs are part of the Russian culture and have existed long before the formal school systems. They are administered through artists, parents, or other local people with a love for the arts. The *dialogue* leads naturally from a dialogic conversation between both types of educators and those visiting from the United States into *curricula* issues.



Fig. P.2 Bibliotheca for Advanced Studies in St. Petersburg

Praxis then becomes informed action (linked to values). For Maxine Greene (2001) a primary example of praxis came through the Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in New York City. By reaching many teachers, Greene influences the building of communities throughout the United States. The results being an informed practice, but educators still regard the arts as additives rather than core knowledge. For social justice to be successful, the praxis should lead to a process of enhancing the *community*. There is still much to do.

Having defined these ideas of cultural studies, critical pedagogy, care theory, and social justice in aesthetic education, the remaining parts of this paper seek to answer the question, *what does Maxine Greene's aesthetic theory offer education and suggest for K-12 educational reform?* Chapter One answers the question, why Maxine Greene? It looks at where she is now, her growth as an existentialist philosopher including some ideas from Romanticism that influenced her development. Anecdotal statements from

Greene's former students and peers provide evidence of her influential status. In Chapter Two, Maxine Greene's theory of aesthetics for education is discussed. It begins with her theory of education and develops to include aesthetics education. Chapter Three analyses her work through the lenses of developmental theorists, art, and aesthetic educators. Included in this discussion of Greene's theory are thoughts from my teaching praxis. Finally, in Chapter Four, I add my thoughts on aesthetic education concluding with suggestions for K-12 educational reform.

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Chapter One

Maxine Greene is a professor of education and philosophy at Teachers College, Columbia University where she has an endowed chair. Since receiving her B.A. in 1938 from Barnard College, she has worked continually to expand our notions of what is possible. Her M.S. degree came in 1949 at New York University. Her Ph.D. followed in 1955 at the same institution. Before joining Teacher's College in 1965, she taught at Brooklyn College, Montclair State, and New York University. She has served as a Professor of Philosophy and Education since 1973 and the William F. Russell Professor in the Foundations of Education from 1975 to 1998, and is now Professor Emeritus. She has been Director of Teachers College – Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education from 1966 to 1973. Her hard work and inspiration to students and colleagues has been recognized through the many honorary degrees she has received including Lehigh University, the University of Colorado at Denver, and the University of Indiana. She has presented her work around the world including New Zealand where she was a Fulbright lecturing fellow in 1990.

Why look at Maxine Greene?

You may ask why Maxine Greene is important for 21st century education. My answer is to look at her influence, her writing, and the amount of passion that she inspires in others. Not only has she inspired my praxis, she inspires many others as well. In a 2002 article entitled, "The Power of One," Amy Oringel names Maxine Greene among teaching's most revered thinkers. She is one of the hardest working teachers that this profession has ever spawned. While teaching courses in aesthetic education – the process of building students' cognition by exposure to *the arts* – to thousands of students,

Maxine Greene has impacted the next generation of teaching professionals. She is an active lecturer and seminar speaker. Her inspiring rhetoric makes a room come alive. (Oringel, 2002). She does all this from a now frail body of an octogenarian.

Maxine Greene is now considered a feminist. She disliked her privileged upbringing, disliking how it consumed her social-climbing mother. It was her father who inspired her to break free from what she called *an airless life* (Oringel, 2002). While searching for her life, Greene went to graduate school. In an early paper, she wrote about the “Philosopher as Man.” In this paper she stated that teachers should behave like people – that is, inject themselves into the teaching process (Oringel, 2002). Being rejected by this early professor, who wanted Greene to remain objective and neutral, it was this course that influenced her to enroll in the doctorate program. Soon, she found herself lecturing to large classrooms as a teaching assistant. She believes that she received a good response not from her knowledge, but from her passion and excitement of the topic. As a Jewish woman in academia in the 1950s and ‘60s, Greene was seen at first as an intruder. She held philosophical conversations in the ladies lounge at the faculty club of Teachers College in 1965 as women were not allowed into the faculty club; she became a philosopher of education through the opened door of the English department.

When she was hired as a professor for philosophy of education at Columbia, Greene found herself in an intellectual minority. She was an existentialist whose peers subscribed to analytic philosophy. She maintained that individual existence takes precedence over abstract, conceptual essence. In 1973 with the publication of *Teacher as Stranger: Educational Philosophy for the Modern Age*, she encouraged teachers to lead

their students on free-form explorations in the classrooms. Thirty years later, in the publication, *Releasing the Imagination*, Greene (1995) summarizes her message:

To help kids shape their identity, we've got to awaken them to their own questions and encourage them to shape their identity, we've got to awaken them to their own questions and encourage them to create their own projects. They don't really learn unless they ask (p.22)

Maxine Greene is now the author of seven books. They are *Variations on a Blue Guitar* (Teachers College Press, 2001); *Releasing the Imagination, the Arts and Social Change* (Josse Bass Publishers, 1995); *The Dialectics of Freedom* (Teachers College Press, 1998); *Landscapes of Learning* (Teachers College Press, 1978); *Teachers as Stranger: Educational Philosophy in the Modern Age* (Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1973), which was awarded the 1974 Delta Gamma Kappa Award for Educational Book of the Year; *Existential Encounters for Teachers* (Random House, 1967); and *The Public School and the Private Vision* (Random House, 1963). Her monographs include *Active Learning and Aesthetic Encounters* (Talks at the Lincoln Center Institute, NCREST, 1984); *A Teacher Talks to Teachers: Perspectives on the Lincoln Center Institute* (Lincoln Center, 1980); and *Education, Freedom and Possibility* (Russell Lecture, 1975).

Teacher as Stranger is her first encouragement to foster what she calls, "wide-awakeness" in classrooms. Linda Levine (Oringel,2002), an associate dean for academic affairs at Bank Street College of Education in New York City explains Greene's appeal when she says,

Maxine has said that when geese fly overhead, the ducks below stand on tiptoe. That is, if we dare to do something off the ground, others will be

encouraged to do the same. Those of us in progressive education are inspired by Maxine and therefore work with a greater sense of urgency and hope. (Oringel, 2002, p.4)

Who influenced Maxine Greene?

To determine how Maxine Greene grew into such a dynamic educator, it is important to look at the people who influenced her growth. As a philosopher and educator, Greene's primary research concerns are philosophies of education and social thought; aesthetics and the teaching of the arts, literature as art, and multiculturalism. Greene's work is prolific, but for this dissertation, the primary texts are *Releasing the Imagination* and *Variations on a Blue Guitar*. Her work intertwines aesthetics, the development of imagination and creativity with the role of educational reform. She represents an existentialist approach, someone who believes that humankind exists and defines itself through one's subjectivity while wandering between choice and freedom. Her views reflect the value placed on individualism, self-creation, and self-definition.

To sketch out the influential growth of Maxine Greene, I will begin with those philosophers who influenced her. This is not a complete discussion of philosophy, aesthetics, or education, but a brief summary of the philosophers most influential for Maxine Greene with their thoughts and ideas. The summary begins with Jean-Paul Charles Sartre (1905-1980). It is his essay, "A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology," that is regarded as the beginning of existentialism in the 20th century. His writings set the tone for intellectual life in the decade immediately after World War II.

Never one to avoid conflict, Sartre (1958) became involved in the Algerian War, generating deep hostility from the Right to the point that French Algerian supporters detonated a bomb outside his apartment building. Sartre's political critique took the form a series of essays, interviews and plays. His play, *The Condemned of Altona*, combined a sense of exploitation (the colonization) with an expression of moral outrage (racism and oppression of Muslim population)(Flynn, 2002). Mentioning this play brings to light the role of imaginative art in Sartre's philosophical work.

This piece, whose chief protagonist is Frantz, 'the butcher of Smolensk', though ostensibly about the effect of Nazi atrocities at the Eastern front on a post war industrialist family in Hamburg, is really addressing the question of collective guilt and the French oppression of the Algerian war for independence raging at the time. Sartre often turned to literary art to convey or even to work through philosophical thoughts that he had already or would later conceptualize in his essays and theoretical studies. (Flynn, 2002, p.14)

This brings out a relationship between imaginative literature and philosophical work, a characteristic found in Maxine Greene's writing style. The strategy of indirect communication has been a tool of existentialism since Kierkegaard adapted the use of pseudonyms in his philosophical writings in the early 19th century (Flynn, 2002).

The point is to communicate a feeling and an attitude that the reader/ spectator adopts in which certain existentialist themes such as anguish, responsibility or bad faith are suggested but not dictated as in a lecture. Asked why his plays were performed only in the bourgeois sections of the city, Sartre replied that no bourgeois could leave a performance of one of them without "thinking thoughts traitorous to his class." The so-

called aesthetic "suspension of disbelief" coupled with the tendency to identify with certain characters and to experience their plight vicariously conveys conviction rather than information (Flynn, 2002, p.14-15).

This quote explains what existentialism is primarily about, a challenge to the individual to examine their life, to heighten their sensitivity to oppression and exploitation in their world. Sartre's (1958) primary purpose was defining consciousness as transcendent. Greene (1995) clarifies and applies his thoughts in *Releasing the Imagination* when she says,

Sartre says everybody experiences a need, that is, a distance between where you are and what you want. In a fair society, we have to enable every child to work through that need in pursuit of his or her own possibility. If you can enable children to choose projects that are meaningful, the product in the final analysis will be superior. (Greene, 1995, p.149)

Sartre (1958) asks the question, "What does it mean 'to be'?" This quote further explains how existentialism views mankind.

If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterward will he be something, and he himself will have made what he will be. Thus there is no human nature, since there is no God to conceive it. Not only is man what he conceives himself to be, but he is also only what he wills himself to be after this thrust toward existence. (Sartre, 1958, p. 152)

His theory of aesthetics comes from his work on 'being and nothingness,' possibly a growth from surviving Nazi oppression. For Sartre (1958), art held special powers that interact with the viewer's senses and the artist's concept. The artwork becomes 're-created' through the viewer's perceptions. A social activist, Sartre emphasized the harsh facts of oppression and exploitation not erased by the World War. Society becomes based on violence. The artist in his view has a social responsibility to address the harshness of society. Greene's (1973) growth in her sense of community and cultural influences grow from this influence. Human kind has value. Aesthetics then has a moral responsibility and the artist should raise public awareness.

Artwork has a special power: that of communicating among freedoms without alienation or objectification. The relationship between artist and public, Sartre (1958) called *gift-appeal*. In *The Psychology of Imagination*, Sartre speaks of a portrait as *inviting* the viewer to realize its possibilities by regarding it aesthetically. Aesthetics for Sartre is an active interaction with an art form that expresses an idea. It should cause you to think, to reflect, and to react. Sartre views the imagination as a picture-consciousness. This notion comes from Husserl (1939) whose theory of picture-consciousness animates the absent subject. Through this animation, the notion of the internal picture or the image without any material existence functions the same way that the picture does. Fantasy can have the same structural character as the physical picture-consciousness. Sartre identified pure fantasy with picture-consciousness and argued that there are mental pictures at work in fantasy. The mental pictures have physicality. I cannot touch them as a photograph, but I must assume that the mental image is a picture and as such has a material content.

The mental picture is an image and the theory of the picture-consciousness defines the theory for imagination as a whole.

This attitude suggests an aesthetic appreciation for the work of art. What lets a work of art be a work of art? How do I let the picture function as a picture? In order to let the picture function as a picture Sartre (1958) calls for an unrealizing attitude in front of it. I must deprive the picture of its real being, I must not see it as a real thing belonging to real time and space. By taking it out of the context of reality, I must remove it from the world and regard it as a phenomenon that is not determined by the sequence of events taking place in the world. Greene (1973) supports an aesthetic appreciation for the work of art when she says,

to do philosophy, then, is to become highly conscious of the phenomena and events in the world as it presents itself to consciousness. To do philosophy, as Jean Paul Sartre says, is to develop a fundamental project, to go beyond the situations one confronts and refuse reality as given in the name of a reality to be produced. (Greene, 1973, p.7)

Merleau-Ponty (1908-1961), a companion of Sartre, developed his theory of aesthetics within the continental school of philosophy. He applied the methods of Husserl's phenomenology to the relation of mind and body in *The Phenomenology of Perception* (1945) and *The Visible and the Invisible* (1964). He diagnosed a pervasive ambiguity in the character of human life and attributed all consciousness to pre-reflective sensual awareness of the corporeal. He tried to overcome the traditional dichotomy between objective and subjective elements of the human experience. For Merleau-Ponty

(1978), as an existentialist, perception becomes the primary mode of access to what is real, but unlike many phenomenologists, he affirms reality as a world that transcends our consciousness. He disagreed with dualism, an idea introduced into western thought by Plato who claimed that there are actually two worlds, the physical world of appearances and a higher world of intelligible Forms. Merleau-Ponty agreed with Aristotle who held that mind and body are two aspects of the same thing, the same complete person. From his work in philosophy, he brought the concept of *social imagination*. Later, Greene adopts this idea and defines it as,

the capacity to invent visions of what should be and what might be in our deficient society, on the streets where we live, in our schools. As I write of social imagination, I am reminded of Jean-Paul Sartre's declaration that 'it is on the day that we can conceive of a different state of affairs that a new light falls on our troubles and our suffering and that we decide that these are unbearable (Sartre, 1956, p.434-435), (Greene, 1995, p.5).

All mental concepts are socially constructed and so Merleau-Ponty's (1978) study of perception stresses the social stratum to find meanings and the objective existence of things. He grows this concept into that of an embodied consciousness. Later Greene identifies consciousness as something experienced through time, space, and activity.

Our perception ends in objects, and the object once constituted, appears as the reason for all the experiences of it which we have had ... (Greene, 1973, p. 114)

Perception undergirds cognition, for Merleau-Ponty, the concepts of experience contextualize within the perception of the individual, while at the same time opening the wider world to the individual. This is a dividing point for Sartre (1956) and Merleau-Ponty (1978). Because Merleau-Ponty believes that a fundamental element of a subject's perception is its perspective character, it is always incomplete and leaves the possibilities of other perspectives always open. To clarify, instead of starting with an individual's experience and connecting it to others as Sartre would, Merleau-Ponty begins with the world and being in the world with others. He argues that the first perceptions are relations to others. The meaning of the human world is,

the recognition beyond the present milieu of a world of things visible for each 'I' under a plurality of aspects, the taking of indefinite time and space. (Rasheed, 2002, p.399)

He grows his thoughts into speech development and cognitive functions. His aesthetics become a thinking process directly related to language. Artists are making a new interpretation of the world, that,

does not exist anywhere – not in things, which as yet have no meaning, nor in the artist himself, in his unformulated life. It summons one away from the already constituted reason in which 'cultured men' are content to shut themselves, toward a reason which contains its own origins. (Greene, 1973, p.115)

When he does this, he creates a successful educational pedagogy that recognizes the role of possibility, at the same time considering the historical and social contexts of intersubjective relationships, a true cultural studies concept (Rasheed, 2002).

At this point, I want to discuss Hannah Arendt (1906 - 1975). She speaks in *The Human Condition*, about the weaving of the *web* of human conditions. Hannah Arendt (1958) was one of the leading political thinkers of the 20th century. She studied briefly with Edmund Husserl (1939) who influenced her. With the growing struggles for Jewish people in Nazi Germany, she fled to Paris in 1933. In 1941 she again fled, this time to New York with her husband and mother. New York offered her a voice and she soon became part of an influential circle of writers and intellectuals. They gathered around the journal, *Partisan Review*. During the post-war period she lectured at a number of American universities, including Princeton, Berkeley and Chicago. She is most closely associated with the New School for Social Research, where she was a professor of political philosophy until her death in 1975.

Arendt (1958) was a stern defender of constitutionalism and the rule of law. She is known as an advocate of fundamental human rights (among which she included not only the right to life, liberty, and freedom of expression, but also the right to action, and to opinion). She was a critic of all forms of political community based on traditional ties and customs, as well as those based on religious, ethnic, or racial identity.

Two works of Arendt had a major impact both within and outside the academic community. *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) was a study of the Nazi and Stalinist regimes. It generated a wide-ranging debate on the nature and historical antecedents of totalitarianism. *The Human Condition* (1958) was originally a philosophical study to

investigate the fundamental categories of the *vita activa* (labor, work, action). In addition to these two important works, Arendt published a number of influential essays on topics such as the nature of revolution, freedom, authority, tradition and the modern age. At the time of her death in 1975, she had completed the first two volumes of her last major philosophical work, *The Life of the Mind*, which examined the three fundamental faculties of the *vita contemplativa* (thinking, willing, and judging).

It is her theory of action and her revival of the ancient notion of *praxis* that represent her as one of the most original contributors to twentieth century political thought (Dorn, 1994). By distinguishing action (*praxis*) from fabrication (*poiesis*), by linking it to freedom and plurality, and by showing its connection to speech and remembrance, Arendt (1958) is able to articulate a conception of politics in which questions of meaning and identity are addressed in a fresh and original manner. Moreover, by viewing action as a mode of human togetherness, Arendt is able to develop a conception of participatory democracy, which directly contrasts with the bureaucracy so characteristic of the modern societies.

Action, the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things or matter, corresponds to the human condition of plurality ... this plurality is specifically the condition — not only the *conditio sine qua non*, but the *conditio per quam* — of all political life” (Arendt, 1958, p.7).

Her influence on Maxine Greene is evident in her professional *praxis*. Arendt (1958) taught Greene. Hannah Arendt (1958) and Maxine Greene (1988) have similar visions of human freedom and the possibility that there is greater potential in the creation of a more emancipated school community. An emancipated school community refers to the sense of democracy within a school. The following quote from Bill Ayers, a former student of Greene's, expands this notion.

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it and by the same token save it from that ruin which except for renewal, except for the coming of the new and the young, would be inevitable...Education is where we decide whether we love our children enough to expel them from our world and leave them to their own devices ... something unforeseen by us, to prepare them in advance for the task of renewing a common world (Ayers, 2001, p.20)

A synergy exists between their writings, each contributing aspects to the work of the other. Arendt and Greene's visions of the *public* are not *blueprints* for action but rather *perspectives* from which to rethink our current practices in education. Arendt's idea is that we disclose ourselves when we come together. We relate because we are subjective. We choose a particular kind of identity. This identity relates to specific responsibilities and to valuing what surrounds us.

Freedom for Arendt (1958) does not mean the ability to choose among a set of alternatives (freedom of choice or *liberum arbitrium* which, according to Christian

doctrine, is given to us by God). By freedom, Arendt means the capacity to start something new, to do something unexpected. This idea is rooted in *natality*, a belief that each birth represents a new beginning and the introduction of novelty in the world. All activities are in some way related to the phenomenon of natality, because labor and work are both necessary to create and preserve a world into which new human beings are constantly born. Arendt clarifies this notion in the following quote:

The new beginning inherent in birth can make itself felt in the world only because the newcomer possesses the capacity of beginning something anew, that is, of acting. (Arendt, 1958, p.9)

Since actions begin with natality, with our very birth comes a capacity to introduce what is totally unexpected. Arendt continues to clarify natality through the nature of new beginnings.

It is in the nature of beginning that something new is started which cannot be expected from whatever may have happened before. This character of startling unexpectedness is inherent in all beginnings ... The fact that man is capable of action means that the unexpected can be expected from him, that he is able to perform what is infinitely improbable. And this again is possible only because each man is unique, so that with each birth something uniquely new comes into the world. (Arendt, 1958, p.8)

Arendt (1958) discusses revolutions as examples of modern action. Her favorite is the American Revolution, because the foundational act led to the Constitution. Other examples she used were the French Revolution, the creation of the Soviets in the Russian Revolution, the French resistance to Hitler in World War II, and the Hungarian Revolt in 1956.

Revolutions are the only political events, which confront us directly and inevitably with the problem of beginning. (Arendt, 1958, 21)

The individual actions of men and women create a public space where freedom appears.

To act in such a way that the memory of their deeds could become a source of inspiration for the future. In doing so, according to Arendt, they rediscovered the truth known to the ancient Greeks that action is the supreme blessing of human life, that which bestows significance to the lives of individuals (d'Entreves, 2006, p.12).

My purpose is to envision the richness of ideas in which Maxine Greene grew and developed. While we are straining toward what ought to be, we imagine. Alfred Schutz (1899 – 1959), like Arendt, supported Husserl's ideas of the social world and the social sciences. After serving with an artillery division on the Italian front in World War I, he studied law and social sciences in Vienna with Kelsen and Ludwig von Mises, but it his work in support of Husserl that he is best known. He fled Hitler's *Anschluss* of Austria in 1939. In America, he developed his thoughts in relationship to American pragmatism,

logical empiricism, and various other fields such as music and literature. According to Schutz (1967) social scientists develop constructs, ideal types, meaning-contexts of lived experience. Schutz responds to the positivist view that social sciences should make use of natural scientific methods, identifying evidence with sensory data that is observable.

By the term “wide-awakeness” we want to denote a plane of consciousness of highest tension originating in an attitude of full attention to life and its requirements. Only the performance and especially the working self is fully interested in life and, hence, wide-awake. It lives within its acts and its attention is exclusively directed to carrying its project into effect, to executing its plan. This attention is an active, not a passive one. Passive attention is the opposite to full awareness. (Schutz, 1967, 213; Greene, 1978, p.163)

Greene (1978) states, the concept of “wide-awakeness” goes beyond ordinary notions of “relevance” for education. Schutz (1967) points out that a heightened consciousness and reflectiveness are meaningful with respect for human projects and undertakings, not in a withdrawal from the intersubjective world.

That wide-awakeness contributes to the creation of the self. If it is indeed the case, as I believe it is, that involvement with the arts and humanities has the potential for provoking precisely this sort of reflectiveness, we need to devise ways of integrating them into what we teach at all levels of the educational enterprise... (Greene, 1978, p.163)

From these rich European thoughts I want to bring in the American voice and influence of John Dewey (1958) on Maxine Greene. John Dewey (1859 – 1952) is comely known as the founder of the progressive education movement (Garrison, 1999). His establishment of the University Laboratory School in 1896 gave him a practical venue for active research in education. Several women influenced his development. His wife awakened his ingrained sense of social justice and encouraged his public works. A colleague at the University of Chicago, Mrs. Ella Flagg Young practically applied and experimented at the Laboratory School. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Young was the first woman president of the National Education Association and became superintendent of the Schools of Chicago. The Laboratory School operated along side Jane Addams and her work at Hull House, for which she received the Nobel Prize. Dewey sought to constantly re-evaluate his thinking and ideas and thought that everyone should reconstruct their own thinking several times in the course of their life (Garrison, 1999, p.4). His theory of education is quite compact. In *Democracy and Education*, he wrote:

If we are willing to conceive education as the process of forming fundamental disposition, intellectual and emotional, toward nature and fellow-men, philosophy is to remain symbolic – or verbal or sentimental indulgence for a few, or else mere arbitrary dogma, its auditing of past experience and its program of values must take effect in conduct.

(Garrison, 1999, p.6)

It is important to realize Dewey's mindset. He did not separate thinking and feeling from action.

Dewey is clear that method is not separable from subject matter...

'Method means that arrangement of subject matter, which makes it most effective in use. Never is method something outside of the material' ...we should arrange the subject matter to make it most effective for teaching others... The subject matter of the learner is not identical with the formulated, the crystallized and systematized subject matter of the adult...the teacher should be occupied not with subject matter in itself but with its interaction with the pupils present needs and capacities...Subject matter alone does not make a good teacher.' Teachers teach subject matter to students. It is a triangle enclosing a pedagogical space. Just teaching the subject matter does not mean one is teaching well. 'To teach well, the teacher must connect the subject matter to the needs, desires, stage of cognitive development, etc. of the student, within the physical, social, and political context that the students and teachers find themselves. Good teaching requires moral as well as cognitive perception of the needs and abilities of the student.' (Garrison, 1999, p.10)

Dewey left Chicago in 1904 for Columbia. Because of his writing for the national publications, *The Republic* and *The Nation*, he was constantly in the public eye. He was the most public university based philosopher of the 20th Century. With his move to Columbia, he is in place to directly impact Maxine Greene. It is his naturalistic existential metaphysics which underlies Maxine Greene's diverse dialectics. During the depression of the 1930's, he developed his aesthetics theory in the soil of taste and beauty. He once said that one of the first ideas in education should be the *audacity of imagination*. This is certainly hard to find in today's schools. The exploration of

aesthetics enhances and nurtures imagination. Dewey (1958) based his work in social democracy when he sought to break down the barriers between art and the rest of experience, to trace the continuities between the work of art and the human experiences. Significance is in the ongoing growth process, learning from experience, or *learning by doing*. This is Dewey's (1954) idea of a transformative, aesthetic experience. Maxine Greene has said that John Dewey considered imagination important. In *The Public and Its Problems*, Dewey (1954) wrote:

The function of art has always been to break through the crust of conventionalized and routine consciousness. Artists have always been the real purveyors of the news, for it is not the outward happening in itself which is new, but the kindling by it of emotion, perception and appreciation. (p.86)

People need the freedom to imagine, to reflect that ultimately leads to praxis. Dewey (1954) sought ways to reach and challenge people to anticipate aesthetic experience. One method he favored was metaphor. Maxine Greene builds on the work of John Dewey. Dewey (1934) saw imagination as,

The 'gateway' through which meanings derived from past experiences find their way into the present; it is 'the conscious adjustment of the new and the old. (p.272, no reference given for inside quote)

Through these aesthetic adventures and opened windows of opportunity, habits of mind form that build community. For me, the image of vigorously growing plants

dancing in the breeze comes to mind. From these new ways of thinking about, seeing, and acting on leads to experiences that provide fuller perceptions. Maxine Greene also favors this method. Both believe that metaphor aids creative thinking. Dewey used metaphors to grow new ways of thinking about, seeing, and acting on ideas to trigger aesthetic growth. It is as if Dewey's students engage in experimental experiences with ideas.

As a philosopher, Maxine Greene spends much of her time looking at the world. Philosophy is a key ingredient in building a world, but another aspect is through education, its process and product. Education does not occur in a vacuum. It is with this introduction that Greene (1978) asks difficult questions to help us expand our thinking about culture, 'natural' flowering of intellect, social change, and heritage. She spends much of her time discussing the ramifications of teaching. She gives us a picture of a teacher as someone who reacts "in a variety of ways." There are daily routines, many ways of adjusting, but my favorite statements come when she quotes Kozol on the classroom,

The classroom is the child's home for many hours each day. It is also his place of work. Therefore, the classroom should reflect happiness, the protection, the loving guidance of the how, as well as, the efficiency of the workshop... (Greene, 1978, p.5)

This pictures the classroom as full of possibilities, with each student rich in potential. This emphasis on "what should be" is a strong point of her existentialist

argument. Classrooms need reflective practitioners. She moves to reduce philosophy in education to its essences. To summarize, it is,

in openings, in unexplored possibilities, not in the predictable or quantifiable, not in what is thought of as social control. For us, education signifies an initiation into new ways of seeing, hearing, feeling, moving. It signifies the nurture of a special kind of reflectiveness and expressiveness, a reaching out for meanings, a learning to learn. (Greene, 2001, p.7)

Then she moves to bring the two ideas together, education with philosophy.

To do educational philosophy is to become critically conscious of what is involved in the complex business of teaching and learning...to clarify the meanings. (Greene, 2001, p.7)

Greene seeks to constitute our consciousness so that we as educators realize ourselves as philosophers. She seeks to liberate our consciousness to a state of reflective action.

Maxine Greene has been at the forefront of educational philosophy for more than fifty years. As the founder and director of the Center for Social Imagination, the Arts and Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, she has sought to engage in public discussions on educational reform and the importance of aesthetics education. Her growth as a philosopher was influenced by many, but for the purpose of this discussion only a few were discussed. From Sartre (1958), Maxine Greene developed her sense of community and cultural influences. All human kind has value and it the moral responsibility of aesthetics to raise public awareness. Art has a special power to communicate. From

Merleau-Ponty (1978), Maxine Greene developed her vision of social imagination, a vision of what ought to be. From Arendt (1958), Greene adopts the notion of praxis, to act. Dewey (1954) influenced Greene for social democracy and for the freedom to imagine. Artwork has a special power: that of communicating among freedoms without alienation or objectification. As each of these philosophers and educators influenced Maxine Greene, she in turn now influences others.

Whom has Maxine Green influenced?

Suzanne Ouellette is a professor of doctoral studies in psychology, from City University in New York. Maxine Greene's (1988) notions of freedom and education influenced her. A teacher who searches out their freedom, freedom of thought, of expression may be the best kind of teacher. She explains:

surpassing transcendence, freedom: Such notions are not being articulated in the conversations now going on. And yet, as will be argued ...a teacher in search of his / her own freedom may be the only kind of teacher who can arouse young persons to go in search of their own (Greene, 1988, p.14); (Ouellette, 2003, p.1).

Ouellette (2003) passionately writes about Maxine Greene's use of ideas, language, and notions on education to empower and to inspire.

She opens a view through which we can recognize and encourage the individual person's exercise of freedom; while at the same time, not make the errors of reductionism and victim blaming or ignore the cultural,

social, and political forces in our lives. Professor Greene's person experiences freedom in the heightened awareness of and encounter with the obstacles of life, through the resistance to attempts to limit human possibility and growth, and with the effect of building a perspective and a place for one's own and others' exercise of freedom...the creation and support of Hannah Arendt's 'sphere of freedom.' (Ouellette, 2003, p.2)

Patricia Cartwright and Lynne Noone are current pedagogy teachers. Pedagogy refers to the art and science of teaching. Cartwright and Noone's premise is that students' understanding is grounded in their understanding of the present. As pedagogical teachers, their role is to foster hope and critique in their student. They use two pedagogy strategies based on critical imagination, WSACR (Write/Share/Add/Confront/ Reconstruct) and Journaling. Both are strategies that Maxine Greene encourages as seen in the following quote:

The problem for a critical teacher educator is how to stir students to 'wide-awakeness' (Greene, 2000, p.43) from the domination of the status quo to a vision of what might be that is grounded in contemporary reality.

Greene believes that for this to happen, there must be a shock, a crisis made from a combination of negative critique and questioning one's own existence in relation to others (Britzman & Dippo, 2003, p.133). This shock, or in our terms, 'jarring', can be generated by interventions by teacher educators in a pedagogy based on critical imagination. (Cartwright & Noone, 2006, p.5)

The concept of 'wide-awakeness' is a recurring theme in the writings of Maxine Greene.

We find a way forward in Maxine's Greene's (2000) view that it is the task of the educator to "create situations in which our students are moved to begin to ask, in all the tones of voice that there are, 'Why?' "

(Greene,2000, p.6) To create situations in teacher education which provide the intellectual, moral, and emotional spaces which allow students to ask 'why' and to 'think differently' is at the heart of our understanding of a critical pedagogy in teacher education. (Cartwright and Noone, 2006, p.2)

The next quotation refers to the students' assignment to create a construction brick as an artistic assignment. It serves as a form of imaginative engagement on a social justice in multiculturalism assignment for class. The professor is Reva Joshee an Assistant Professor with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto.

The first year I used the bricks I wanted the students to engage imaginatively with the course content. I had heard and later spoken with Maxine Greene at a conference earlier that year and was intrigued with her notion that imagination makes empathy possible. As I explored more of Greene's work I learned that she also saw creativity and imagination as keys to creating a more socially just world. Imagination allows us to break with those things that are seen as 'given' and to conceive of new ways of being. As she noted, 'There is no question but that some students

face fearful obstacles due to inequities in this country...It may be, however, that a general inability to conceive a better order of things can give rise to a resignation that paralyzes and prevents people from acting to bring about change.' (Greene, 1995, p.18-19); (Joshee, 2003, p.4)

A current educator, Bill Ayers, led a jaded past. With his partner, they were the Bonnie and Clyde of the sixties during the "Days of Rage" in Chicago. They smashed storefront windows and assaulted police officers and city officials. Ayers acknowledges committing crimes during his underground days –crimes that arguably amount to treason, yet thanks to procedural complications and a lack of witnesses, he served no jail time. On reflecting back on his odyssey in a conversation with journalists Peter Collier and David Horowitz, he states that he is, "Guilty as hell, free as a bird –America is a great country." Bill Ayer's epiphany came during a course taught by Maxine Greene in 1984. Then 40, he planned to stay in school only long enough to receive a teaching credential.

Ayers took fire from Greene's lectures. Greene lectured about the 'oppressive hegemony' of the capitalist social order that 'reproduces' itself through the traditional practice of public schooling (Stern, 2006, p.1). Ayers chose to embrace, to encourage, to empower – to become a teacher. Greene's message to Ayers, as a teacher, was to choose to do philosophy as a part of praxis.

We were talking earlier ... about what it might mean to do philosophy as opposed to analyzing positions or searching exclusively for clarifying language. What might it mean to pose distinctive kinds of questions ...

the kinds of questions that might make us more than ‘accidental tourists,’ more than clerks or bureaucrats or functionaries? (Ayers, 2001, p.4)

Philip Taylor from Griffith University in Australia brings in an international voice. As the Australians were trying to achieve uniformity in arts curriculum, Greene’s influence impacted their decisions.

It was only a few years ago when I first came across Professor Greene’s work, that was in 1992 when I was teaching a course on qualitative research and arts education at the University of Melbourne. Her chapter, “Arts Worlds in Schools” in Peter Abbs’ anthology, *The Symbolic Order* (London, Falmer Press, 1989) arrested my interest. In the early 1990’s, Australian educators were in the middle of writing a national arts curriculum and here was a thinker highlighting the challenges with mandating attainment targets, with programming end products, with pre-scripting ability levels and exit statements. ... The arts, they suggest, can contribute to the intellectual power required by this country, or to the productivity being demanded, or to the cultural literacy that is supposed to bind us together, or to the disciplinary emphases that are to enhance academic rigor and overcome shiftlessness, relativism, ‘soft’ electives, and the rest. I shall not even mention those that stress the vocational relevance of the arts... (Greene on Abbs, 1989, p.215; Taylor, 2000, p.1)

Summary of Maxine Greene

Chapter one answered the important question of why Maxine Greene (Fig. 1.1)? This is answered from looking at her writings, the esteem in which she is held, the passion she shows and the passion she inspires in others. Her legacy consists of doing philosophy as a part of the praxis of teaching. In this light it becomes the vocation of vocations.

Teaching is the vocation of vocations, because to choose teaching is to be about the business of empowerment, the business of enabling others to choose well. ... Teaching is an act of hope for a better future. ... The reward of teaching is knowing that your life makes a difference (Ayers, 2001, p.24)

Although Greene's work is prolific, for this dissertation, the primary texts are *Releasing the Imagination* and *Variations on a Blue Guitar*. Her work intertwines aesthetics with educational reform. She represents an existentialist approach, believing that humankind exists and defines itself through individual practices while wandering between choice and freedom.



Fig. 1.1 Maxine Greene

Chapter Two

Chapter one looked at the inspiring praxis of Maxine Greene (1978; 1995; 2001) and her growth as an existentialist philosopher. Influenced by Sartre (1958) and Merleau-Ponty (1978), especially in the ideas of transcendence of consciousness, Greene continued her growth with ideas from Hannah Arendt (1958) and Alfred Schutz (1967). From these influencers, Greene added to the concepts of *open spaces* and *wide-awakeness*, which drew upon complex assumptions of human nature. Chapter two continues the focus on the concepts of *open spaces* and *wide-awakeness* and Greene's application of Dewey in opening students' sense of perceptions. The two concepts become the base for Maxine Greene's theory of aesthetics education. However, she adds her thoughts to each along with a third concept, the *importance of imagination*. Together these concepts form her aesthetics education theory. It consists of three concepts: opening spaces through aesthetic education, becoming wide-awake, and discovering the importance of imagination. The discussion begins by defining the term aesthetics.

Opening Spaces through Aesthetics Education

The term *aesthetic* refers to a particular field of philosophy that concerns our sensations, perceptions, and imaginative experiences. As a term, *aesthetics* comes from the Greek word, *aisthetike*. Alexander Baumgarten used the term first in 1735 (DeSantis, K. and A. Housen, 2000). Baumgarten's use referred to the science of how we use our senses to know. The term did not come into common use in English until David Hume in the early 19th century when he used "aesthetics" in reference to "standards of taste."

(DeSantis, K. and A. Housen, 2000) For the purpose of this discussion the focus is on Maxine Greene (2001) who defines aesthetic and aesthetic education, and the influence it has on those who have artistic experiences as follows:

‘Aesthetic’ is an adjective used to describe or single out the mode of experience brought into being by encounters with works of art.

‘Education’ is a process of enabling persons to become different, to enter the multiple provinces of meaning that create perspectives on the works.

To enter these provinces, the learner must break with the taken-for-granted, what some call the ‘natural attitude,’ and look through the lenses of various ways of knowing, seeing, and feeling, in a conscious endeavor to impose different orders upon experiences. (Greene, 2001, p.23)

As Greene expresses her notion of aesthetics, she specifies that experience opens us to encounters with different works of art. She does not specify what makes an artwork, but leaves this to individual interpretations. *Aesthetic education* refers to a particular focus within the philosophy of education. Through aesthetics education, the individual transforms into a better citizen, one that brings benefits into society. Greene further defines aesthetic education as,

a way of approaching (or looking at or taking a stance with respect to) the knowledge gained by the natural and human sciences, the awareness made possible by the arts, and the personal insights into existence each human being accumulates through their lives. (Greene, 2001, p.5)

She further clarifies her meaning in 2001 during a speech at the Lincoln Center:

Most simply, most directly, it (aesthetics) is education for more discriminating appreciation and understanding of the several arts. The first concern of those of us engaged in aesthetic education is to find ways of developing a more active sensibility and awareness in our students.

Greene identifies education as the vehicle for change as it becomes a conscious act to see things in various ways. Through aesthetics education, Greene sees it as a strategy to enable young people to open themselves to new experiences, ways of thinking, and knowing. As they begin to experience art as a way of understanding, they make associations that bring them into personal touch with a “message.” The experience and knowledge gained opens their ways of knowing. New modalities and new perspectives challenge their intellect. To support her idea, Greene (1995) turns to her reflection of Merleau-Ponty.

We may have the experience Merleau-Ponty describes when he talks about “a route” being given to us, ‘an experience which gradually clarifies itself, which gradually rectifies itself and proceeds by dialogue with itself and with others.’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.21; Greene, 1995, p.149)

The route that Maxine Greene sees comes through the arts. She clarifies her thoughts,

...This is the starting point: the ability to feel from the inside what the arts are like and how they mean. Experiences of this sort cannot but become the ground of an illumination of much that lies beyond, and we are preoccupied with allowing such illumination to occur. (Greene, 2001, p.8)

With aesthetic encounters, students gain knowledge about art-forms, skills used, and eventually an “active sensibility.” When there is a significant encounter with an art-form, an opening occurs on a different level. This is an event, which I have had the pleasure of witnessing many times in my art classroom. A young student looks at an illustration in a book, and something grabs their attention. One example that comes to mind happened while looking at images of bulls created by Picasso, see Fig. 2.1 below. The class was examining two images in an art textbook. The first image was a simple bull formed in wire similar to the wire the students use. Beside the wire image was another image showing Picasso drawing a bull with a laser, see Fig. 2,2 above. What caught the student’s attention was the laser. He asked if he were looking at a light like the one used in *Star Wars*. When I said it was a laser like a “light saber” the “space opened.” Suddenly, the student realized Picasso was drawing with a “light saber.” He was thrilled; something related to his world, he could grasp the concept and it caught his attention. The “open space” triggered by an activated sensibility occurs in the arts many times through the years.



Fig. 2.1 Picasso Bull from plate VII, 1945



Fig. 2.2 Student recreating bull

The “open space” triggered by an activated sensibility occurs in the arts many times through the years.

Another example comes from another interest of mine, the art of dance. The music plays, the dance instructor models the dance moves. As the students try there is more modeling and repetitions of attempts until there is an “aha” moment. By an “aha” moment, I mean that sudden electrifying moment when there is a sense of understanding and success. An “open space” occurs as the dancer acts by reaching out into the encounter and bringing part of it back, inside to own. In dance this moment is described as “dancing inside the music.” To “dance inside” is to give up your personal control and to allow yourself the freedom to feel the rhythmic structures in your muscles. The body works in sync with the rhythm and an aesthetic movement happens. Encounters with the arts open us up to new interpretations and through new interpretations to new possibilities.

Greene expresses that aesthetics education enables more young people to give up that sense of “I can’t do it” and to embrace themselves with a sense of “I can.” This self “embrace” defines one of the roles of the arts, the permission to find ourselves. The aesthetic experience and knowledge gained open ways of knowing, new modalities in thinking, and new perspectives that challenge intellect. Experiences with the arts provide ways of understanding. These same experiences help make connections that touch us with a “route.” The more consistent the encounters, the more defined the route becomes.

Traditionally, these encounters occurred in the defined spaces of museums and concert halls, the atmosphere sometimes thought of as “high” arts. These encounters may be interpreted as “magical” and beyond our understanding, but should become exciting opportunities to enrich and stretch students’ lives, to activate their sensibilities. The changes that can come through a significant encounter give students what education strives to achieve intellectual, social, and emotional growth.

Traditionally, the arts trained for decorative devices in education with the intent to develop skilled artisans. This artisan approach, found in early public schools differs from the role that Greene (1995) sees for the arts in today’s schools. Many schools offer art education or music education that provides basic instruction. Maxine Greene encourages a move away from a basic knowledge approach to the arts toward an aesthetic education approach. Skill development teaches a set of dance steps, the notation of music, the color wheel, or how to use a camera. An aesthetic education teaches the art of dance, intuitively interpreting movement to music. An aesthetic education takes the knowledge of a color wheel and expressing color into a dynamic design. An aesthetic education helps a young film student to self- discovery that brings a *Star Wars* to society.

Another form of arts education has used the arts as therapeutic “play.” This relegates them to an affective realm, implying that “the affective is alternative to the cognition” (Greene, 1995, p.19). Self-discovery can take many forms. Play is a wonderful way to develop cognitively, to develop socially, and to develop emotionally. As art becomes meaningful, that is the beginning of an open space within the mind. Maxine Greene (1995) asks that the arts be respected. Yes, the arts are useful in expressing emotions needed for therapy, but the arts offer so much more. There is a direct tie between aesthetic experience and cognitive development, personal meaning, and society, which lead to connections.

What happens without encounters with the arts? Without experiences with the arts, human development becomes emotionally stilted. The “human spirit” suffers. The opposite of *aesthetic* is *anaesthetic*. This anaesthetic is the same danger alluded to by Kierkegaard (1947) when he referred to the civilizational malaise. He also wrote of, “the inability of a civilization ... to satisfy the human spirit.” (Kierkegaard, 1947, p.194) Greene agrees and supports this idea of emotional incapacity. Modern society seems to lack the ability to satisfy the human spirit.

Anaesthesia ... can immobilize, prevent people from questioning, from meeting the challenges of being in and naming ... (perhaps) transforming the world. (Greene, 2001, p.x)

As Maxine Greene continued her self-discovery, she realized that her world was one dominated with the ideas of men. Many of life’s decisions were not Greene’s to

make, but were under the protective eye of her father. She struggled with this idea and recognized that it was her “spirit” that was not satisfied.

When I ponder my own history, I realize that I can never quite overcome the unease caused by the tension between my unalloyed love for, say, the works of Flaubert, Baudelaire, Melville, Cezanne, Debussy, and Stevens and my recognition that theirs are male imaginings and soundings that, like any other category of speaking demand a diversity of decodings and interpretings, not reverential uncoverings of what seems at first to be objectively illuminating, objectively *there*. ...Following the rules I thought I could make their visions mine... (Greene, 1995, p.119)

It was during an engagement with several arts that she encountered her imaginative capacity. She then realized that we each must interpret and discover by imaginative adventures.

Simply being in the presence of art forms is not sufficient to occasion an aesthetic experience or to change a life. Aesthetic experiences require conscious participation in a work, a going out of energy, an ability to notice what is there to be noticed in the play, the poem, and the quartet. Knowing “about,” is entirely different from constituting a fictive world imaginatively and entering it perceptually, affectively, and cognitively. (Greene, 1995, p.125)

To summarize then, aesthetics is an approach that activates sensibility (our awareness). Through aesthetic education, persons become different. Aesthetics education, then, becomes a vehicle for creating intellectual growth on a broad scale through continual experiences. The awareness made possible by the arts develops personal insights or to use the term of Maxine Greene (1995) creates an “open space.” The “open space” compares to a “light saber” or “dancing inside the music.” Finally, the “open space” is like “a route” that gives us permission to find ourselves.

Becoming wide-awake

Greene’s (1995) aesthetics theory grew with her struggle toward self-discovery. Through her work at the Lincoln Center, her continued research, and her extensive writing and speaking engagements, what began with personal discovery now inspires others to do the same. From her reflections on *Variations on a Blue Guitar* (2001) Greene states,

These lectures were given over a period of twenty-five years of self-discovery and continuing efforts to move a diversity of teachers to discover new dimensions of themselves. ... To connect with the thinking, the questions, the views of practice of elementary and secondary public school teachers, relatively few of whom have had backgrounds in philosophy or aesthetics. (Greene, 2001, p.ix)

From Greene's praxis with current educators, she builds bridges between current educational thought and ideas of practice toward the arts. Through these bridges of thinking understanding develops into the arts, what they offer to the world. From this understanding a door opens into self-discovery. It leads to awakening the inner soul through questioning, what is liked, why is it liked, and what emotion does it bring. *Becoming wide-awake* discusses four areas that need awakening: the spirit, the self and personal reflection, intellectual possibility, and community.

There is a *spiritual* side to the self that is met through becoming wide-awake to ourselves and our world. Maxine Greene found inspiration from a well-known philosopher, Soren Kierkegaard. While sitting in the Fredericksburg Garden one afternoon, Kierkegaard (1846) reflected on his life. Anticipating what certain of his contemporaries saw with industrialization, he offered another point of view. Greene tells us:

Wherever he (Kierkegaard) looked, he thought, practical men were pre-occupied with making life easier for people. Those considered 'benefactors of the age' knew how to make things better "by making life easier and easier ... some by railways, other by omnibuses and steamboats, others by telegraph ... and finally the true benefactors of the age ... (making) spiritual existence systematically easier and easier ... He decided to make things harder...(Greene, 1978, p.161; Kierkegaard, 1947, p. 194)

What is Kierkegaard's point "to make things harder"? Life is hard enough, but there is something to be gained through work. Kierkegaard viewed, using intellect, finding yourself, and becoming more as an important aspect of life. Maxine Greene continued with her thoughts in addressing what Kierkegaard was anticipating, a "civilizational malaise,"

"the inability of a civilization directed to material improvements – higher incomes, better diets, miracles of medicine, triumphs of applied physics and chemistry – to satisfy the human spirit." (Greene, 1978, p.161; Kierkegaard, 1947, p. 194)

The human spirit suffers without discovery. A life is lived, yes, but in the midst of the abundance of modern life, the human spirit can be starving, starving for fulfillment, for exploring life or ideas that lead to interests and talents. It is the discovery of individual interests and talents that lead to "richness." This relates to Maxine Greene's (1995) idea of "becoming wide-awake." The individual becomes awakened to life. This lack of discovery relates to the abundance of modern life. The "benefactors" of the modern age did not conceive of either its abundance or its cost.

Another cost of the "civilizational malaise" comes in the human brain. There is research that shows that the human brain is realigning, changing in ways not previously considered. (Sousa, 2001) The cost is being discovered in the schools with increasing numbers of learning disabilities. I further this discussion in chapter four. Maxine Greene sees an aesthetics education as a way of helping all students, but especially those with disabilities. An aesthetics education offers unique encounters to develop thinking

through personal areas of interest. These encounters open spaces within the mind that cause us to reflect on our first hand experiences. The arts then become very personal.

Greene's (1995) concern moves toward developing a sense of *self*. The personal experiences in our society's problem often treat the person as a number, depersonalized. Kierkegaard also spoke of this problem and influenced Greene's sense of concern.

He saw the individual subsumed under abstractions like "the Public," lost in the anonymity of "the Crowd." ... He was concerned about depersonalization, automatization, and the bland routinization of life. For him, human reality – the lived reality – could only be understood as a difficult, indeed a dreadful freedom. To make things harder for people meant wakening them to their freedom. (Kierkegaard, 1947, p. 194; Greene, 1978, p.161)

Modern society moves from one technology enhanced activity to another. As life is lived, people tend to settle into a routine – their lived reality. An interesting question to ask is what is the first thing that is "turned on" in the morning? Our modern life seems to be a constant effort of turning things on: a lamp, a water tap, a television, a microwave, a computer. In a school, the students enter the building with "technology" turned on in their ears with MP3 players. They enter the school's concrete environment filled with volumes of electricity. The first thing the students must do is turn off their "technology" and go into a noise filled gym, the "holding pen." The day then flows from one technology driven class to the next. By technology driven, I refer to the constant flood on

the senses of computer and television screens. The students see little fresh air or sunlight. They read from books without adequate “white” space full of small fonts that stress their developing visual capacities. The intellectual stress continues with pressure to pass tests driven by government standards. The students’ young brains are struggling to process the informational overload.

Continuing with these thought, Maxine Greene (1995) spoke of A. Schutz’s (1967) explanation of the role of the arts. The arts provide a point of connection for the students. In the midst of technology and testing, the arts reach into the students’ lives to provide an outlet, but much more. The arts offer the opportunity for personal discovery and growth. Through personal discovery, comes a sense of self, which provides relevancy.

This goes beyond ordinary notions of “relevance” where education is concerned. Schutz is pointing out that heightened consciousness and reflectiveness are meaningful only with respect to human projects, human undertakings, not in a withdrawal from the intersubjective world. He also points out that human beings define themselves by means of their projects and that wide-awakeness contributes to the creation of the self. (Greene, 1978, p.163)

Reflectiveness relates to both wide awakeness and open spaces. According to Greene, aesthetics education should consist of varieties of imaginative adventures that deliberately foster the intellect and help open the spaces of the mind. It takes effort to

inform and involve people with the arts. Greene's (2001) focus is to use aesthetics education to give the arts a voice.

Nevertheless, the arts must be understood to be modes of sense making.

Perceivings we have learned to do, using symbol systems (or the languages) of various arts. (Greene, 2001, p.41)

The arts aid students in making sense of their world. As they struggle with the multitude of changes in their daily experiences, the arts offer a creative outlet where they can explore their emotions or ideas. Greene continues,

To engage with works of art is to go in search of fresh connections, unsuspected meanings, to engage in acts of continuing discovery. The more informed these are, the more sensitive we are likely to be to the complexity of the world and the suggestiveness of it, to color and texture and qualities of sound and the relations of shapes in space, to untapped possibilities. As I have said, there is always more – more awakening to the world on the part of those willing to act, to come alive, to choose. (Greene, 2001, p.42)

Intellectual possibility is a function of the arts. Making new connections with thinking and discoveries exercises the intellect so that growth and development occur. Creative experiences offer an opportunity to reflect, to think deeply about an idea connecting on another level. Personal reflection about creative experiences leads directly



Fig. 2.3 The Arsenal by Rivera

to Greene's notion of becoming wide-awake. It is the reflective process that leads to intellectual growth and development as a person and as a citizen. An example comes through using the arts to explore social problems. An artist that comes to mind is Diego Rivera, who was a member of the Mexican Muralists, see Fig. 2.3 *The Arsenal*. The art movement not only recorded a social commentary of the early 20th century in Mexico, but helped the world make new connections with poverty and social problems in third world countries. It is from these new connections that we begin to build bridges from our self to others.

One of the significant aspects of our adventure here is, I believe, our gradual consciousness of ourselves as members of a community. We come to share values ... norms, and a sense of craft, and a feeling of what excellence is. We share all this as we somehow share our stories with one

another, as we begin to recognize each other. ... We know enough about racism and classicism that impose invisibility upon so many and make the weaving of community so difficult. ... Think what it would mean in our increasingly diverse classrooms for teachers to be enabled... and to realize ... how the arts enable persons to create their own visibility, to change their lives. (Greene, 1995, p.145)

Through a heightened consciousness and reflectiveness, Greene's notion of becoming wide-awake concerns the importance of community building. *Community* is not produced through edicts or from a set formula.

Like freedom, it has to be achieved by persons offered the space in which to discover what they recognize together and appreciate in common.... Community is not a question of which social contracts are the most reasonable for individuals to enter. It is a question of what might contribute to the pursuit of shared goods: what ways of being together, of attaining mutuality, of reaching toward some common world. (Greene, 1995, p.39)

Community concerns becoming wide-awake. An example used by Maxine Greene was the church pastored by the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr. He addressed the individuals of the church to envision new possibilities for themselves. This example is relevant for me since I teach in a community similar to that of Dr. King. Just as he

spoke to trying to awaken his congregation, I teach trying to awaken my students to new a dimension of their lives. Dr. King's congregation could not have predicted the transcendence they would feel.

The transcendence was often deeply personal, but through experiencing it, they came together in a revitalized community. In that sense, they were a community of *beginners*, moved to imagine what *might be if they took action together*. [Many] of them were children, despised by many in the surrounding white world. Regard, responsibility, imagination, yes, and a love for them as worthy human beings: these are what moved them beyond themselves and changed their very lives. (Greene, 1995, p.40)

The building of community through the arts is an open door found in the schools, especially in the urban schools where I teach. One form this takes is an enrichment program for those students who have a natural interest or ability. One such successful program I have seen uses the art of film. As the students grow their ideas and transform them into visual imagery social problems or powerless individuals find a voice. One youth explored her pain from her father's suicide. Another troubled the notion of a skate park for inner city youth. Wide-awakeness is a process developed from such encounters. With respect to consciousness and reflectiveness, it develops over time. Through the use of projects and encounters in the arts, the self forms. They develop effectively through artistic encounters. Greene (1995) continues her point when she says,

if it is indeed the case, as I believe it is, that involvement with the arts and humanities, has the potential for provoking precisely this sort of reflectiveness, we need to devise ways of integrating them into what we teach at all levels of the educational enterprise; we need to do so consciously, with a clear perception of what it means to enable people to pay, from their own distinctive vantage points, “full attention to life.” (Greene, 1978, p.163)

For Greene it is important to have personal experiences with specific works of art, with literature, creative poetry, dance, or visual art during this process.

Aware of the changes in approaches in the arts – most particularly the rejection of pure formalism – I have tried to be attentive to the context, while insisting on personal transactions with actual works of art. Acknowledging our links to constructivism, to the idea that meanings must be achieved and not simply found that they can only be achieved against the backgrounds of lived lives (Greene, 2001, p. x)

Greene’s work today strives to awaken people to live the reality of their lives with a sense of freedom. This means communicating to them in such a way that they are aware of their responsibilities as individuals in this world. She has chosen the concepts of *wide-awakeness* and *open spaces* to reach into the world using her found sense of

freedom to awaken this freedom in others. The real world is a world of constructions open to interpretation, expansion, and revision. These concepts define her praxis.

Discovering the Importance of Imagination

Greene expresses the notions of *becoming wide-awake* and *open spaces* through encounters “made possible by the arts, encounters that we accumulate as we live our lives. In *Releasing the Imagination*, Greene (1995) builds on these ideas while exploring the last concept of her aesthetics education theory, the role of the imagination.

This narrative in the making examines and reexamines processes of human questioning, responses to blank spaces in experience, resistances to meaninglessness. I place the release of imagination with which I am so deeply concerned in context in a variety of ways. (Greene, 1995, p.6)

This last part of Greene’s aesthetics theory defines imagination and discusses it as a tool. Greene uses the art of literature to discuss examples. Another way to help make connections is through visual arts and film. Any of the arts express imaginative concepts. Greene also includes two different aspects of imagination, absence and empathy. Maxine Greene (2001) defines *imagination* as, “the capacity to see through another’s eyes, to grasp the world as it looks and sounds and feels from the vantage point of another.” (Greene, 2001, p.102) Imagination is at the heart of aesthetic experiences and should be central to education and scholarship. Imagination gives voice to the new connections made through creative thought. “Imagination is the capacity to posit alternative realities,” (Greene, 2001, p.65).

Imagination functions as part of the two previously discussed concepts of open spaces and wide-awakeness. Imagination functions in open spaces by fighting against preconceived notions. It literally “opens” a door in the mind to think about something in a new way or to allow new connections to form as shown in the following quote.

[It] is perhaps the refusal to control what is discovered as meaningful that strikes traditional educators as at odds with their conception of norms or their notions of appropriate cultural literacy. ... If, however, we are to provide occasions for significant encounters with works of art, we have to combat both standardization and thoughtlessness ... (Greene, 1995, p.125)

Imagination supports becoming wide-awake in a similar way by enabling the transcendence from experience to new connections with ideas. It requires a conscious participation, as Greene states her thoughts about imagination.

[Imagination is] an ability to notice what is there to be noticed in the play, the poem, the quartet. Knowing “about” ... is entirely different from constituting an fictive world imaginatively and entering it perceptually, affectively, and cognitively. (Greene, 1995, p.125)

A delicate balance exists in teaching between giving opportunities to gain knowledge and opening the creative thought process. The engagement with imagination describes what Greene refers to as significant encounters with the arts. Further discussion of imagination turns to twelve characteristics named by Greene (1995).

Greene's first three notions on imagination each deal with our sense of the world and notions of realities.

Imagination is, "a means through which we can assemble a coherent world ...imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible." (Greene, 1995, p.3)

Imagination directly links to empathy. Without imagination or empathy, a painful world exists. To show the significance of an absence of imagination, Greene (1995) uses the story of Anita Hill. Ms. Hill's testimony concerned the issue of sexual harassment, which had a direct bearing on the Senate confirmation hearings for Clarence Thomas's appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court. This sad time in American society brought to light an unsettling quality within a powerful part of government. The Senate, predominately composed of men, could not grasp Ms. Hill's outrage at being sexually harassed. Headlines in newspapers and cries from reporters (women in particular) of "They just don't get it!" greeted Ms. Hill.

The male senators' inability to grasp what was happening was due not only to their amused indifference but was also to a failure of imagination, and this failure should be instructive for teachers. Without the ability to imagine how it was for Anita Hill, or for anyone they conceived as other, the senators showed how lack of imagination [that] results in incapacity to create or even participate in what might be called community. This may be the case on the part of the oppressed as much as it is on the part of the oppressor, particularly when those who suffer deprivations thrust all who appear as members of the majority into one category. (Greene, 1995, p.37)

The Anita Hill / Clarence Thomas story exemplifies what happens when imagination is stilted. While this was a case of someone oppressed and of an oppressor, it exemplifies the construction (or lack) of “inner” eyes. One looks at a situation initially in the way they were taught to perceive it. Perception is rooted within social contexts. In Ms. Hill’s situation, many of the Senators did not perceive their behavior as harassing because they were not initially taught that it was inappropriate. Not only did the Senators lack the perception that Thomas acted inappropriately, they also lacked the ability to empathize with Ms. Hill. This story points to the tie between imagination and empathy. With the absence of imagination, there comes an inability to see through another’s perspective.

... Teachers incapable of thinking imaginatively or of releasing students to encounter works of literature and other forms of art are probably also unable to communicate to the young what the use of imagination signifies. If it is the case that imagination feeds one’s capacity to feel one’s way into another’s vantage point, these teachers may also be lacking in empathy... Is it not imagination that allows us to encounter the other as disclosed through the image of that other’s face? And is this face not only that of the hurricane survivor or the Somalian child or the homeless woman sitting on the corner but also of the silent or the fidgety or the hopeless child in the classroom...? (Greene, 1995, p.36-37)

Imagination aids with empathy and Greene (1995) defines imagination as a part of empathy. Maxine Greene (2001) defines imagination as, “the capacity to see through another’s eyes, to grasp the world as it looks and sounds and feels from the vantage point of another.” (Greene, 2001, p.102) Empathy is important for the arts and for our modern culture. Not only is it at the heart of aesthetic experience, but it should be central in education and scholarship. “Imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities.” (Greene, 1995, p.3)

Greene (1995) turns to the words of Mary Warnock when she writes of the importance of teaching young people to look and listen in such a fashion that “the imaginative emotion follows” (Greene, 1995, p.35; Warnock, 1978, p.207). Part of the role of education is to heighten the consciousness of the students. Education+ can use the arts to capture students’ emotions and to exercise and apply them in various ways. Imagination functions as a part of both open spaces and wide-awakeness. The importance of this aspect of imagination lies in the possibilities. Through aesthetics education, the arts can deal with particularities, seducing people to see, feel, or imagine solutions. Using literature, people are drawn into moments in time, growing a deeper understanding for the “voice” writing about their world. To move from particularities to a broader and broader grasping discovers in others’ questions and visions more and more ways of transcending a one-dimensional understanding to a multi-dimensional one.

The extent to which we grasp another’s world depends on our existing ability to make poetic use of our imagination. (Greene, 1995, p.4)

The poetic use of our imagination offers us a sense of alternate realities and links us to another's world or a "created world" like the one in *Star Wars*. What we tend to and nurture affects the design of our thoughts. As thinking individuals, we construct our world and make adjustments. Through our thoughts, action forms and becomes our life. Using imagination, a link can form between what we feel or think and how we determine what another feels or thinks. There is an important link between imaginative thought and action. One such imaginative action is play. Imaginative play is often seen in our culture with interactive games. In the arts, it can involve artistic processes such as creating. Imaginative play is completely natural for the young child. How we play characterizes our culture and composes our way of life. As Raymond Williams (1989) states about culture,

every human society has its own shape, its own purposes, its own meanings. Every human society expresses these, in institutions, and in arts and learning. (Williams, 1989, p.162)

Culture establishes the common meanings and directions of society which in turn affects how imagination functions within the society. Imagination activates under the pressures through experience, contact, and discovery, "writing ... into the land." (Williams, 1989, p.164)

Emotion is the basis for Greene's (1995) next two characteristics, passion and beauty. As Greene said, "passion is the door to imagination." (Greene, 1995, p.16) Passion operating as a door relates to Greene's idea of becoming wide-awake. We awaken to who we are, what we can do, how deeply we can feel, and what lies within our



Fig. 2.4 Scene from “Giselle”, Bolshoi 2007

grasp. Through passion a person becomes more sensing, more feeling. Passion can be like a dance toward wonderful fulfillment or incredible imaginings, see Fig. 2.4 from the ballet *Giselle*. It is the imaginings that are invited in when the door to our passion opens. Another way of looking at the tie between passion and imagination is seen in an Irish saying, “when night holds sway and the forest is free of strangers – beauty comes” (O’Donohue, 2004, p. 82). Beauty in this sense is a special excitement, a hard to grasp, ethereal thought like imagination. The passion that is evoked holds a special place to us often taking hold of our hearts, touching our lives. In that moment of time it becomes luminous implying a form of energy, what I call the *web of betweenness*.

To tap into imagination is to become able to break with what is supposedly fixed and finished, objectively and independently real.

(Greene, 1995, p.19)



Fig. 2.5 Single seed looks like an island

We perceive our world as singular objects as we become like an island. Fig. 2.5 represents creative potential not only as a seed; it is representative of human potential as well. In this conviction, “each individual is separate and utterly alone makes us blind to the subtle world that dwells between things.” (O’Donohue, 2004, p.123) As we see, we also filter through our experiences. There is an unknown intimacy, in which our imaginations want to engage. For example the invisible territory between friends has a ‘life’ all its own. It is not alive, but it has energy. Think of the energy and lovers. When in contact with each other the force completely engages their heart. Often they say nothing but know each other’s thoughts. Every heart is full of creative energy that needs release. It seeks room to breathe, to come to life.

Imagination enters in, as the felt possibility of looking beyond the boundary where the backyard ends or the road narrows, diminishing out of sight. (Greene, 1995, p.21)

This quality of imagination builds on Dewey's idea of the imagination as a "gateway" through which meaning comes from past experiences and add a dimension of understanding to future events (Dewey, 1934, p.272; Greene, 1995, p.20). As we remember things from the past, they form a backdrop for present and future events. Against this backdrop we understand and filter present events. Depending on the events of the past, a woman makes sense of the world from a "womanly" perspective especially if there was a political or professional context different from the one of the present.

The role of imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve...it is to awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected. (Greene, 1995, p.28)

These two characteristics imply that the imagination is actively moving. An actively moving imagination contains so many varied and interesting thoughts that it is hard to filter through them. An awakened imagination can flood a person with so many images, thoughts, and ideas that help is needed. A highly imaginative person I know has even hired an assistant just to help contain, and give direction to his thoughts. The assistant has the task to categorize and organize his imaginative business ideas into a successful business plan. Rich examples of imagination are found in Maxine Greene's (1995) rich literary examples. Another example is found in children's natural ability to visualize through stories. Both of these examples provide a reason for aesthetics literacy education within core curriculum through storytellers, film, or the newest holographic imaging including multicultural education. The arts often operate on the margin (Greene, 1995) and can

affirm the problems, wounds and scars found in other cultures or in cultural clashes. In time, these works of art can radiate through a culture exposing the dark and light, wounds and scars. An example in American culture is the impact of *West Side Story* to highlight gang violence in New York City. The impact of dance in this film or stage production should be noted. Upton Sinclair used detailed descriptions when he wrote, *The Jungle*, that highlighted the gross living conditions of immigrants in early 20th century America.

Our imaginations come into play as we attempt to “make sense.”

Imagination may be a new way of decentering ourselves, or breaking out of the confinements of privatism and self-regard into a space where we can come face to face with others and call out, ‘Here we are.’” (Greene, 1995, p. 35)

The last point on imagination directly ties to the lives of teachers crossing gender lines, races, classes, and ethnicity, etc working toward social justice. In the arts a way to address social justice is through developing the imagination of the students. As the following quote points out, the imagination links the individual to thoughts for improving their community.

If we can link imagination to our sense of possibility and our ability to respond to other human beings, can we link it to the making of community as well? (Greene, 1995, p.38)

Aesthetics education offers a forum for social justice, moving away from the *savage inequalities* in society (Kozol, 1991). By opening up creative possibility, ideas become alive as well as human experience.

Teachers should teach with relevancy. When the curriculum is relevant, the students will invest in their learning. This often requires teachers to develop their imaginations to guide students into relevant connections of knowledge into the students' lives. From the *habits of mind* that develop, the sense of community grows whether the local community or the larger world. Imagination enters in, as the felt possibility of looking beyond the boundary where the backyard ends or the road narrows, diminishing out of sight. As the ultimate aim of education is to enable individuals to become architects of their futures, the molding of their minds is crucial for culture. Schooling should refine sensibilities, develop routines, and techniques. Creating a disposition to learn continually is one of the most important parts of an education.

Community closely aligns with our sense of empathy and so Greene comes full circle in her theory of imagination. It develops from our sense of what is possible and responds to our ability to relate to other human beings. Imagination becomes a vehicle for building community.

The only same generalization that can be made is that none of the women and men emerging from our schools in the next decade should expect to lead to purely mechanical, conforming, robotic lives. They must not be resigned to thoughtlessness, passivity, or lassitude if they are to find pathways through the nettles, the swamps, the jungles of our time. ... [It] may be the recovery of imagination that lessens the social paralysis we see around us and restores the sense that something can be done in the name of what is decent and humane. I am reaching toward an idea of imagination that brings an ethical concern to the fore, a concern that again,

has to do with the community that ought to be in the making and the values that give it color and significance. (Greene, 1995, p.35)

Imagination makes possible what Greene calls the “as-if” perspectives. This “as-if” perspective exercises empathy to open perspectives metaphorically. The nature of empathy invites us to take another’s perspective. What does not change, as well, is the regard for diversity, for the distinctiveness of different cultures and for our ongoing obligation.

[Imagination does] justice to multiplicity and difference, even as we keep alive our engagement with the art forms in the context of which we create our identities. (Greene, 2001, p. x)

Connections help us, as situated human beings, make sense and create meanings. Our knowing has a subjective dimension that we take into our shared world. Through our awareness (wide-awakeness) we become free to find our voice. We take this into our communities reaching out to others with stories and experiences. This implies that authentic and reflective involvement with aesthetic experiences, help us move away from separateness. The arts orient us toward the unexplored and toward living a more exciting life.

Summary of Greene’s Aesthetics Theory

Chapter 2 built on the concepts of wide-awakeness and open spaces and Greene’s application of Dewey in opening students’ sense of perceptions. These concepts

developed into Maxine Greene's theory of aesthetics education. It consists of three major parts: becoming wide-awake, opening spaces through aesthetic education, and discovering the importance of imagination. The notion of becoming wide-awake develops a sense of self and nurtures the human spirit something, which our technical society needs. Speaking as an art teacher, the arts are symbolic systems that, using Greene's term, help the individual pay "full attention to life," while nurturing them intellectually. Becoming wide-awake brings in a sense of heightened consciousness through reflection. It also aids in developing individual relevance. The third part of Maxine Greene's aesthetics education theory discovered the importance of imagination. It is very complex and affects such things as empathy. Imagination can be a tool for discovery and growth, see fig. 2.6. Greene suggests using imaginative literature and the arts in educational curriculum. Each part of Greene's aesthetics education theory relates to building a sense of self and community. Imagination becomes a valuable teaching strategy that "we and our students might come to use (imagination) in a search for openings without which our lives narrow and our pathways become cul-de-sacs."

(Greene, 1995, p.17)



Fig. 2.6 Child's art showing symmetry

Chapter Three

When I determined to have a relationship with a strong idea, I found myself on a quest of self-discovery. My self-discovery grew with an investigative nature while sifting through the ideas of Maxine Greene found in her books from 1995 and 2001. She expresses so eloquently thoughts that I struggle to articulate. Reading Maxine Greene inspires my commitment to the field of education, while clarifying the role of aesthetics education for the future. For me this quest takes the form of my dissertation. My excitement grows as I discover someone who shares many of my own ideas and concerns. Grappling with Maxine Greene's theory for aesthetics education, I sought clarity about the workings of the mind in aesthetics. To address these concerns, I looked to the research of developmental theorists, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Arnheim. Their work briefly expands the discussion while helping me analyze and interpret Greene's aesthetics theory for education. The voices of current researchers in education and philosophy also help me evaluate the thoughts and to determine the adequacy and inadequacies of Greene's theory. In particular, the work of Elliott Eisner, a peer of Maxine Greene, is used. My voice concludes this discussion as I extend Greene's theory of aesthetics to include my notion of imagination as a *web of betweenness*.

Aesthetics Encounters and Experiences

A true aesthetic encounter becomes an emotional engagement to stimuli. It takes many forms and moves beyond pure emotion into an enrichment of ideas. Creating art becomes a translation of an idea using raw materials (pigments and brushes, camera and

film, or music notation or instrument) that add dimension to the physicality of experience. As stated in chapter 2, Maxine Greene (2001) defines aesthetics as a mode of experience that develops through encounters with works of art. Aesthetic encounters help our understanding of ideas, emotions, or different cultures. Aesthetic encounters offer a transformation of what is commonplace into an intellectual leap. This process breaks down barriers and influences community building. Maxine Greene (1995; 2001) argues for using the arts to open minds, what she calls *opening spaces*. To explore the dimensionality of aesthetic encounters, I briefly look at developmental theory as it relates to aesthetic development. Some brief tenets of developmental theory state that learning occurs when individuals interact in some way with their environment; this physicality of experience directly relates to the triggering effect that Maxine Greene (1995; 2001) refers to as *opening spaces*. (The environment consists of people, their behavior, objects, and various phenomena.)

One explanation of developmental theory comes from the Visual Understanding in Education, a research institute in New York, based on the theories of Jean Piaget (1951) and Rudolph Arnheim (1978). Using empirical data, developmental theorists tend to conclude that cognitive development is a process occurring in a progression of phases, or stages. The development model argues:

The development of thought proceeds in a predictable, measurable order, and in a sequence of stages;

- Each stage is equally important;
- Each has its own characteristics – particular ways of bringing

knowledge to a situation and of learning from that situation;

- Each adds a new dimension of thought; each is consistent across different domains: an individual typically operates within her/his stage regardless of task or activity.

- Stages are contiguous, with individuals moving from one stage to another and not skipping any. (DeSantis & Housen, 2000, p.5)

While it is not my purpose to expand the discussion by bringing in this developmental model, the model helps me examine many of the beliefs that Greene has about aesthetics understanding. Greene agrees that the individual actively constructs understanding from processing her/his experiences and makes meaning through reflection. Greene does not develop any “stage theory” as Piaget does. I can speak as to what I have seen in my twenty years of teaching. I agree with a “stage” theory, but have not seen it specific to particular ages. A major determiner of artistic development seems to be engagements and experiences with the arts. Both of these are influenced by the learning environment of the child. If a child has had an aesthetic focus then their “stage” of development is more advanced. This focus is crucial to fully develop the cognition of a child. My evidence is merely anecdotal and this is an area for future study.

The desire to learn usually comes from a kind of dissonance that occurs when the individual sees something that s/he cannot do or understand. To emphasize and explain aesthetic understanding, examples from the work with developmental theory are included from Lev Vygotsky (1925; 1978), Jean Piaget (1951; 1971), and Rudolf Arnheim (1981). This is not an all-inclusive group, but each provides support for Maxine Greene’s theory of aesthetics education with cognitive development. Lev Vygotsky and Piaget focus on the child’s interaction with the environment to construct meaning. Piaget placed added

emphasis on intellectual growth while Vygotsky emphasized other people in the child's environment. Arnheim connected visual perception and thought.

Lev Vygotsky (1925; 1978) was born in 1896 in Russia. Trained as a linguist, his goal in the post-revolutionary climate of the emerging Soviet Union was to reconstruct psychology along Marxist lines, in particular to apply psychology to the field of education. His career was brief, only lasting ten years due to his premature death from tuberculosis. Vygotsky explored the psychological implications of others on the development of the child. This short synopsis of his work begins with two theories he explored looking for the strength and reliability of each. This synopsis comes from his 1925 article, "Art as Perception." The first theory, based in antiquity, used the work of Potebnia and related aesthetic encounters to language evolution. The second, using the word of Valerii Bruisov, compared aesthetic encounters to scientific proof. Vygotsky's conclusions led to his theory of the zone of proximal development, which is examined later and supports thoughts of Maxine Greene (1978; 1995; 2001).

From antiquity came the notion that art leads to perceptions of wisdom, and teaching, with instruction as its main task. This statement implies that in ancient times, the arts were recognized for their importance in developing the mind. How the world currently sees the arts has changed. The arts are expanded to include television, movies, music videos, etc. Maxine Greene's aesthetics theory calls for a return to the ancient role of the arts in developing the mind and enriching a culture. Vygotsky brought research from Potebnia, an ancient philosopher, to the discussion. Vygotsky struggled to discover the relationship between aesthetic thought and cognition, as has Maxine Greene. Potebnia recognized an analogy between the evolution of language and the activity of art.

In reality, today the visual arts are seen as a form of text and as such are a language of their own. With visual arts now labeled as text they should follow the pattern of code deciphering that is inherit with fluency. In ancient times fluency in the arts was an important part of an education. Greene is a current philosopher and educator who is making the same claim. An excellent education should include fluency with the arts. Her idea is to use aesthetic education as a model for creating such fluency.

Vygotsky took the idea from Potebnia to use the psychological system of philology to show that a word divides into three basic elements: external form, inner form, and significance. The inner form, understood as the etymological form, expresses content. Often through time, this form displaces as the meaning of the word expands. An example from Vygotsky is the Russian word for “mouse” that once signified “thief.” Only by the means of the inner form do the sounds acquire the meaning “mouse.” The inner form has significance for an analogy with art.

Let us explore the phenomenon of synonyms. Two synonyms have the same content but a different sound form, because the inner form of each word is completely different. In Russian, moon and month mean exactly the same thing. Etymologically, in Russian moon means something capricious, whimsical, changeable ... (alluding to the lunar phases), while month in a measure (alluding to measuring time by lunar phases). The difference between the two words is merely psychological...Potebnia formulated his thought brilliantly, “the inner form of each word gives our thought a different direction ... (Vygotsky, 1925, p.2)

This directional change in word meanings compares to the various directional changes in art. Vygotsky (1925) noticed that the same three elements that make up a word also make up a work of art. An example is the classical statue that represents justice. The statue itself (the outer form) is of a woman with scales (inner form) that represents the notion of justice (content), see Fig. 3.1 below. In a work of art, this translates to the product (painting), the artistic style (inner form) and the image (content). Another example comes from language. The idea of elements synonymously translates to the concept of a sensory image or idea. Shakespeare’s play, “Othello”, represents the outer form. The play develops the character, Othello, who represents the inner form. Shakespeare then uses the character to explore the emotion of jealousy, which represents the content. Vygotsky saw just as Greene does, that art communicates. Vygotsky proves this etymologically using the work of ancient philosopher, Potebnia. This also supports Greene’s use of literary analogies as shown in the following example:



Fig. 3.1 Justice statue Williamsburg, VA

Sometimes I think that what we want to make possible is the living of lyrical moments, moments at which human beings (freed to feel, to know, and to imagine) ... I remember Elizabeth Bishop's translation of Octavio Paz's poem on Joseph Cornell's boxes... Minimal incoherent fragments: the opposite of History, creator of ruins, out of your ruins you have made creations. ("Objects and Apparitions for Joseph Cornell," 1997, p.275-276; Greene, 2001, p.7-8)

Greene is trying to express that life consists of lyrical moments. By lyrical moments, she is saying that life should have a sense of movement, of events happening, and of our mind processing events. Small inconsequential moments, when placed together through a day may have dramatic results and cause important decisions to be made. Now take these same moments and include in them an encounter with a work of art for example a song. How does the hearing of a song at a key moment in time affect the emotions of the moment? Could the song, its melody, its lyrics, or its meter create or relieve tensions in such a way that it alters a decision? Potebnia's theory was not complete at the time of his death. It continued with Potebnia's pupil, Valerii Briusov who developed his thoughts into the next theory: Any work of art generates a fundamental effect that includes intellectual operations and thinking processes. Vygotsky stated it another way, "any work of art leads to the same perception, as does the course of a scientific proof" (Vygotsky, 1925, p.9). Vygotsky used Rohrschach's (Vygotsky's spelling) inkblot tests as an example.

Virtually anything can be made meaningful. ... The ink blot tests conducted by Rohrschach show quite unmistakably that we give meaning, structure, and expression to the most absurd, random, and senseless accumulations of forms. In other words, a work of art by itself cannot be responsible for thoughts and ideas it inspires. ... There would be, in fact, no difference between a riddle, a fable, and an extremely complex work if any and each of them could contain the greatest and most valuable thoughts and ideas. (Vygotsky, 1925, p.12)

In other words, we interpret different works of art differently depending on the experience and perceptions we bring with us. This adds support for Greene's encounters with the arts. Aesthetic encounters through the arts become modes of sense making. "Perceiving as we have learned to do ... we extend our knowledge of the world." (Greene, 2001, p.41)

From the aesthetics found in inkblots to the sequential thinking process of the scientific method, Vygotsky offered a variety of intellectual perceptions. Through our sense of perception, then, we follow a thought process dependent on our subjectivity. A mathematician thinks creatively in mathematical sequencing. A scientist thinks creatively using sequential methodology. A poet thinks in lyric emotion. Greene would include aesthetic encounters to add richness to the thinking of each mode of thought. Each processes their perceptions differently and each signifies their level of understanding. An artist does as well. However, artists have at their command an ability to transform their thoughts into another form that of a visual expression, a dance, a song. Each of us acts as an embodied thinker, bringing our experiences and modes of thought into any experience. We each "color" our life and experiences with this filter.

Vygotsky (1925) came full circle and connected Potebnia's theory to the sensual and associative trends in psychology. The process of thinking, in its higher forms, aided language development. As Vygotsky (1978) developed his thoughts, three theories evolved. For this project, however, only the second theory is applied, the zone of proximal development (known as *zoped*). Vygotsky described this as:

The distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86)

According to Greene self-discovery can take many forms one of which is play. Play relates to Vygotsky's idea of *zoped*. Greene (1995) describes play previously in chapter 2 as a wonderful way to develop cognition, social skills, and emotional health. To help explain and discuss an example of play and cognition I look to an experience with a young family member named Zoey. She came to my house while her mom took her younger brother to the doctor. As we talked, she opened an old wooden cabinet:

“I want to play, GG.”

“Great, let's play puzzle.”

I carefully selected a simple tray puzzle. (Tray puzzles are framed puzzles that include large familiar shapes and incised outlines for each piece of the puzzle. The outlines help with placement). Zoey flipped the puzzle over, separated the pieces, and then turned them printed side up. As she looked at them, I noticed that she made faces at the pieces that had cartoon eyes that “looked back at her.” I also noticed that her expression matched the printed ones. Zoey began trying to place different pieces,

unsuccessfully at first. She then noticed some familiar shapes of a tree, a duck, and a circle. She placed these on the outlines inside the tray, then stopped. Zoey thought quietly. There was a long pause in action. I waited until she seemed unsatisfied with her progress, then offered her guidance.

“Hey, Zoey, let’s look for the edge pieces. Do you see how smooth this piece of the puzzle is?” (Holding an edge piece, I offer it to her.) “Where do you see this same color on the edge of the puzzle? What color is this?”

“Blue” said Zoey as she took the piece of puzzle.

Zoey matched the blue area with a section of the border. We continued putting the puzzle together for fifteen minutes. This was excellent for Zoey who has ADHD (Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). I praised her, we “high-fived” and then stopped to go outside to play.

This example shows the steps of *zoped*. The distance between the actual developmental level determined the steps of independent problem solving. This occurred when Zoey, see Fig. 3.2 above, began to look at the puzzle pieces. She identified with them, evidenced through making facial expressions that matched the cartoon faces (mimicry) and placed a familiar shape, the duck. The level of potential development, determined through problem solving, began as I intervened and gave adult guidance. She then reached past her actual developmental level and reached a higher potential level. The *zoped* occurred when Zoey completed the action of placing the edge pieces of puzzle. This showed the context of interpsychological ability. In developmental theory,



Fig. 3.2 Puzzle play

learning occurs when the individual (Zoey) reacts with her environment (which includes me (people), the puzzle piece (an object), and an activity (placing the piece of puzzle)).

Vygotsky's (1925) theory substantiated the importance of interactions with the environment. Remember the environment includes people, objects, and products. Vygotsky posited that the interactions with others are particularly important for learning. From my interpretation, Greene (1995) built on Vygotsky's notion of interactions with the environment. Her notion of aesthetics encounters and experience compared with Vygotsky's and they both conclude that through experience with the arts, ideas, thoughts, and new connections form that create a sense of excitement in learning. Applying Greene and Vygotsky's notions to current educational practice point to changes that need to occur, some suggestions are discussed in chapter 4. People must have the freedom to work with their ideas and to make new connections. Vygotsky, like Greene, concluded that the mind developed in stages, growing in systematized ways. Unlike Vygotsky, Greene (2001) sees the growth, much like the mind resembling a sponge that soaks up

ideas and thoughts, concepts, or experiences. The sponge, in turn, squishes out all that was absorbed from the experiences to color the world. As Greene suggests, the arts offer a way for people to make a place for themselves, coloring their world through their experiences, particularly aesthetic experiences.

The next developmental theorist I want to use to analyze Maxine Greene was a peer of Vygotsky (1925; 1978). Jean Piaget (1951; 1971), like Vygotsky, connected learning to interactions with the environment. Born the same year as Vygotsky, Piaget had a long and successful career. He received his doctorate in science from the University of Neufchatel in Switzerland. He taught at the Sorbonne in Paris. There are two special connections for me to look at with Piaget. First, his work on the nature of thought itself relates to my work on the nature of imaginative thought. Second, his studies of children relate to mine since we both chose to study our own children. Piaget continued his studies of children, especially his own with the help of his wife. From their observations he described four stages in the cognitive development of children: sensori-motor, pre-operational, concrete-operational, and formal operational. Within a supportive environment, the cognitive strategies of one stage transform into the next. Piaget and his collaborators found that,

children could only be taught concepts that they were already on the verge of understanding. They noted the relation of learner “readiness” to teaching and learning. A child cannot learn the cognitive concepts of a later stage until ready. At each new stage, the cognitive strategies of the previous stage/s are integrated. (DeSantis & Housen, 2000, p.5)

Coming from a science background (he specialized in clams and snails), Piaget named his study, *genetic epistemology* meaning the study of the development of knowledge. To quote Piaget, he defined genetic epistemology as follows:

Genetic epistemology attempts to explain knowledge, and in particular scientific knowledge, on the basis of its history, its sociogenesis, and especially the psychological origins of the notions and operations upon which it is based. ...Genetic epistemology also takes into account, wherever possible, formalisation – in particular, logical formalisations applied to equilibrated thought structures and in certain cases to transformations from one level to another in the development of thought. (Piaget, 1968, p.1)

I observed my children, and noted their developmental changes through their art. Using a series of tasks, Piaget, demonstrated qualitative change in a child's intelligence



Fig. 3.3 Baby reaching

from infancy until late adolescence. To develop this notion of genetic epistemology, I thought about another young family member, an infant named Alena, see Fig. 3.3. Piaget (1951) noticed that infants have skills regardless of their environment. (The importance on environment is expanded later.) Their skills are simple, sensori-motor, but they direct the infant's exploration of their environment. Piaget labeled these basic skills as *schemas*. Think of an infant, Alena, grabbing at a rattle and putting it in her/his mouth. As the infant continued to "practice" the grabbing and mouthing action, one-day, s/he grabbed mom's necklace. This Piaget referred to as *assimilation* or assimilating a new object into an old schema. When Alena encountered another new object, her sister, (Zoey's) hair, she tried to grab and mouth again, but with less success. Then Alena adapted by pulling and drooling with added force. This Piaget referred to as *accommodation*. Assimilation and accommodation make up *adaptation*, what most of us would call learning. Adaptation broadened the concept, one that Piaget thought of as a biological process. The infant's grip accommodated dependent on characteristics of the object and discriminated between different objects strengthening the grip when required (as in pulling hair since the hair owner is pulling away). All living things can adapt, even those without a nervous system.

The fundamental hypothesis of genetic epistemology is that there is a parallelism between the progress made in the logical and rational organisation of knowledge and the corresponding formative psychological processes. ... Nothing could be more accessible to study than the ontogenesis of these notions. There are children all around us. It is with children that we have the best chance of studying the development of

logical knowledge, mathematical knowledge, physical knowledge, and so forth. (Piaget, 1968, p.8)

Analyzing this quote from Piaget for the work of Maxine Greene (1995), a parallel exists between the logical, rational progress of knowledge (Piaget) and the intuitive, excitement that develops with aesthetic knowledge (Greene). Piaget explains, organizes, and names formative psychological processes. Greene establishes conversations for change that relate, establish, and open a door for aesthetics to take a leading role in learning processes. Both voices are important. My concern for today's society is that those in authority recognize the scientific voice to the detriment of the aesthetic. Maxine Greene has done a credible job of preparing the way, educating through her writings and the Lincoln Center Institute. My concern is that a fight lies ahead. The importance of aesthetics education requires the attention of the nation and the lawmakers in particular.

Maxine Greene advocates for the arts and their inclusion into school curricula. A problem that comes to mind is how aesthetics education would look if generalized into the educational process. Would a formal list of approved artists be developed? What would happen to the freedom to create? Would only particular styles be approved for study? My concern is that this becomes a disservice to the arts. A generalization of aesthetics education is like offering crumbs to a starving child. The child would happily eat, but what s/he needs is the "free-and-reduced meal program." Food is a daily need. Offering "special crumbs" will not alleviate the hunger. More is needed; there are ways to get your message to the broader population. Greene reaches out to teachers around the

country with minimal effects. Her audience is not broad enough and lacks power, this point continues in chapter 4.

Piaget (1968) differed and contrasted with Maxine Greene. He differentiated between two aspects of thinking, different yet complementary. The first is *figurative* and the other is *operative*. The figurative aspect was a state of imitation. Remember the example of Zoey who mimicked her face to the cartoon face on the puzzle piece. The operative state became one of action. Think again of Zoey and her careful examination of shapes and colors on the puzzle pieces. The operative state occurred when she placed (an action) the edge piece matching the color with the frame of the tray puzzle.

In the cognitive area the figurative functions are, above all, perception, imitation, and mental imagery, which is in fact interiorised imitation... It includes actions, which transform objects or states, and it also includes the intellectual operations, which are essentially systems of transformation ... They can be carried out through representation... Now, the figurative aspects are always subordinated to the operative aspects... In other words, to my way of thinking the essential aspect of thought is its operative and not its figurative aspect. (Piaget, 1968, p.8)

To contrast Piaget's thinking with Greene, think about these four points: art and aesthetic experience, questioning reality, visual illusions, and diversity. If we reflect on our personal aesthetic encounters, often the discovery is of personal Importance, see Fig. 3.4 below. The child develops artistic vision or art as commodity deflecting attempts to

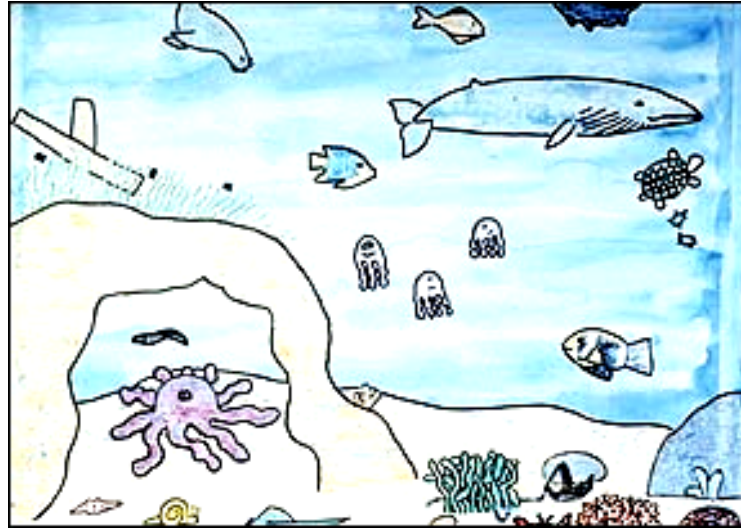


Fig. 3.4 Figurative representations of the sea

explain it. Questioning reality is a processing response for Piaget. For Maxine Greene it uses reflection.

While the mind is processing, it also activates previous memories and from these colors and connects to sense making. Depending upon the type of memories or encounters with the arts, cultural differences come into play. The final composition of thought, may be a shared decision to live in accord with shared norms that are continually remade and revised in the light of differing perspectives. I think of such norms and principles as equality, ones that have been misused repeatedly by those in power but that can be and are being reinterpreted in the light of presently lived experience. (Greene, 1995, p.195)

Piaget (1968) relates the active process with learning. The child perceives information from her/his environment. Depending on the age of the child, the information translates from sensory-motor (until age 2) into symbols (pre-operation stage from 2 – 7 years). The child develops an increasing capacity for representation and can use words or transpose imaginative thought into language or action as exemplified in imaginative play. Children’s thinking becomes increasingly abstract and has greater coordination of thought from ages 7-12 (the concrete-operational stage). The child is able to transpose thought from language, into increasingly symbolic forms that are representative of real objects or ideas. This relates to Greene’s idea of “active sensibility.” As stated in chapter two, Greene (1995) explains that a significant encounter with an art form opens a space. Aesthetics education can act as that vehicle for the child to transpose thought from language to creative thought. As Greene adds, the child then has permission to develop a sense of self, or “I can.” New modalities of thinking open and new perspectives challenge the intellect.

Children can build increasingly complicated symbol systems that begin to open areas in their brains to understand others. This continues to develop in complexity through adolescence. From 12 on the formal operational stage occurs and continues through adulthood. From this stage, the learner thinks about ideas as well as concrete things. It relates to Greene’s notion of empathy and community. Empathy is one’s ability to relate to another’s point of view. Greene seeks to create a coherent world. As Green says, “it is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called “other: over the years,” (Greene, 1995, p.3). For cohesion to exist, what has to be in place? This builds into Greene’s concept of community.

Greene (1995) like Piaget (1968) sees learning as an active interaction with the environment. Greene's theory of aesthetics builds on an understanding of the stages of development. (Indeed, most educators agree with this analysis of stages.) As I continue to interpret Greene in light of Piaget, other differences occur. Piaget's figurative functions were perception, imitation, and mental imagery. Greene theorizes that change requires experiences that open a space

within the mind. Such experiences then flood into the new space acting as a change agent. Greene clarifies these concepts with her notions of making space and becoming wide-awake. Both notions imply an internal move from an experience toward an internal change. Experience, specifically aesthetic experiences provide such a quality of perceptions that the person does not merely change, but transforms. Fig. 3.5 represents such an activity developing children's social awareness of their world.

Vygotsky and Piaget are important for educators as they plan a curriculum that enhances their students' logical and conceptual growth. Maxine Greene is important for



Fig. 3.5 Child's synthesis of world humanity

educators, too, as they plan a curriculum that enhances their students' understanding of the world through aesthetic experiences that open their minds, expand their sense of community and empathy. All of these scholars are important for teachers who have a critical role in developing learning experiences. As students learn, they interact with the surrounding environment. Human cognitive development depends on the environment (Arnheim, 1971; Piaget, 1968; Vygotsky, 1978). Human aesthetic development depends on experiences. Children grow their interactions that stimulate further development with meaning making. By encountering new problems, children receive information, internalize it, and act upon it. Often the speed of mental development varies with the richness (or lack) of experiences encountered in the environment. [Remember that the environment includes people, objects, and experiences. All are important for cognitive stimulation, all are also important for perception.]

The psychological implications that each found tied thinking and perception to Greene's (1995) theory of *becoming wide awake*. As previously discussed, Vygotsky (1978) researched the thinking process especially in its higher forms. His work specifically looked at the brain as an organ, but he was also aware of the significant influence that adults (teachers) had in the cognitive development of a child. As I analyze Greene's theory in light of Vygotsky, the differences are apparent. Vygotsky saw the brain as a functioning and developing organ. Greene sees the brain as a treasure house storing the multitude of experiences that enrich the thinking process. Both Vygotsky (1925; 1978) and Piaget's (1951; 1971) work influenced another psychologist, Rudolf Arnheim (1971). Arnheim, who just recently died, continued to address the implications

of perception. He was concerned with the modern interpretations of and applications for the arts.

We feel tempted to assume that art is unsure in our time because we think and talk too much about it. Probably such a diagnosis is superficial. True enough, the state of affairs seems unsatisfactory to almost everyone, but if we look for its cause with some care we find that we are heirs to a cultural situation particularly unsuited to produce art and likely to encourage the wrong kind of thinking about it. Our experiences and ideas tend to be common but not deep or deep but not common. We are neglecting the fact of comprehending things by what our senses tell us about them. Concept is split from precept, and thought moves among abstractions. (Arnheim, 1971, p.v)

Arnheim's concern for modern interpretations of art and applications for art supports Greene's concern for the arts. Arnheim (1971; 1972) built his research as a part of the gestalt theory of expression (DeSantis, K. and A. Housen, 2000). To clarify, Gestalt psychology came out of the Berlin School in the 1890's. It operated on the principle that the brain and thinking were holistic in nature, which is to say a sum of its parts. Arnheim's work used the Gestalt effect referring to the form-forming capabilities of our senses. His work directly tied aesthetic encounters and experiences with the physical (sensory) awakening of the human brain.

The mere exposure to masterworks will not do. Too many persons visit museums and collect picture books without gaining access to art. The

inborn capacity to understand through the eyes has been put to sleep and must be reawakened. This can best be done by handling the pencil, the brush, and the chisel. But here again bad habits and misconceptions will block the path unless there are protection and help. (Arnheim, 1971, p. xi)

Each time we look at something our personal knowledge significantly contributes to the deeper meaning of the work of art. Visual perception lays the groundwork for concept formation.

The development of pictorial form relies on basic properties of the nervous system, whose functioning is not greatly modified by cultural and individual difference. It is for this reason that the drawings of children look essentially alike throughout the world... (Arnheim, 1971, p.201)

This is an important “discovery” from Arnheim. Think of the multitude of variations of cultures. What does this statement tell us about the nature of children? My analysis is that children are fundamentally the same no matter where they live, how they live, or what their experiences are. Since there are children’s drawings around the world, it is logical to assume that children “naturally” create. Whether or not they create art is open to definitions and interpretations. This natural affinity for [art] creation speaks to an innate need it fulfills. Greene recognizes the importance of children discovering and expressing their voice through creativity, see Fig. 3.6 on next page.



Fig. 3.6 Students finding their artistic voice

When students are encouraged to find their voices and their images...they are ...creating an “in-between” among themselves. The creation of an in-between arise when children inscribe ideas and feelings in journals that can be read by other children around them or when children draw or paint delight or pain on sheets of paper... (Greene, 1995, p.39)

Arnheim believes that aesthetics education is viable to increase cognitive growth. He also believes that aesthetics education cultivates the ability to see the underlying forms and shapes that develop into patterns in our mind. Greene believes that aesthetics education cultivates the ability to see the world. These ideas are closely related. Patterns are to a degree set within cultures. I say this based on my twenty years of teaching art. I have seen visual and expressive patterns expressed according to cultural heritage.

Arnheim saw pattern as more than expressing perception, but of shaping the mental process into design.

An artistic image is not merely a product of perception but also of representation, in which the process of finding form in a given stimulus repeats itself. ... We represent a precept by inventing in the given medium a suitable formal pattern. (Arnheim, 1971, p.128)

An example occurred in a high school class when a girl was interpreting the class assignment using colors and shapes reminiscent of Eastern European folk painting. Her art was different from the rest of the students around her who were American. It was early in the semester and I had not realized that the girl was an international student. When I talked with her, I found out that indeed she was a Romanian refugee. The patterns were set which agrees with Arnheim's thought. This girl's ability to see the world was not evident, but her ability to interpret using visual symbols certainly was. From what knowledge I have, it seems that this student's "home" culture more highly values the arts for a quality education.

As our brains seek a sense of order and natural balance, Greene and Arnheim agree that the brain creates new openings of understanding. The new opening ties together their work. Arnheim stresses that expression is the crowning aspiration of perception.

[Expression] refers to the universality of the patterns of forces experienced in the particular images we receive; to expansion and contraction, conflict and concordance, rising and falling, approach and withdrawal. When these dynamisms are understood as symbols of the powers that shape

human destiny, then expression assumes a deeper meaning. (Arnheim, 1971, p.443)

What is the deeper meaning for expression that Arnheim refers? I think it relates to Greene's notion of *opening space*. The opening within the brain provides a route for the dynamic changes that flow from the arts. Greene clarifies her thoughts,

...This is the starting point: the ability to feel from the inside what the arts are like and how they mean. Experiences of this sort cannot but become the ground of an illumination of much that lies beyond ... (Greene, 2001, p.8)

Illumination is such a powerful word to use. Maxine Greene chose this word well for it implies that there lies within our mind an ability to capture thought, to form ideas, and to create expression. Her idea of opening a space within the mind is like lighting a candle in the dark. The mind always has the potential for change. The word image of being illuminated triggers for us thoughts of change, potential, and possibilities. For Greene the route of choice for change and possibilities is aesthetics education.

This discussion analyzed and critiqued Maxine Greene's aesthetics theory using developmental theorists Vygotsky, Piaget, and Arnheim. I chose to use developmental theorists to help with my understanding of how the brain works. Having taught art for several years it is a constant challenge to relate to different students because of the complexities of the human mind. Exploring the work and ideas of each helped me to think in new and deeper ways about Maxine Greene and her theory of aesthetics. Each offers a new dimension to the discussion of *opening spaces* within the mind with

aesthetic encounters. The next section looks at the second part of Green's aesthetics theory, *becoming wide-awake*.

Aesthetics education opens creative possibilities with experiences and encounters. Through human experience, these ideas grow and enable discoveries of what are possible, developing habits of mind. From these habits of mind, we develop a sense of community. Therefore, if we examine the artwork of children, it is apparent that they are learning more than just how to handle media. They become members of their communities, becoming situated learners; situated in a social and material context. This means that there are serious implications for educators of the arts.

The community we achieve, the dialogues we enter take shape across the differences, preventing those differences from tearing us apart, linking us in a desire to see more, feel more, understand more, listen more acutely, dip more passionately into life. (Greene, 2001, p.148)

Greene points towards dialogues that should be taking place through the arts. These dialogues prevent a tearing in the culture by linking together different ideas, aiding our listening and understanding. Greene states that the arts have the potential to create empathy. As Foucault (1977) reminds us, the discipline of the arts through the discourse of self expression and formalist aesthetics is controlled, structured, and selected. The arts offer different ways of considering, imagining, and representing our lived situations. In other words, the arts are about life. The arts educate, give pleasure, and often seek to make differences. Greene sees the arts through their frames. The first part of this discussion in *becoming wide-awake, but to what*, explores some of these frames of the

arts. The second part examines what happens through “unframing” the arts with serious issues and imagining other ways of being and knowing (Rogoff, 2005).

With the incorporation of cognitive tools in education, children develop the mind as a socio-cultural organ. As Plato argued, the mind consists of knowledge that it learns; it is an epistemologic organ. Education shapes the mind to receive what it perceives as real and true in the world. Certain knowledge and experiences develop a rich understanding of the world and experience. The arts are a cognitive function based on experience, perception, and action. Maxine Greene (1978; 1995; 2001) who was influenced by John Dewey (1958) stated that art is a mode of human experience. She in turn influenced popular art educator, Elliott Eisner (2002). Dewey once stated, “that the stamp of the aesthetic needed to be on any intellectual idea in order for that idea to be complete,” (Dewey, 1958, p. 38). Art is thinking, but on a different level and in a different way. Each experience gives something back that requires from us a new vision. Aesthetic experiences refine our sensory system and cultivate our imaginative abilities. Aesthetic experiences give us a kind of permission to engage, to notice, and to react to our world. To help understand Greene’s theory, I turn to Eisner (2002) to help clarify her ideas.

Indeed, the arts provide a kind or permission to pursue qualitative experience in a particularly focused way and to engage the constructive exploration of what the imaginative process may engender. (Eisner, 2002, p.11)

Eisner sees another cognitive function of the arts, as the stability they provide for what is otherwise *evanescent*. Eisner's idea of the *evanescent* relates to a developing notion of mine, the *web of betweenness*. It is difficult to grasp ideas and images within the mind unless they are inscribed using materials to give them a kind of semi-permanence. The arts then become vehicles through which these inscriptions occur.

[The arts] enable us to inspect more carefully our own ideas, whether those ideas emerge in the form of language, music, or vision. The works we create speak back to us, and we become in their presence a part of a conversation that enables us to "see what we have said." (Eisner, 2002, p.11)

The work of Eisner (2002) closely aligns with that of Maxine Greene (1978; 1995; 2001) and provides important substantiation for her ideas of *becoming wide-awake* through aesthetic education, experiences, and encounters. To substantiate this point I will discuss Eisner's work along two lines: what the arts teach, and how learning occurs in the arts.

What "the arts" teach when included in the curriculum is influenced by how and what is taught. As in other fields, the arts taught in different ways will give different outcomes. In schools, policy makers, administrators, and teachers all may determine curriculum. Eisner's research focuses on the ways the arts influence and the kinds of the experience students have in working with them. The quality of the experiences or encounters (quality referring to depth of experience or frequency) determine how well cognitive abilities develop. One way to discuss this is to identify what forces affect student learning in the arts. Eisner identifies four forces on cognitive development.

Let me identify four: there are the constraints and affordances provided by the activities and the materials with which students work; there are the prompts, cues, and scaffolding that the teacher provides to enable students to succeed; there are classroom norms, the kind of thinking and behavior that is encouraged and discouraged in the setting; and there is an ambiance we can refer to as the classroom milieu. ...What is its sense of community or practice, and how does it relate to what students' experience and learn? (Eisner, 2002, p.71)

The realization that curriculum contributes to how the mind develops makes its planning process critical. I do not mean to imply that the curriculum is the only determinate on mind development although it can have a significant impact. Curricula links thinking processes with the types of citizens that a culture develops. Including aesthetic education then places the arts in a significant role in a culture.

How, on the various levels at which you teach, can you create the kinds of situations where involvement with the arts not only enables you and your students to combat boredom and banality, but develops among all of you the sense of agency that is most apparent in encounters with the arts? (Greene, 2001, p.182)

The arts are framed as a collection of activities, but age appropriate and affordable. These framed activities operate as learning strategies to provide scaffolding (optimizing student learning) that enhances learning. As with the earlier example of the child, Zoey learning to work a puzzle, the notion of *zoped* applies. It utilizes personal discretion of intervention, intervene too soon, and the student becomes dependent on the

instructor. Intervene too late, and the student's frustrations will interfere with assimilating new perceptions.

Classroom norms affect the sense of encouragement, cooperation, and community. Such a classroom expects, that students will come to the classroom to work, that they will have the materials they need to work with, that they will initiate their work as they enter the classroom and not feel the need to wait for a signal from the teacher before they begin. (Eisner, 2002, p. 74)

These norms aim toward creating a studio environment. Comments by both teacher and student are both private and public, using critique. The classroom milieu refers to a collective force consisting of the tasks given, teacher prompts, and classroom norms. The arts classroom should not look like the traditional classroom. An example is a dance class where students focus on developing aesthetically shaped movements. They may work singularly or in-groups, under direction or reading notation as with a ballet. Performance often becomes the goal.

These interacting forces create a cognitive culture that has as much to do with developing dispositions as with developing aesthetic and analytic abilities. It is a culture that, at its best, models ... what it feels like to function as a budding artist, to be really engaged in one's work, not for extrinsic reasons but for intrinsic ones. (Eisner, 2002, p.74)

The arts frame learning, but what do they actually teach? Greene (1995; 2001) relies heavily on literary arts. For me, as a teacher of the visual arts, Greene's examples are narrow and lack clarity. Maxine Greene knows the arts affect our lives and that they

provide enriching experiences, however, she does not state clearly what the arts give. For the purpose of this discussion, I bring in three areas that Eisner (2002) emphasizes: attention to relationship, *flexible purposing*, and framing the world from an aesthetic perspective. Eisner's ideas parallel Greene while offering the specifics she lacks.

Attention to relationship concerns the relationship between the "parts" that constitute the whole. Creating these relationships displays *rightness of fit*. In the arts this concerns highly nuanced qualities; subtle differences that can make all the difference in achieving a satisfying product. Eisner emphasizes these inter-relationships and frames them with developmental theorists:

Other forms of perception attend to component qualities but do not explore the relationships among them. In Piaget's terms, perception is "centrated" rather than "decentered." In Arnheim's terms, the solution is "local" rather than "contextual." The viewer looks, but looks at parts rather than at the ways those parts interact with each other. (Eisner, 2002, p.76)

Greene emphasizes the looking at works of art and engaging on an intellectual or emotional level. She does not have the deeper knowledge that comes with trying to convey the problem of arts educators, how to convey the arts as language formation.

Teaching in the arts is very much concerned with helping students learn how to see the interactions among the qualities constituting the whole. ...One of the techniques people use to heighten awareness of these relationships can be seen in an art museum as people move close to a painting and then step back several feet. ... What is happening here is a

kind of visual analysis-synthesis relationship. The person is trying to see the details or nuances of the part and then, by moving back, how those qualities influence the whole. One might say that it's a kind of dance in the service of sight. (Eisner, 2002, p.76)

In the kind of perception Eisner refers to, sight alone is not sufficient, but requires *somatic knowledge*, a type of embodied knowledge. This type of knowledge requires *tuning-in* to the work and making adjustments “emotionally.”

Some images resonate with our gut, others with our eyes, still others with our fantasies. ...Works of art call upon both the ideational and any of the sensory resources we use to experience the world; the fact that an image is visual does not mean that the experience we have of it will be visual. ...

In the hands and mind of the artist, they are avenues for communication.
(Eisner, 2002, p.19)

Eisner provides clarity and support for Greene. Greene calls for us to interact with the arts. Eisner helps us relate what we experience with in this interaction (the encounter) that occurs. Learning to frame the world from an aesthetic perspective refers to a way of defining our world. The arts provide frames of reference enlarging our view. To extend this discussion, I want to include examples from different forms of art and the *sense-making* they provide.

What students bring to an aesthetic encounter affects their ability to interact with it. This brings the discussion to the importance and function of the curriculum and, more specifically, the function of the arts within the curriculum. One such function is that the

curriculum provides frames for reading the world. These frames, theories, concepts, images, and narratives parse the world in particular ways. “Becoming socialized within a particular culture means acquiring these frames, for they allow you to join and participate in a discourse community,” (Eisner, 2002, p.85). Through the courses students take, they acquire tools. Educational programs can determine the type of tools they have and their ability to shift thinking for different possibilities. Greene (1995; 2001) realizes this concept as well and her notion of *becoming wide-awake* sums up her thoughts on aesthetic encounters and experience by viewing the arts as encounters. This parallels Eisner’s idea of the arts as a means of discovery. The arts offer us the resources to experience the varieties and range of our responsive abilities.

When the arts genuinely move us, we discover what it is that we are capable of experiencing. In this sense, the arts help us discover the contours of our emotional selves. (Eisner, 2002, p.12)

Think with me for a moment of a sunset, a popular experience. We have all taken a picture with our mind and have thus “framed” it. The colors of yours may be different from mine, but both represent sunsets. A sunset painted by a child usually consists of “stripes” of colors. The stripes may be carefully painted or “bleed” together if the paper is wet. Now, think of a sunset painted by an Impressionist painter. For example, Monet paints a shimmering sunset that seems electrified with light and in so doing, shows us a different way of enjoying a sunset, see Fig. 3.7. Each experience represents a reaction to our world. The creation of such carefully constructed relationships, called *rightness of fit* by Dewey (1958) and Eisner (2002) or *becoming wide-awake* by Greene (1995),



Fig. 3.7 San Giorgio Maggiore at Sunset

require careful attention to highly nuanced qualities. The arts are both rational and irrational thought, cognitive and intuitive, physical and emotional. This visual process engages the mind's eye, which act much like a space probe reaching out into space. It scans surfaces, explores textures, borders, and surfaces.

Through our perceptions, the mind codifies from the general to the specific. Any person who takes the time to look at an object or any form goes through this process. When we look, we see the 'thing' but also register a picture in the mind. A student with properly developed cognitive abilities perceives their world as singular objects, in a sense as islands of perceptions in seas of ideas, each filtering through our experiences. Aesthetics education translates these experiences within our mind, imagination emerges, and cognitive growth occurs. Without aesthetic experiences, cognitive abilities are stilted. Often learning disabilities develop (Sousa, 2006). Greene's (1995) opening

spaces through aesthetic education looks at the arts as symbolic systems that help the individual pay “full attention to life,” while nurturing them intellectually.

One example of “art as code” (aesthetics education as on-going process) comes in the work of ultra realism. One such artist is Janet Fish. Developing as an artist in the Caribbean, her compositions bring a sense of energy through her use of shimmering colors. She gives us a new way of seeing colors and light. The objects move beyond mere representation of form into a landscape of interpretations. Her art provides the conditions for awakening us to the world. The arts provide a way of seeing and thus knowing in new and exciting ways.

Another example of art as code is found in my own painting of a reef entitled, *Off Grand Cayman*. My efforts seek to convey to the viewer the immensity of energy and life flowing around this great reef. The air is warm with a slight breeze. Dropping from the boat into the warm waters, there was a great sense of excitement. Snorkeling swiftly, the reef came into view. Among the waving fans of coral swam many brightly colored fish; small crustaceans crawled about. I had never imagined the abundance and diversity of life under the ocean. Suddenly, I heard laughing turn to squeals from my younger friends. Someone was stung by a jelly fish. My adventure concluded with a shark sighting. The resultant image is a pale interpretation of these few moments of aesthetic encounter.

Art is “framed” in other meaningful and exciting styles. Two examples from contemporary culture are rap music and hip-hop dance. In the article entitled, “The Aesthetics of Rap,” the qualities that make rap music important for today is overshadowed by the press it receives. Rap music has qualities that make it good art,

Good art is usually emotional and/or thought provoking. ... While many rap records possess those attributes, far more do not. This is true with most art forms, however. In general, unsuccessful art productions far outnumber successful ones. (Salaam, 2003, p.1)

One of the earliest qualities of rap that make it good art is the playful word choice and the individual message. These lines come from Run D. M. C.,

Now the name that I use is D. J. Run And I'm a fast-talking, slow-moving
#1 And if you don't believe all the words I say then you're a natural born
fool who's got to be that way... (Salaam, 2003, p. 6)

Similar to stages in visual development, dance “frames” other perceptual stages. Like the universal occurrence of circularity (the mandala in visual expressions), dance has essential movements that lead into pattern formation and that are found around the world. Traditional dance in Africa is a dominant, pervasive force in African communities (Asante, 2003). The historic perspective of dance is for preserving cultural values, Kariami Welsh-Asante (2003) states that “those who have never bartered the fierce freedom of their souls,” are true dancers (p.1). These qualities are tradition, tradition and continuity, tradition transformed, and tradition contextualized. Dance is another form of language just as visual art or music. As such, it directly ties into cognitive functioning.

Especially in African dance, there is text and, as such, it is a document that can be used for historical, philosophical and aesthetic information.

(Asante, 2003, p. 38)

Dance has reasserted itself in this culture with popular television shows such as, “So You Think You Can Dance” and “Grease the Next Time Around.” With this reemergence comes a highly energized, creative and emotional form of dance, hip-hop. It takes personal statements, similar to improvisational jazz and has a conversation with the music using movement. Brian Friedman, a judge on the previously mentioned shows and one of the most popular choreographers says, “dance takes the person into new experiences and gets them in touch with the rest of their self,” (Friedman, 2007, p.1). Friedman points out yet another quality that comes through the arts, that of individual relevance.

It is not that Friedman is the only choreographer available to judge for the show or help instruct the young dancers. It is that Friedman is exceptionally talented, he is compared to a young Picasso because of his abstracted and energized “forms,” see Fig. 3.8 above. Movement becomes his product. His expertise on the previously mentioned television shows aids in the popularity of all dances within this culture. Through his statement, he helps many individuals come into touch with themselves and their emotions. He connects to Greene’s concept of *becoming wide-awake*. Aesthetic experiences then become new vistas. These new vistas come in the form of language, music, or vision. The works we create speak back to us. Through their creation, we add to the conversation that enables us to *see what we have said* (Dewey, 1934). Within this creative experience lies a physicality that triggers a new layer of dimension and places the aesthetic experience as an ongoing process. As Stuart Hall (1967) explains, the arts



Fig. 3.8 Contestants from 2006

offer a mental framework with concepts, imagery, and representation systems that render intelligible ways of our society.

What happens when the arts are unframed? The arts shape our understanding of the world in particular ways and as such have power. The arts offer *different* ways of thinking about, imagining, and representing our lived situations. Recently, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, an internationally known artist, reflected on his spoken work texts, “El Mexorcist (A Performance).” He asked of artists,

Why do we continue doing what we are doing (in my case, writing and performing) against the backdrop of war, censorship, cultural paranoia, and spiritual despair? What are the new roles that artists must undertake? Where are the new borders between the accepted and the forbidden? Is art

still a pertinent form of inquiry and contestation? ... (Gomez-Pena, 2006, p.5)

The arts within public education are often equated with “recreation.” There is a traditional enforcement of censorship silencing young voices. The school arts are expected to be appropriately decorative and entertaining, safe and conforming. By unframing the arts, the potential is therefore the expression of visual and expressive culture. The voice of critical theorist, Irit Rogoff (2005), offers what Greene (1995) is seeking in her aesthetics theory. There is a gap in the functioning of school arts and practicing artists.

[We can] no longer think of art as applying existing knowledge through other means, no longer illustrating or analyzing or translating. Rather, we think that it is both a research mode and a means of knowledge production. ... Therefore, art and visual culture are able to produce both new knowledge as well as new modes of knowing which have the potential to unframe ... (<http://mediageographies.blogspot>)

Greene (1995) advocates *becoming wide-awake* and my question at the start of this discussion is awakening to what? Her aesthetic theory for k-12 education calls for a re-conceptualization of aesthetics education. The call to re-conceptualize joins the voices of other educators for envisioning new models of pedagogy to keep a contemporary understanding of practicing the arts central to public education and not marginalize it to

core subjects. (Crichlow, 2003; Ellsworth, 2005; Greene, 2005) My answer to Greene is to re-conceptualize aesthetics pedagogy towards social justice through the arts.

The first challenge to this concept is whether social justice projects can take place in the public schools. Social justice projects do take place in the schools. Social justice projects are sometimes difficult to complete in some school climates. Nearly forty years ago, there was a call from art educator Vincent Lanier (1969) to make the arts socially relevant.

What we need ... are new conceptions of modes of artistic behavior, new ideas of what might constitute the curricula of [arts classes.] These new curricula must be meaningful and relevant to pupils. These new ideas must engage the “guts and hopes” of the youngsters and through these excitements provoke intellectual effort and growth ... in a quickly changing and worsening social environment. (Lanier, 1969, p.314)

Prior to Maxine Greene’s (1995) call for an *awakening* came Lanier’s call to awaken for social justice. Two beliefs underscore a social justice practice in the arts. These beliefs may require us to rethink our understanding of what makes art, how we view it, and its aesthetics. The beliefs are (1) in the circulation of images within a culture and around the world; and (2) understanding aesthetics as relational and dialogic. Images educate us in particular ways and may require us to rethink our understanding of them; this is where their power for change lies, see Fig. 3.9. This belief underscores the need to educate students who can engage (see, feel, and experience) and commit to the politics of images



Fig. 3.9 Specialist searching for IED



Fig. 3.10 Contrast of cultures

and image making. A recent example comes with the images from Abu Ghraib Prison and the Iraqi War. There is an inter-national war, against terrorism and from the images various messages are conveyed. These images are examples of an unframed visual culture, see Fig. 3.10. Images that get a gut wrenching reaction or that engage us emotionally so that they bring us to action. These images need a response and the response is coming from many places. The government wages its campaign with more “politically correct” images. The terrorists send out images of live executions via the internet. One US Marine featured on the daily news paints images of his unit in Iraq while other soldiers, my son for example, take digital images. These images are posted to the internet on government and non-government sources. This response is no different than Picasso’s *Guernica* during the Spanish Civil War. Giroux (2006) argues that what is missing from the debates on Abu Ghraib is,

questions that foreground the kinds of education (not ignorance) that enable one to participate in acts of torture, killing, and sexual humiliation against the kinds of education that prevent such inhumanity or enable one to bear moral witness when degrading acts of abuse occur (p.55).

The second challenge lies with the schools for they have to rethink what it means to educate young people to live in the modern world. To envision a different form of critical examination questions the meaning of such images and a discussion for their iconographic influence on culture. An iconic image that comes from recent publications is that of a hooded Iraqi prisoner with electrical wires attached to his hands. M. T. Mitchell (2004) states that this image is more than a weapon for one side or another. Such an image becomes a powerful teaching device for what it tells us about this war and its relation to morality, religion, and sacrifice. Asking hard questions about these images uses art for cultural survival and cultural change: are these images alternative images or merely images that take their place within the lineage of art history?

The ease of representation translates into a greater sense of responsibility in education for aesthetics education. With a camera on most cell-phones, it makes for easy capturing of images. A visual history becomes almost instantaneous. The constant recording through camera phones, video cameras, computers, etc., means there is a responsibility to teach our students, giving them the tools to read images (such as those from Abu Ghraib) critically. Students need to think about the kinds of meanings they

shape critically. Different forms of the arts send different messages. Works of art that are socially engaging force us to ask critical questions about cultural situations.

Alternative forms of the arts force the students and the public to think about the role of the arts in society. During this tumultuous time is the art we need most the art that is most critical? A dialogic aesthetic redefines the role of the arts. The arts move from frames recreations, to open cultural conversations. Dialogic aesthetics are about empathetic engagements. They give us a tie in with our communities, bringing in local knowledge. They also generate a provisional knowledge that record particular times and places in our cultures. The experiences and aesthetic encounters that we bring to the arts are part of the dialogue. These experiences are polyphonic, multi-voiced, and multi-cultural. The aesthetic education would move from content specific to an engagement with form, an expression of idea. This is just the beginning of this discussion. Chapter 4 addresses some practical implications for aesthetics education in k-12 institutions.

Discovering the Web of Betweenness in Imagination

This chapter continues to explore the relationship between the imagination and aesthetics. Maxine Greene claims that imagination is important to the cognitive capacities permitting “us to give credence to alternative realities” (Greene, 1995, p.32). Many philosophers have debated imagination, trying to define its identity and clarify its role in our lives. The first part of this discussion briefly discusses the debate surrounding imagination and its many definitions. The second part discusses Greene’s beliefs of imagination and explores how her beliefs set parameters on imagination without really

defining it. The third part of the discussion develops my notion of the imagination as a *web of betweenness*.

Overtime, Greene (2001) clarified that aesthetics education includes imaginative development. Imagination develops through making personal discoveries. Greene builds her thoughts upon A. Schultz (1967) addressing the multiplicity found in imagination.

I wanted to see through as many eyes and from as many angles as possible, and for a long time. I believe I deliberately sought visions that might enable me to look from the other side of the looking glass, to begin to feel those “multiple realities” or “provinces of meaning” that mark lived experiences and not the ontological structure of the objects which constitute reality” (Greene, 1995, p.94, quotes from Schultz, 1967, p.231)

Imagination is a part of who you are; this shows through what is imagined. Imagination helps discover who they may become. In my art classroom, I see child after child who cannot easily imagine; it seems painful for some and frustrating for many. It can be a laborious process for someone older to develop their imagination. Often, I see students who just do not want to put out the effort required to imagine. I cannot even begin to understand how one cannot imagine. “Are your thoughts black? Don’t you see anything?” are common questions for me to them. If their imaginations are lacking from playing video games, what types of images fill their minds? From questioning the students, the images are often soldiers, male and female, in combat situations continually fighting and often killing other combatants. The level of blood and gore can be set from “no blood” to “gruesome.” If the imagination helps define the type of person we are,

then what type of child develops through these video games? If the imagination helps define who a person will be, then what type of citizen is our culture creating?

Your imaginative ability (imagination) forms when you are a child through experiences and play. (Piaget, 1968) Some children have rich imaginations; their imaginative abilities may be inherited, nurtured through reading and story telling, and “play.” Think about what you did as a child. While I gathered images from my play, television and books, I used those images to create wildly imaginative adventures from fighting dragons to flying on the wind. Daily I explored along the creek or inside the woods looking over and under anything that could be moved. I watched the constant change found in nature and the multitude of variations in the plants or sky. Mud from the creek was turned into imaginative pots for a tea party or into fantasy creatures come to life.

While my childhood was rich with “imaginative adventures” living beside a creek and walking in fields with my dogs, few children experience this today; it saddens me. Some children’s imaginative abilities are referred to as “stilted.” A stilted imagination is like a malnourished child. A healthy child needs food. Their diet should be colorful to be healthy, not a diet of chips and colas. “The child needs interactions with nurturing adults who encourage running, jumping, exploring, and playing with others. “(Piaget, 1968)

Highly imaginative people relate their imaginative abilities to many things. Speaking for myself, I remember drawing (almost constantly) on paper, in the muddy creek bed, or on my bedroom wall; drawing became my “natural” outlet. There were books to read, however, it was much more important for me to be read to. Then, I could

let the “television” of my mind bring me the most wonderful images retelling the story. For me, this was better than going to the movies or watching television. I agree with Maxine Greene that literature relates to the imagination. It certainly did for me. Imagination forms from entertaining oneself, interacting with the environment, experiencing life, and playing with thoughts or ideas.

As an artist, my claim is that imagination acts as a fragile strand crossing into another dimension. The imagination is like an electrically charged thought. It operates like a plasma window between the three dimensional world and the creative world of thought. The plasma window makes sense for me having had an uncle who worked for NASA during the 1960’s. His explanations of the plans for space travel forever inspired my creative imagination. (Plasma is the fourth state of matter. NASA uses plasma windows to allow our world to see into outer space.) An artist acting like the plasma window has the ability to be in the world and to see the world in certain ways while creating using our knowledge and cultural presentations, see Fig. 3.11.

My claim moves the imagination beyond the sense of self and into this multidimensional realm, accepting and sending sensory and cognitive perceptions and beliefs. The notion of a *web of betweenness* also sees the imagination in a role of dualism. Imagination is a part of whom a person is and at the same time of who a person might become.

During this dissertation process, a personal discovery is that my thoughts become mental images. While analyzing Greene’s theory of aesthetics education, I began my interpretations by sketching, looking for common ideas and overlapping thoughts. I



Fig. 3.11 Plasma window

sketched out concept maps, various diagrams and shapes, but nothing implied the dynamic action I felt. My own research has been working on the notion of a *web of betweenness*, an area of energy transverses between thought and creative form. Finally, a vivid picture from childhood began to emerge from a memory of a bursting seedpod. This idea intrigues me and will be developed in chapter 4.

Defining imagination as an artist, imagination is action. As a thought, it has an electrical charge. This charge acts and reacts within the brain, coding and decoding images, thoughts, and ideas and synthesizes them, then like a fragile strand crosses into another dimension, that of creative thought. It is the resultant action that is known as a work of art. An artist has the ability to be in the world, seeing the world in ways different and multidimensional. An artist creates using their sense of logic and cultural symbols.

Speaking as an artist, there is a human impulse to create. There is a drive, an expression of creativity that often causes others to wonder. Where one sees an event, an artist sees the dimensions of the event. My claim moves the imagination beyond the

sense of self and into a multidimensional realm, accepting and sending sensory and cognitive perceptions and beliefs. An example comes while watching the evening news or CNN. Both you and I see images of a war in Iraq. My imagination immediately turns those news images into fragmented parts, coloring and layering them. Dependent on my mood, sounds or music that are around me,

I impart color(s) and “view” the fragmented parts in my mind. During this process, I begin to “play” in my head with the images, colors, textures, stretching, twisting, imploding or exploding them for effect. I am already creating an artwork before I ever approach a canvas or clay. That is what I mean by an artist seeing an event in dimensions. My imagination intuitively transfers layers of meaning and time into visual excitement. My *web of betweenness theory* recognizes the tie between cognitive abilities and imagination. Imagination influences literacy just as literacy (meaning literary, aesthetic, cultural, etc.) influences the imagination. Imagination as multidimensional reaches from this world into another.

Summary of Analysis

This chapter sought to explain Maxine Greene’s (1995) aesthetics in education theory. Greene concludes that aesthetics education should include varieties of imaginative adventures. Imagination is a major part of her theory and plays an important role in the processes of human questioning, responses to blank spaces in experience, and resistances to meaninglessness. Imagination is used, “in a search for openings without which our lives narrow and our pathways become cul-de-sacs,” (p.17). Greene discusses different aspects of imagination such as an absence of imagination and our ability to

awaken imagination. Imagination aids with empathy and as such ties to community and social consciousness. In *Variations on a Blue Guitar*, Greene again focuses on using *the arts* to develop imagination and the role of self-discovery. While Greene discusses different aspects of imagination, she fails to give a clear definition for imagination and any framework for understanding it. Imagination was then explored to add to Greene's thoughts. I added to the theory of aesthetics by developing my own theory for imagination calling it a *web of betweenness*. My theory of imagination defines imagination as an electrically charged thought that moves beyond the sense of self and into a multidimensional realm; a spider web pictured in Fig. 3.12 captures drops of dew and spans space with them like an imaginative thought spans from a personal thought into a creative action. The theory of a *web of betweenness* sees the imagination in a dual role helping a person discover who they are and who they may become. It causes my mind to think of a spider's web moist with dew, but the dew represents imaginative thoughts (Fig, 3.12).



Fig. 3.12 Web moist with dew

Chapter Four

With each window we open or door we pass through an interaction with the world begins. Our interactions potentially alter another's perceptions. My desire in this dissertation was to clarify my position, my roles, and the affect on the lives of my students, altering the perceptions of an inner-city classroom, through deeply exploring Maxine Greene's (1995) aesthetics education theory. Being an art teacher, the terms chosen to focus on were *art* and *aesthetics*. These were defined as follows: *art* generally means various forms of visual expressions while *aesthetics* refers to broader areas of creative expression such as dance and film. Due to my experiences teaching in the schools, concerns for effective teacher preparation and meaningful practice, the research began with the question: *What does Maxine Greene's aesthetic theory offer education and suggest for K-12 educational reform?*

My theoretical underpinnings were cultural studies, critical pedagogy, care theory, social justice in aesthetic education, and imagination. Each of these ideas acts as a filter for the work of Maxine Greene in aesthetics education while leading me to development my theory of *The Web of Betweenness*. This last chapter has three parts. First is a review of the journey through a theoretical summary. Second is the further development of my notion of the *Web of Betweenness*. Third are the recommendations for education in two areas: art education pedagogy and for K-12 educational reform in America. I conclude with the implications applied to my inner-city classroom.

Theoretical Summary and Findings

From the beginning my journey came from a *cultural studies* perspective that reflects historical and contextual ideas (Giroux, 1995; Wright, 2000) and includes excerpts from *my* lived experience. In the historical context chapter one looked at the early development of Maxine Greene (1978; 1995; 2001) and her growth into existentialism that activates her interactions with the world. Greene works with her students at the Lincoln Center for the Arts who drive her practice, as my students drive mine. In turn, Greene's students return to their positions in education to influence school reform through aesthetic education. I explore Greene in depth, to express ideas, to think, to reflect, and to react.

Cultural studies drive my *praxis* while informing my creative theory (Freire, 2000; Hall, 1992; Wright, 1995; 2000). This is seen through different discourses. My journey expands into developmental theory, various educational and philosophical theories, and creative forms of popular culture. All these areas fit in the exploration of Greene's theory for educational aesthetics and educational reform.

Cultural studies overlaps into critical pedagogy. As a teacher like Maxine Greene (1995; 2003), I negotiate and transform relationships among teachers, students, the institutions known as schools, while teaching knowledge in a particular way (McLaren, 1982). These dynamic relationships reach out into the wider community, state, or nation. *Critical pedagogy* comes from the work of progressive teachers, literacy workers, and those motivated people who see the inequalities that exist and strive to defeat them. I want to do the same. I have sought to come along side other motivated and inspired educators such as Maxine Greene, to lead reform.

We live our lives in relationship with others (Noddings, 1984; Greene, 1995; Thayer-Bacon, 2003), so it is from this perspective that I brought in the lens of *care theory*. Through caring and being receptive to others, care theory is a form of motivational displacement. When I reach out as a care-giver, I release ‘motive energy’ that flows toward the ‘cared-for’ (Noddings, 2002) who responds. From being cared for, we learn to care. From my investigation of Maxine Greene, it is evident that she cares deeply and passionately about many things so much so that it was hard to stay focused only on her aesthetics in education theory. She writes so passionately about other topics such as democracy and education.

Teaching in inner-city schools offers me a unique role as caregiver, see Fig. 4.1. From my “care” I began this journey to discover what else I could do, developing my care, and implementing my findings into praxis. Care theory reaffirms the ethical and



Fig. 4.1 Talking with students

moral foundations of teaching and educating. My discovery is the depth of care shown by Maxine Greene and the fruitful action that inspires her praxis.

Social Justice through Aesthetics Education drives my praxis by motivating me to investigate, to seek and to understand the *responsibility* to the students who are part of the global learning community. As social justice through aesthetics education works toward good communication, to hear the voices of the many, I ask them to join in our conversations. This dissertation is a way for me to converse with Maxine Greene (1995), and others, who believe that art has a special power to communicate.

This dissertation shows that Maxine Greene's (1995; 2003) aesthetics education theory reaches toward each student, teacher, parent, and person offering help to shape their identity. This happens through critical questioning that discovers their questions and encourages answers through creative experiences and processes. Without critical questioning, learning ceases. My *Web of Betweenness* adds to the discussion by clarifying and enriching our understanding of the role of the imagination and develops in the next section.

Why did I investigate Maxine Greene (1995)? To determine how Maxine Greene grew into such a dynamic educator. I wanted to know who influenced her growth. My discoveries were many. Sartre (1958) helped Maxine Greene develop her sense of community and cultural influences through his belief that all human kind has value. Sartre also believed that it was the moral responsibility of aesthetics to raise public awareness. Both of these beliefs became a part of who Maxine Greene became. Merleau-Ponty (1978) influenced Maxine Greene (1978) to develop her vision of social imagination, a vision of what ought to be. From Hannah Arendt (1958), Greene adopted the notion of

praxis, to act. John Dewey (1954) influenced Greene for social democracy and for the freedom to imagine. He promoted the idea that artwork has a special power: that of communicating among the freedoms without alienation or objectification.

As a philosopher and educator, Maxine Greene (1993; 2001) researches different areas in the realm of philosophy, education, social and democratic thought, aesthetics and the teaching of the arts, literature as art, and multiculturalism. Her legacy comes from “doing philosophy” as part of her praxis. Teaching, in this light, becomes the vocation of vocations with Maxine Greene leading educational philosophy for more than fifty years. Her goal in founding the Center for Social Imagination, the Arts and Education at Teachers College, Columbia, was to engage the public in discussions on educational reform and the importance of aesthetics education. This dissertation becomes a part of this discussion.

From her growth as a philosopher and an educator Maxine Greene (1978) began to use the term, *wide-awake*, a derivation from Schultz’s (1967) concept of *full awareness*. It was the concept of full awareness that Greene grew into the notion of being *wide-awake*, which denotes a plane of consciousness of highest tension that originates with an attitude of *full attention to life*. From this journey there is an internalization of the concept of being wide-awake that strengthens my teaching and inspires educational reform. In my classroom each lesson becomes a new opportunity for learning and a new sense of joy from teaching while giving explanations, answering questions, and guiding creative experiences.

The act of teaching brings me experiences of wonderment and excitement when students make discoveries, exploring media and ideas. My sense of wonder at the

potential that lies in the room continues to grow. As Greene (1995) says, it is during the performance, especially when the working self is fully interested in life, that we become wide-awake. My teaching experience is becoming *wide-awake*. Living within acts and attention, the project of teaching directs energy into effect, executing a plan. Teaching and learning are active (Schultz, 1967, 213; Greene, 1978, p.163).

Beginning with chapter two, the focus grows from the concept of *wide-awakeness* to include the concept of *open spaces*. *Open spaces* is Greene's application of Dewey (1958), opening students' sense of perceptions and opening their minds what he called the *audacity of the imagination*. These concepts, wide-awakeness and open spaces, along with a third, the *importance of imagination* form the base of Maxine Greene's theory of aesthetics education. Each concept is important for developing different aspects of a person. The notion of *becoming wide-awake* develops a sense of self while nurturing the individual intellectually and spiritually. *Becoming wide-awake* heightens the consciousness through reflection which aids in developing relevancy. Opening spaces grow the intellect opening the mind to new experiences, new challenges, to seek answers to new questions.

From investigating Greene's (1995; 2001) theory of aesthetics education, I began to question how the human mind works. Chapter three explores this part of my journey into the field of psychology and developmental theorists, Vygotsky (1978), Piaget (1968), and Arnheim (1971). They expand my knowledge and develop my understanding of how the mind works. Human cognition develops depending on the environment (Arnheim, 1971; Piaget, 1968; Vygotsky, 1978). Their studies on thinking and perception also support the concept of *becoming wide-awake*.

Educational practices in America use lectures, teacher demonstrations, and programmed instructions to name a few teaching strategies. Piaget espoused discovery learning through activities and projects. Intelligence grows from the processes of assimilation and accommodations. My own teaching practice includes working with many “differently abled” students. My classroom is inclusionary. This means that it includes students who have learning or processing issues. It affords me the opportunity to think of what the best approach is for them in an art class. Many strategies are used to meet the differentiated instruction needs of the students. These include, but are not limited to altered projects, abbreviated assignments, peer tutoring, individualized instruction, numerous repetitions of instructions and practice assignments to work toward mastery. Experiences should be planned with children given the time to explore, to manipulate, to questions, and to search out the answers for themselves.

The teacher serves as a guide or facilitator of knowledge. Teachers should be there guide and stimulate the students. Students will make mistakes and will learn from them. Learning is much more meaningful if the child is allowed to experiment on his own rather than listening to the teacher. The teacher should present students with materials and situations and occasions that allow them to discover new learning. Piaget recommended that children have the time to discovery and collaborate to create meaning. This strategy is used regularly within my art room. The students are often given problems to solve. The type of problem often relates to a topic of conversation that is currently popular with the students, such as an advertisement or transportation concern. This type of assignment allows the students to think and reflect on the “problem.” From this reflection conversations happen and ideas are exchanged with the teacher and among

peers. The imagination of the students is activated and different types and levels of thinking are used. Then the students begin to create an artistic form that addresses the problem. The students have the opportunity to present their solution to their peers.

A parallel exists in the logical, rational process of knowledge formation from Piaget (1968) and the intuitive and excitement of aesthetic knowledge from Maxine Greene (1995; 2003). Within this parallel Piaget explains *perception* as being concentrated and formed as a psychological process. Greene (1995) explains perceptions as developing through conversations and within relationships that *open a space* in the mind. Piaget sees questioning as a process, while Greene sees questioning as part of reality that comes from reflective thought. There is a difference in the role of questioning. Greene uses reflective questioning that allows the student to explore the process, the different parts of the learning process. Her guiding questions lead the students into a deeper reflection of their experience. Piaget used questioning in a structured format without allowing unpeeling the layers of a learning experience.

How the brain is perceived brings important insights into the thinking process. Vygotsky (1978) described the brain as a developing and functioning organ. Arnheim (1971) saw the brain and thinking holistically (DeSantis & Housen, 2000). Aesthetics experiences awaken the brain through processes not mere exposure. If the brain operates as a sum of its parts, then Arnheim's work in form-forming using our senses provides another strong reason for the arts. Arnheim's work directly ties aesthetic encounters and experiences with the physical (sensory) awakening of the human brain; work that supports Maxine Greene and other popular aesthetics educators such as Eisner (2002).



Fig. 4.2 Flying milkweed seeds inspiring imagination!

Greene (1995) pictures the brain as a treasure house of experiences that enrich the thinking process and help children find their “voices,” see Fig. 4.2 above. The voices from current researchers in education and philosophy help me evaluate my thoughts and help me determine the validity of Greene’s theory. In particular, the work of Elliott Eisner (2002) takes my attention. As the keynote at a national conference (TAEA, Boston, 2005) Eisner reiterated much that Maxine Greene (1995) states that the arts wake up a person to become who they are meant to become. Later at the conference when we spoke, Eisner repeated that one of the most important things we do as art educators is to awaken a person to their creative potential. With my peers at an international conference in Russia (2006) while writing this dissertation, I found that we share many of these same ideas. As colleagues, we spoke about the role we share in awakening our students, helping them open their minds and growing their imaginations. I extend Greene’s theory of aesthetics by developing my own theory about imagination called the *Web of Betweenness*.

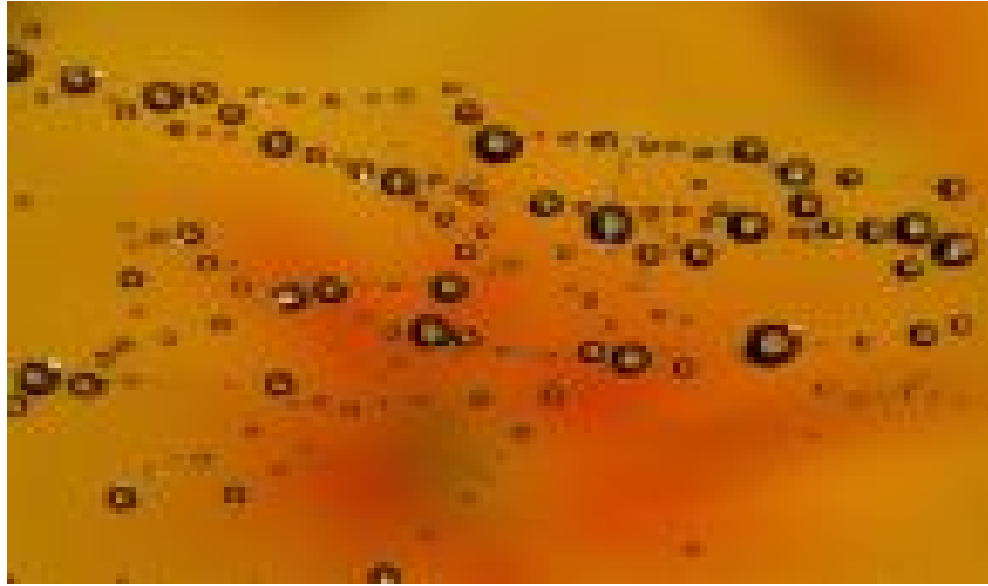


Fig. 4.3 the Web of Betweenness

The Web of Betweenness

Different questions come into my mind concerning imagination. Why is imaginative thought important? What is the role of imaginative thought? Does the role of imaginative thought change with the culture that inspires it? *The Web of Betweenness*, see Fig. 4.3, claims that the imagination is an active living force that exists beyond the self. Scientific imagery shows an active brain as a colorful brain, the colors showing the heat/energy generating within. Energy release goes beyond the brain; this principle also applies to the imagination. Since part of the brain activity is the imagination then it is reasonable to assume that at least part of the colors and energy relate to it. An imagination can be quite colorful, think of the young children who imagine “monsters” under the bed, tell elaborate tales of adventure, or when given the chance imagine their selves flying to school on winged feet.

Imagination is active within the brain, yet reaches beyond reflecting the forms of your thoughts. Reflecting on the forms that my thoughts take, the mental images are often in familiar forms. Specifically, I think in plants. This is not to say that I only think in plant forms, but often they help me understand an idea; I ‘morph’ the images into parts of plants assigning them plant parts as a way to understand their roles. For me, plants are familiar, have good associations, and they comfort me. An example came when I strove to understand the parts of Greene’s (1995) theory; I pictured a blooming plant with opening blooms one bloom for each part of her theory. If imaginative thought is alive and has movement, it must take a shape. A vivid picture from childhood begins to emerge a memory of a bursting seedpod. Why did I remember this? The idea intrigues me. The plant is tall with large full pods; it is a favorite of spiders. Finally, my memory surfaced.

The plant in my mind is a favorite, the milkweed. It grows tall maturing with rounded heads that become interesting seedpods that alternate on its stem like fruit. As a small child I remember asking why it is called milkweed; my dad likened the pods to a full cow waiting to be milked (since we lived near a dairy this was easy for me to understand). While milkweed is nothing exciting for most people, for me it captures special moments bringing to mind morning walks along Beaver Creek, see Fig. 4.4. The mornings held magic for my young mind. During my morning walks my imagination became a constant companion bringing to life stories from my Irish grandmother. I was a young child of 4 or 5 and in my mind the milkweed plants were full of fairies.



Fig. 4.4 Morning walk along Beaver Creek

Imagination develops in stages similar to the stages found in the milkweed: sprouting, followed by quick growth into a gangly plant that soon begins to bud developing into a beautifully blooming plant. This mature plant then turns to forming full rounded pods. At the right moment in time, these pods burst releasing a flight of tiny winged seeds.

My research is anecdotal and comes from many observations of children. The young child (2-3 years) relates to the sprouting stage. This is when their imagination begins to form as noted when the child learns to play “peep-a-boo.” Rapid physical and mental growth is also a time of rapid imaginative growth. The sprouting child scribbles images as they jabber learning their language patterns. Like a young plant develops leaves, the young child (3-5) develops figurative representation, a form of text that uses their thoughts and experiences.



Fig. 4.5 East Tennessee milkweed



Fig. 4.6 Close-up of blossom

The imaginations needs nourishment just like a plant needs water and soil nutrients, see Fig. 4.5 of a healthy milkweed plant. The growing gangly child is like the milkweed with increasing height and new leaves. The plant's environment determines its physical development and affects the quality of the next generation of plants. The same is true for the child. The new growth of the plant, the leaves that are added are like the new skills and aesthetic encounters. The child's environment affects the depth and quality of their imagination. A child may have a poor physical environment, yet one that is rich in imaginative play due to interactions with adults or others with whom the child comes in contact. Another child may develop poorly because of an environment lacking in reading, stories, or play. A deprived environment affects the child cognitively, physically, and creatively. [This is discussed in more depth in the K-12 education section.]

The school-aged child has languages. I use the term languages because language is not only verbal, but includes other forms of expression like telling stories, drawing or

painting, and singing. The child may create “mud pies” in a creek bed as I did or compose songs at a piano like one of my daughters. I use to tease my son that his expressive language was *Lego*. [While *Lego* is not recognized as a creative language, spatial and mechanical are.] It is more likely that the young child plays with a manufactured clay product like play dough or sings along with television friends. Whatever the child’s languages, they form through play and experiences. The richer the environment, the more and deeper the languages develop.

This blossoming stage relates to the school-aged child’s (6-16) developmental stages, which are of extreme importance for the imaginative development of the child. The fertilization of the blossoms becomes the opportunities given children through their environments from school experiences, educators or parents, see Fig. 4.6. The aesthetic experiences, encounters, and creative play open the windows of children’s minds awakening them to creative possibilities. How these enriching experiences are built into the learning environments relate to imaginative development, this idea develops in the section on K-12 education.

The multiple layers inside the milkweed pod reflect the multiple layers of human thought. Human thought develops individually, but forms along environmental lines. We are imbedded within a culture each with its mores, institutions or geographic influences just as a milkweed plant grows within particular soil and environmental conditions. For the milkweed, the environment is ample rain and soil nutrients to develop a fruitful plant. From this maturing state something exciting happens. These matured seeds burst the pod open taking flight. For a nourished imagination, the creative

thoughts cannot be held in and they burst forth with imaginative energy altering the world.

The milkweed metaphor offers many layers. It has an outer shell of protection and a shiny, smooth inner shell that makes release as easy as possible. This is important and will be discussed in a moment. The pod has literally hundreds of seeds. Each seed is like an imaginative thought. Some seed are larger than others like our big ideas. Some seem to fly away quickly while others cling until a stronger wind blows them away. This is like our imaginative thoughts that are easy to develop while others take time and reflection before they mature. (This dissertation is like this type of seed). Finally, not every seed finds release just as every imaginative thought does not become a created form.

The composition of the milkweed seed is important. It has two parts. One is a hard, tiny brown pellet of a seed which I think of as the imaginative idea. The rest of the seed consists of filaments that catch the wind and allow the seed to blow freely wherever it may this is like the freedom for thought and expression that one feels. The seed may fall on an area that allows it to grow or it may shrivel away. Like any imaginative thought, it may grow and develop into great art or invention or it may be hindered by too much restriction. The mature seed fly away like imaginative thoughts becoming the idea for a composition, a song, or invention. It may take many forms depending on the language of its creator. Remember the languages are diverse and include linguistic, visual, melodic, and movement.



Fig. 4.7 Potential inside a seedpod

My imagination envisions different forms for different ideas, a type of individuality. The notion of a *web of betweenness* recognizes that the imagination has dual roles. Imagination is a part of who a person is and at the same time of who a person might become. Developing imagination then becomes a strategy for identity development and makes its development more important for an individual than was previously thought. It is reasonable then that imagination should be actively developed. A person will not reach their potential without its development, see Fig. 4.7 that illustrates this.

The imagination has qualities of a muscle. The brain too has qualities of a muscle. Both the imagination and the brain grow stronger with use, like exercising a muscle. Both have memory as does muscle tissue. Once the imagination or the brain has an experience, an imaginative thought or an idea it retains the memory of it. Like a

muscle, the brain and the imagination work hard to become and stay strong. Many repetitions add strength. This is like an imaginative adventure; you picture it, building it, having experiences within an unseen world in your mind. Then like visiting a favorite spot, the brain can ‘revisit’ adding to the adventure, playing within the mind. Overtime, the memory becomes stronger and stronger until some may feel as though they could ‘loose’ their selves within their own mind. This multidimensional realm holds thoughts and visions leading them into future forms.

In my “aha moment” I saw the *web of betweenness* like a seed trapped in the strand of a spider’s web just as an imaginative thought seeks expressive form. The thought multiplies forming new strands with each imaginative thought. The web forms some strands attaching, then the seeds of creative thought fly “catching the wind” of imaginative thought. My notion of a *web of betweenness* moves creative thought from the brain into a multi-brain into a multidimensional realm, accepting and sending sensory and cognitive perceptions and beliefs while forming mental images.

The imagination has a multidimensional realm that comes from the cognitive process (the brain), any thought, any imagining. The best way to explain this is through explaining my thoughts on creating a work of art. In the artwork, *Integrity*, I developed a humorous cartoon, into a larger statement. While the piece is a multilayered mixed media artwork created for the retirement of a well known administrative art assistant, it also spoke to the person’s integrity. As a gift, the art teachers were to each create a page for a book which would be presented at the reception. After carefully thinking about her, the job she held, and the political nature of it, the idea of ‘see no evil, speak no evil, and hear no evil’ seemed appropriate.

The following is a look into my thought process. This is not to suggest that this is the correct way of “creating” or manipulating an idea, only that this is brief look into my process for this particular image. I thought, “It needed to become my own. What can I do?” As my mind ‘played’ with the idea a wonderful, playful image began to form. Artists tend to have themes for their work and one of mine was surfacing, the frog. Next I related the frog idea to a memory from childhood. I thought, “I love frogs, they remind me of visiting grandma’s in Mississippi.” I thought of crawling under the house, and catching “peepers,” to throw on my aunt. All these memories flooded into my mind and I laughed. I began to sketch and re-sketch, quickly before the image changed in my mind. When I liked the sketch, I inked it in. “Hmmm, better, but not enough...,” and decided to I sleep on the idea overnight. In the morning I knew what I wanted to do. I went to a copy machine and began to enlarge and then shrink the image. I began to imagine how they would look and then cut out the shapes, layering and turning them. When the



Fig. 4.8 Integrity

composition seemed to suit, I pasted it into place. Something more was needed ... “I know, I’ll color it with ink washes. ... Ahhh, very cool,” I thought. The images of the frogs resembled the presence that my retiring friend had, sometimes large and sometimes hardly noticed, but careful.

The artwork, *Integrity*, shown in Fig. 4.8, shows the many layers of thought involved in using an imagination. It also proves my notion of a *Web of Betweenness*. As stated previously, the *Web of Betweenness* adds to the discussion of aesthetics education with the idea that the imagination acts as a living spark that flows from our dimension to another. My imagination was challenged with a problem to solve, in this case the need for an artwork as a gift. Since I had known this individual for almost a decade, it created within me the desire to make more than just a picture. I desired to create a statement about the individual. My brain acted as an epistemologic organ that worked from a cultural idea. My language was drawing a cartoon. I linked my thought process to the cultural statement. Because of my ability to communicate through art, I could offer a new twist to a well-known idea using my theme of frogs. I also used cultural technology to assist my creativity. I analyzed and synthesized the relationship of the idea interpreting the idea using frogs. Using technology, I could further develop my idea, shrinking and enlarging stating subtly that our presence can be important in a situation or minimized, but still present. My artwork was framed by my cognitive development, my perceptions, and the interaction with my environment. So my artwork became a dialog with an idea. I find it aesthetically pleasing and socially relevant for this individual. Therefore, I have found that this particular artwork serves to open culturally relevant conversations.

This discussion of, *Integrity*, serves as support for six statements about the *Web of Betweenness*:

- The brain is an epistemologic organ that develops the mind as a socio-cultural organ that codifies using various forms of language. (Dewey, 1958; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995; Schutz, 1967; Sousa, 2001; 2006)
- The importance of *aesthetics education's* inclusion in the general educational curriculum is the linking of the thought process to cultural awakening and citizen development (Dewey, 1958; Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995; 2003; Sousa, 2001)
- *Aesthetics education* offers avenues of communication that frame our references to the world creating new vistas that in turn affect imaginative growth. (Eisner, 2002; Foucault, 1977; Greene, 1995; 2003; Hall, 1967)
- *The arts* frame cognitive development due to perceptions and interactions within the environment suggesting an analysis-synthesis relationship. (Eisner, 2002; Greene, 1995; 2003)
- *The arts* are dialogic, aesthetically and socially relevant for redefining, the role of the arts, opening cultural conversations, generating knowledge of while recording particular times and places in our cultures. The arts experiences are polyphonic, multi-voiced, and multi-cultural. (Greene, 1995; 2003; Lanier, 1969)

To summarize, *the Web of Betweenness* conceptually defines imagination as an electrically charged pulse transversing creative thought from the three-dimensional world into a multidimensional world while seeking creative form; it affects self-concept formation, see Fig. 4.9 above. Each of these statements are clarified and developed through application to Art Education Pedagogy in the next section.



Fig. 4.9 The living spark of imagination transversing the web

Implications for Art Education Pedagogy

How would the *Web of Betweenness* impact aesthetic education specifically arts education? Before this question is answered, let me provide an explanation of the field of art education, what it is and the purpose it serves. Arts education lies within a college of education just as art classes lie within the K-12 school curriculum. Both the art classes and the art educators are often misunderstood.

Art education is an exciting and challenging area that works with talented and creative persons. One role of art education is to teach strategies to those who want to impart their skills in an artistic form to school students. Art education pedagogy seeks to train an artist to expand the thinking and imaginative potential of children. Art educators act as facilitators to children within the K-12 system to reach beyond their selves, to

discover new forms of communication that allow them to express thoughts and ideas in unique ways. Art educators help students learn how to think while developing their knowledge of art through experiences and encounters. This sounds challenging and it is.

The challenge lies with bringing together two very different areas of knowledge, art (visual) and teaching. Pedagogy teaches ways of working with and understanding students. Good pedagogy reflects the changes within society making it meaningful and current for today's schools and reflects the political changes found within the schools as well as the changes within the culture. This means that arts education pedagogy teaches about the rules and regulations of the modern school systems while also teaching about current trends such as multiculturalism or the implications of computer technologies on the classroom. Art education pedagogy teaches the artist teacher to continue to draw from their artistic knowledge for relevancy acting as agents for culture formation and cultural practices.

Uniqueness exists within the knowledge brought into the arts education programs by each pre-service teacher. Each brings an artistic specialty that may come from any form of the arts or crafts. (The arts are such areas as painting, drawing, sculpture, instrumental, choral, or musical composition while the crafts are ceramics or jewelry to mention only a few). This makes for a richness of thought processes and ideas representative of the microcosm found within K-12 education.

The arts in the schools are part of a dialogic activity as individuals or groups make sense of and express their lived experiences. The arts become a form of text that consumes the images, social trends, and experiences creating culture. (The impact of a rich aesthetic curriculum on K-12 education is the focus of the next section.) Art

educators should impact K-12 instruction, affecting the cognitive development for future generations; therefore, the training that future arts educators receive is very important.

The last decade has seen changes in the art education due to postmodern influences. The changes are from the traditional form that focused on historically fine arts and crafts to the relative that include the larger realm of visual culture. (Efland, Freeman, & Stuhr, 1996; P. Smith, 2003) This section of my dissertation adds to this discussion for the reconceptualization of arts education theoretically and pedagogically. My *Web of Betweenness* considers the contributions of critical theory with M. Greene's (1995; 2003) aesthetics theory while still acknowledging the influence of R. Williams' definition of culture as an, "interconnected social organism comprised of different aspects of society," without hierarchy working together toward a 'community of experience' (Williams, 1965, p.63). P. Willis's (1989) *grounded aesthetics* relates to Williams' definition of culture. The term *grounded aesthetics* views human consumption as a socio-political act as culture forms during the act of consumption. The act of consumption becomes a symbolic act of creativity. Contrast this act of consumption to the more traditional knowledge formation approach known as DBAE. My proposal offers an alternative to the 1990's art education pedagogy that was built on Disciplined Based Art Education (DBAE). DBAE built knowledge on four disciplines of art history, art criticism, aesthetics, and art production. Traditionally, aesthetic education affects concept formation by building art skills and basic art knowledge from production and art history. The *Web of Betweenness* changes the focus away from skills and concepts and places the focus on imaginative development through aesthetic encounters and production.

The *Web of Betweenness* builds on the assumption that the brain is an epistemologic organ that forms knowledge as the mind develops, for example, riding a bicycle. The theoretical knowledge of the physics of how a bicycle works uses reasoning, however, there is no substitute for acquiring the state of balance to successfully ride a bicycle; this knowledge of balance is a more intuitive knowledge. We do not need to know the physics, but in order to ride, the practical knowledge, having balance, is needed. As an epistemologic organ then, the brain evaluates properties, higher forms of knowledge (imagination) instead of propositions.

The brain naturally has imagination that it exhibits through creative thoughts. These thoughts seek a form that filters through whatever culture or society in which it lives. During this part of the process, the filters of culture or society affect the concept of self. While the brain sifts, filters, and shapes these imaginative thoughts, the brain also codifies them. The code that emerges is in the form of an aesthetic language. The language that emerges is an expression of its creative thoughts. This language is the “knowledge of how”, practically speaking it is the young child who draws, sings, tells stories, or writes poems. Each language form exhibits a type of aesthetic understanding; physically, the electrically charged pulse transverses from the three-dimensional world (the brain) into a multidimensional world (imaginative thought).

The *Web of Betweenness* seeks to develop a natural response found in children, the imagination. I propose that schools integrate encounters and experiences that excite young minds. This requires that instead of removing time from fine arts classes that these classes are incorporated into core curriculum classes that cross curricular learning are included weekly.

- The arts should have the same level of importance as language, math, or science. Including aesthetics education into the general education curriculum links this thought process to the cultural awakening of the child.
- The art education curriculum should include some study of cognitive development that includes language formation since the brain multitasks as a socio-cultural organ that codifies language forms. [A language is an arbitrary agreement.]

Languages have different qualities including the nature of meaning and the translation of forms. This first example uses math as a language form. Mathematically speaking, the formulas translate into particular relationships. One particular example is found in the Fibonacci number sequence (1, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, etc.) that is illustrated in nature with the spiral structure of a nautilus shell, see Fig. 4.10.



Fig. 4.10 Nautilus shell naturally displays the sequence



Fig. 4.11 Parthenon used the Golden Mean

It follows the proportions of the *Golden Mean*. The *Golden Mean* states that the dimensions of the small part (a) relates to the large part (b) as it relates to the whole (b + a). In artwork, the ratio of 1 to 1.6 is used (Chapman, 1992, p.35). Interpretations of this math form benefits the arts educator. Historical study proves that the ancient Egyptians and Greeks were aware of this pleasing proportion, represented textually by the Greek symbol *phi*. This proportion shows in the architectural structure of the *Parthenon* for example; see Fig. 4.11 (Knott, 2008)

The second statement from the *Web of Betweenness* uses the arts to frame cognition from interactions and perceptions from the environment. This suggests that information taken in then undergoes a form of translation and analysis. Another example of the translation and analysis that work well with art is music. Music as a language form translates into a notated form and into mathematical segments of time. A musician translates the sound into fingerings and embouchure forms. Referring back to the

Fibonacci proportion, Beethoven's 5th *Symphony* uses it in the opening notes that have become recognized and dramatic chords of music. It is also recognized that Stradivarius used the proportion to place the "f" holes in his famous violins (Knott, 2008).

When heard by an artist, the musical language translates the sounds into visual forms. Different types of music spontaneously seem to suggest different artistic images. An application of this translation is found in many 20th century art images. For the art educator, the education curriculum should emphasize connections between forming culture and consuming culture while aiding identity formation. While many artists could be used, I will use jazz artist Stuart Davis as an example of the third statement of the *Web of Betweenness*, the importance of aesthetic education in the general curriculum. Through aesthetic awareness a linking process occurs between the thinking process and cultural awakenings.

Davis, who grew up in Philadelphia, had an aesthetically rich environment, especially in jazz. With the technological advances of radio, Davis thought that visual art should change in style to reflect the new musical form. Davis used a new, jazz-inspired visual language to examine and communicate "modern" American life, (see Fig. 4.12). By the Swing Era, Jazz was the most popular musical form. Applying this concept to aesthetics education, many culturally changing phenomenon will be incorporated into public expression. For art education purposes, some should be included into the curriculum providing cultural relevancy for the students.



Fig. 4.12 Stuart Davis, Jazz Landscape

Many cultural phenomena, found on the internet, such as sports, or the war in Iraq, are already in the thoughts of the students. Asking them to work with these ideas helps with relevancy and offers opportunities to develop their cognitive abilities. Thinking about cultural issues adds additional emphasis on practical and reflective encounters for K-12 students. The arts offer the space within the educational curriculum for the students to discover what ideas and cultural happenings are important to them. Through the growth of aesthetics education, avenues of communication open. The students frame their reference to the world and from this framing; the students create new ideas that in return affect their imaginative growth.

Aesthetics education enhances the curriculum to include “things meaningful,” changing the focus from basic skills to enriching life skills. The arts add to culture generating both knowledge about their times and recording events, ideas, and places. Art educators have power within their grasp as they work with developing minds. It is up to

the arts educator to bring this richness into their courses, to stimulate thinking, to aide imaginative expression, and to engage both students and culture through different forms of cultural art.

Additional emphasis should be placed on developing the concept of artist/ teacher. When I first began to participate in art education classes, I came from a fine arts program. The draw for me was that I was a natural teacher and that the commercial program I participated in did not seem to fit my personality and artistic gifts. What I found were students who lacked confidence in their artistic abilities and thought art education was a safe place to “hide.” Through the years many of my students have expressed surprise at my artistic abilities. I ask, “Do you not think your math or science teachers know what they are teaching you? ...Why would I be any different?”

Art education programs should continue to seek artists who are passionate, passionate about their art work and passionate about teaching. Not everyone who is interested in teaching K-12 arts should. Teaching is a complex combination of skills, strategies, and “people” sense. An excellent art education program should build the concept of artist-teacher. Notice that I put the concept of artist first. As an artist the art educator analyzes and synthesizes different bits of information processing them into a creative form. The students need to see this process modeled by an artist, with strategies to develop and teach the processes from the point of view of a teacher. I believe that the confidence displayed to students through the artist-teachers’ content knowledge affects the students’ learning. How can someone who doubts their abilities positively affect the artistic abilities of others?

By taking the developing concept as artist-teacher, the creative thought forms in the mind of the future teacher and begins to take life in the multidimensional world of creative thought. There is a well-known saying that, “if you repeat what you’ve done, you’ll get what you got.” The question then becomes what will “your” art class look like? This simple question asked repeatedly builds the concept of artist-teacher.

While teaching pre-service art educators, I came to several conclusions:

- Art education needs teachers who can work with various ages of children, therefore it is important to learn about the different ages and characteristics of children. Many jobs require that the art educator work with an age span that overlaps developmental ages. It is common to find teachers who work with pre-schoolers to pre-adolescents.
- It helps to develop the concept of working with a particular age. By isolating the behaviors common to a particular age-group, it assists the pre-service teacher in developing their knowledge. It is like building a scaffold on which to hang bits of information that will develop instructional knowledge. Then another age-group can be isolated, worked with, and knowledge gained.
- Different personalities seem to work with some ages better than others. While I taught at the university, a favorite comment of mine was, “Everyone should begin teaching with elementary children.” A few students would look at me quizzically and ask, “Why?” My response was always the same, “Because they will love you.” Many of my former students are now my colleagues and several have come up to me and said that I was right. Having begun their careers with elementary positions, they said that the job is so demanding, they could not imagine having to

deal with students who did not want to be in their classes or to work with students with so many other needs like the ones I work with.

- Success in art education relies on a balance between the person as an artist and the role of a teacher; both are required for the art classroom. One strategy that is successful is for the future teacher is to develop a “picture” of what they want to “see” in their future classroom. If the pre-service teacher cannot imagine a productive and successful classroom, it brings to mind a question as to their teaching abilities. The imagination as a teacher needs development. It is easy to repeat what one has seen, it becomes more difficult to envision something better.
- All students are wonderful in my eyes and I have taught long enough to realize that there is a “rightness of fit” for the students and their teacher.

The last statement clarifying the *Web of Betweenness* defines the imagination as an electric spark. Think about this statement for a moment. An electric spark is like a good teacher who starts classroom learning. A teacher is sometimes like the engine of an automobile. On a cold winter day, it may start hesitantly, but in a few minutes (or with a few lessons) the engine is running well. An excellent teacher is like a powerful spark that ignites the entire class and imaginations can soar, see Fig. 4.12. Again, the ignition of imagination and learning cannot be over-emphasized. The future is in the hands of the teacher.

This is a little scary when you think of how little teachers are paid when so much is asked of them.



Fig. 4.13 Milkweed seeds take flight

Art education pedagogy teaches ways of working with and understanding students. An excellent art education program should reflect cultural changes; include meaningful pedagogical content and practical skills. Art education programs should seek passionate artists who desire to both create art and teach the skills to students. The art education curriculum should include additional study of the cognitive process.

Art education pedagogy is an important part of aesthetics education. It serves to link two different areas of development, the physical cognitive development with the more intuitive aesthetic development. Art education links with aesthetics education through the *Web of Betweenness*. The example of artist, Stuart Davis, exemplifies the *Web of Betweenness*. Davis' life was rich in aesthetics education in the general curriculum. From his aesthetic awareness,



Fig. 4.14 Webbing knowledge

Davis could link his thinking process with cultural awakenings. In the general curriculum, it is the arts that offer the space for the students to discover what ideas and cultural happenings are important to them. Aesthetics education enhances the curriculum and provides meaningful experiences. Finally, the *Web of Betweenness* spans imaginative thought from the brain into an aesthetic form much like a spider web forms a “bridge” between different objects see Fig. 4.14.

Implications for K-12 Educational Reform

Where does the *Web of Betweenness* lead us in reforming American schools? How would an educational system that uses an aesthetics emphasis look? This section focuses on an aesthetic curriculum for K-12 education. While the educational process enables its participants to become different, an aesthetics curriculum creates new vistas on the

horizons of students' lives who become architects of their futures. As an architect of their futures, each student becomes more reflective and purposeful in planning, setting and achieving goals.

Associates, friends, and acquaintances have asked me to open an aesthetic school. While the request has caused me to smile, the request also causes me to think. What would such a school look like? My response is to ask them to consider the economics of such an adventure. It is an adventure because it would offer an exciting alternative to present day schools. The K-12 schools that exist in America today are a form of a factory model begun more than a hundred years ago. While our society has changed tremendously over time, the school systems have not. This section of the dissertation allows freedom for my imaginative abilities to ignite a spark toward imagining better schools.

What is the purpose for schools in America today? In the past it was the public schools that helped develop a language consensus among the immigrants. Teaching in an inner-city school today, this need is still present. Schools develop culture as they provide common experiences for the young population. Schools can develop a sense of nationalism. As schools transfer culture they are transferring to the students' knowledge and skills while at the same time strengthening what is the strongest (or best) parts of the culture and forging up weaker institutions that add to the cultural stability. More and more the schools are a social agency screening the children for physical, emotional, and cognitive needs.

These different needs should be assessed. Due to the improvements of modern medicines, many children who would not have survived or thrived are presently in the

educational system. Due to governmental policies and safeguards, most children have access to an adequate education. I do believe that improvements can and should be made with aesthetics education leading the way toward school reform. I have taken into consideration the struggles of the family unit as well as special education intervention strategies. Both are incorporated within the family academy structures (K-7th) and beginning with 8th grade into the academic academies (defined on page 158). Both the families and the academies would complement and extend the County / State core curriculum (of Tennessee which I am familiar).

This is a high interest topic for me as the school where I am currently teaching is going through the process of redesigning the structure and curriculum. In the following model clarifications should be made:

- Students are chosen for each family academy due to natural proclivities, strengths, interests, and information gathered from parents, former teachers, and test data.
- Academies operate Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Fridays; Wednesday's may be reserved for additional tutoring, special projects, field trips, or assemblies as needed.
- All academies emphasize research and investigative techniques using various hands-on activities.
- Different technologies and language skills are an integral part of daily activities as are basic physical exercise and play.

Three terms need to be defined: *family academy*, *looping*, and *academic academy*.

A *family academy* is an educational unit present from kindergarten through grade seven.

The family unit consists of a teacher and ideally twelve to fifteen children. [I chose this number from my years of experience in a public classroom. This number is easy to work with, enjoyable due to personality differences, and large enough to represent different learning and thinking styles). Each family unit has three grades present and operates on the looping strategy (K-pre-1st and 1st; K-2nd; 2nd – 4th; 3rd – 5th; 4th – 6th; 5th – 7th). This amount of family divisions easily accommodates the number of students available within a typical school division. It easily expands or collapses the groups to accommodate student needs. *Looping* is a learning strategy where a group of children remain with the same teacher for a period of two to three years. This mixture of family groups would allow for children and their different rates of learning. For instance a young boy enters kindergarten, struggles with reading so he needs a pre-first year before entering first grade. Suppose the boy is ready to enter second grade and now learns easily, he could progress to a 2nd – 4th group. Another child upon entering kindergarten might be gifted so that child could even skip from a K-2nd group to the 4th – 6th group. At the end of the third year, the family group would have a few children who would go on to another family while also taking in new family members. This model has flexibility to meet cognitive needs and also offers stability to meet emotional and physical security meeting the specifics in the first statement of the *Web of Betweenness* that the brain develops the mind within the boundaries of society and culture.

My experience with special needs students is varied. I have worked closely with special education students whether gifted, processing delayed, or learning disabled and automatically include them within each family. These students would be spread among appropriate family groups with teacher aides or educational assistants being assigned

accordingly. If a family group had a hearing disabled student(s), for instance, sign language would become a part of that group's curriculum. Ideally, English Language Learners (ELL) could be distributed with additional work in language, both English and (i.e.) Spanish becoming part of that group's curriculum.

The family academies would be based on the following aesthetic areas: visual arts, musical arts (choral and instrumental), dramatic arts and creative movement, and technologies. This translates into four different aesthetic families. The students would have the freedom to move from one type of aesthetic study to another when the looping cycle ends.

To clarify my thoughts, a student would make a choice or be placed within a family group. The family would "belong" to a particular aesthetic strand. If there were problems, maybe the child did not know or understand what the "family" would be then shifts could occur; or, if the parents had chosen and the child was unhappy, then steps could be taken to accommodate parents while also developing the student along more agreeable courses of study. Ideally every student would have some exposure and classes within each aesthetic area, however, the family aesthetic would consume most of the learning strategies. Basic technology skills should be incorporated to every family as much as reading, science, and math. Some curriculum areas seem to fit better with certain aesthetic areas in my mind. For example drama and movement work readily with history and stories. Music has such a strong basis in mathematics that the two work naturally together, while visual art and science have mutual bonds.

Ideally, each aesthetic family would develop work around thematic units. These themes could be different for each family or be carried out throughout the school.

Thematic learning is a pedagogical model based on the selection of a theme or topic of study. This model also incorporates several other pedagogical methods such as field trips, team-teaching, and learning community. The theme becomes the critical thinking binder that brings in different pieces of information. This approach encourages students to think broadly and narrowly about a subject. With my emphasis on aesthetics, thematic teaching stimulates imaginative and creative thinking. This model is also inclusive since it encourages students to find the relationship between information and facts from a variety of sources. It is a scalar form of learning, meaning that learning is scaled, delving deeper and broader with successive loops. Thematic teaching encourages students to look for relationships between finite (or specific information) and global thinking.

The rationale for this type of family academy comes from current research that shows creative and productive behaviors in adults can be traced to these common experiences (Gabelnick, F. et al, 1990; Smith, B.L. & McCann, J, 2001):

- Early attention to childhood interests
- High expectations
- Participation in experiments, investigations, and projects
- Mentors

The goals of this model are to:

- Increase learning, success, and academic achievement
- Enhance intrinsic motivation to learn
- Improve self-directed learning
- Refine analytic, critical, creative, and problem solving skills

- Escalate talent refinements

With entrance into 8th grade a change occurs from a family academy model to an academic learning community. Historically, the academic academy was founded by Plato in Athens in 385 BC. An *Academic Academy* today is an innovative learning experience that involves the students in a cohort. The *cohort* adds stability similar to the family unit in the younger grades. Within this learning community students have a greater opportunity to connect with their teachers and classmates. Some classes have a different learning design, for instance 2 or more classes may be connected by a common topic or strand. In other situations the connection expands to the larger community, such as the University of Tennessee or the national lab in Oak Ridge (ORNL). The students deepen their learning through these experiences and become a part of something larger. Through a continual and constant study of the aesthetic arts within other disciplines, the students develop a deep richness.

What kind of academic academies do I envision? The aesthetic connections continue, see Fig. 4.15. Four academic academies would provide choice for individual study: The Liberal and Visual Arts and Science Academy; the Academy of Engineering, Mathematics, and Music; the Academy of Dramatic Arts, Political Sciences and Legal Studies; and the Academy of Health Sciences and Movement. The next figure illustrates each academy and the different component of aesthetics education. The academies continue the strands begun within the family groups in K-7th grades to provide continuity, yet broaden to include career opportunities of study. The 8th and 9th grades are a time for exploration and development with a final selection of an academy for the 10th

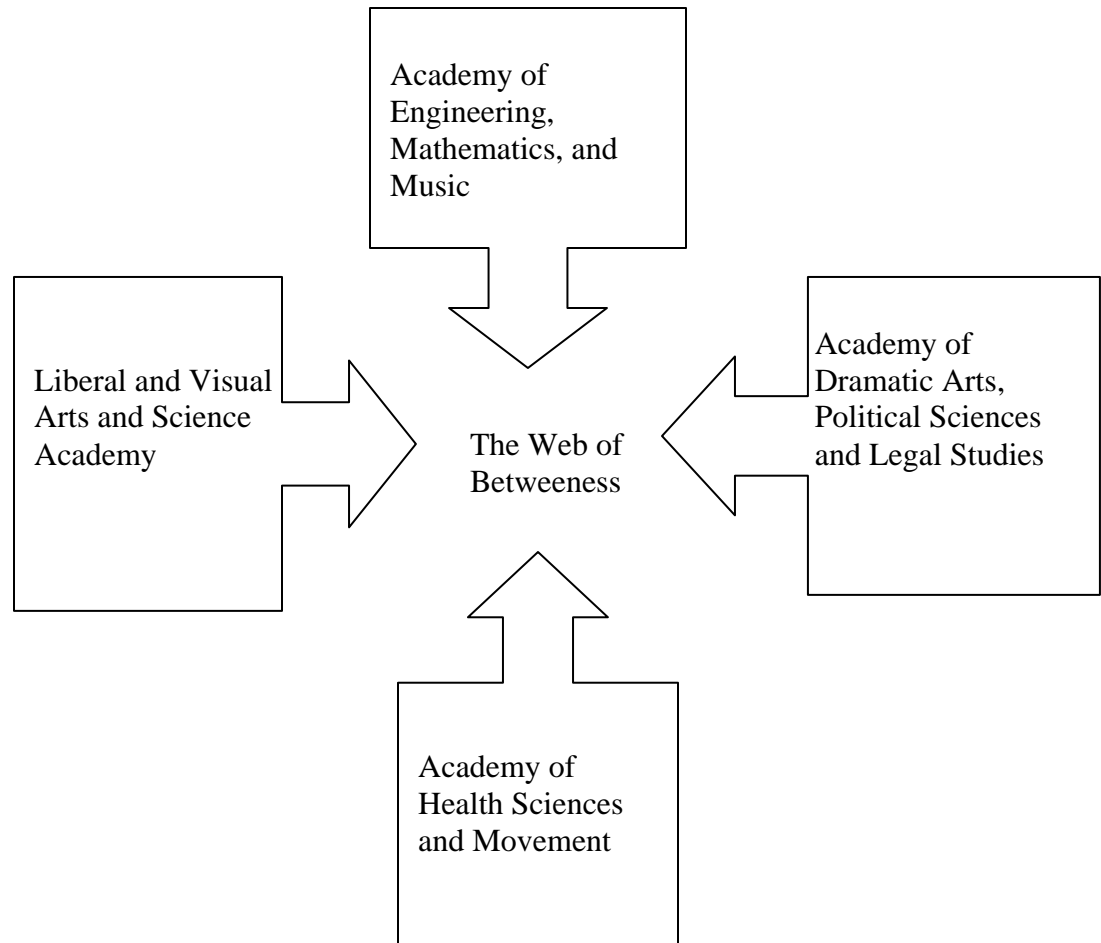


Fig. 4.15 Academy Model for using the Web of Betweenness

grade. This is not saying that a student who has an interest in two different academies could not take classes in both. It is asking the students to make a decision for an academy based on interest and future life goals. It does organize the students into cohort groups so that the students can develop friendships within an area of interest. Specific instructors would be aligned with an academy providing a mentoring role. Cohorts enhance the learning environment and enhance the learning experience. There would be classes that were shared among different academies such as math or language. There

would be other class that would be specific for an academy such as advanced painting or aerospace engineering.

This academy model works with the idea of the *Web of Betweenness*. Conceptually, it continues that the imagination acts as an electrically charged pulse transversing creative thought from the three-dimensional world into a multidimensional world while seeking creative form. The academy model develops the self-concept formation through growing personal identity concept using an aesthetics education. Aesthetics education is the theme which ties all four families together; “things happen” within a curriculum rich in aesthetics education.

This section has sought to further explain educational reform within the confines of the *Web of Betweenness*. I have proposed an idea for a school model based in aesthetics education. This dissertation concludes with the application of the *Web of Betweenness* in my inner-city classroom.

Applications to a K-12 classroom

Applying the Web of Betweenness to my classroom practice is rewarding and exciting. My school has students from 13 different countries and most major religions in the world. There are at least ten different languages spoken throughout the day. The school has a free-and-reduced lunch rate of 70% that translates into a poverty environment. The school has a transient population of approximately 25%. This statistic is included to let the reader become aware of another problem with working with this population. One fourth of the students attend the school for a limited amount of time before moving to another inner-city school within the system. The time is precious to

stimulate and motivate the students to set goals and to imagine a better future. Another recurring problem is with violence within the home. Weekly it comes up as a topic of discussion with the recurring question of, “what do I do?”

Aesthetics education offers these components: refine sensibilities, develop routines and foster skills for life long learning, while providing opportunities for sensory education that have social implications. It is imperative that students have the opportunity to develop their sense of aesthetics. Arts classes challenge students in different ways. The students have to think, to analyze without the burden of test scores or of absolutes. The students learn that their opinion is important. The students develop skills and discover that they already have many of the skills necessary for the experience. I want to use the five statements of *aesthetics education* and apply them to my classroom. Each statement becomes a strand to construct my web of school reform.

My classroom is within a very diversified school. It lies at the heart of a moderately sized southern city close to the Appalachian Mountains. Many of our students complain that school does not relate to their life. In this environment, that can lead to disasters in learning. In an attempt to correct this problem, additions to the curriculum were made so that the learning opportunities tie in with the realities of their life. For learning to become meaningful, the students need to look beyond the traditional books that many cannot read and tie learning opportunities to the popular culture to which they belong. An example in a reading intervention program includes building or “banking” word sounds that the students then use to construct poems or raps about an incident in their life.

In the art room images of social problems are used to spark a writing assignment that is both creative and cognitive in thinking. The writing component supports the school's literacy interventions. The writings are shared with classmates, discussed, and then expand to include visual symbols. As students explore a particular issue of concern they also expand their skills for problem solving, and research. Through collective identification of generative themes, students engage personally with the curriculum. New skills become important life skills.

Aesthetics education links the thought process to cultural awakening and citizen development. *Aesthetics education* also offers avenues of communication that frame our references to the world creating new vistas. Imagine a project in which the students focus on the waste generated within the school. An example from my teaching takes the students through a series of steps. To begin, images are shown of garbage and the problems it causes. The students briefly research issues of production, packing, and disposal. The next day, the students begin to gather mathematical statistics from the cafeteria. The students discovered that a school generates a great deal of garbage. After researching for a week, a group of students created a visual display from every plastic *spork* used in the cafeteria. Students also published a 'zine, a small newspaper to illustrate the facts and figures involved in plastics production and the dangers to the environment. Interviews with a principal and cafeteria manager, shown as a film loop, explain why plastic is used instead of metal forks. *Cartoons* from art classes show how students might be fed in future schools or on other planets. Rather than expounding clichés against pollution, the students, families, and the larger school community begin to consider how our everyday choices affect the environment.

Each year my visual arts classes operate around a theme. The themes vary from year to year so that the students continue to have a fresh experience. One year the theme continued to relate art to a pizza. This theme tied art into a popular culture food of pizza while tying art to a larger idea of diversity through art and through different cultures. The theme this year was faces through time and from the world, see Fig. 4.16.

An interesting insight occurred in my classroom recently. As previously stated, there are many different nationalities present in the school. To work with this idea, I thought a good teaching aide would be a “portrait wall” of faces from around the world, see Fig. 4.16. The portraits include several races as well as different artistic styles. This wall of faces continues to be used during class discussions. It is used to build a basic knowledge of terms, but to my pleasure it adds to the richness of class discussions that develop the students’ empathy and imagination.



Fig. 4.16 Classroom portrait wall

The students' natural responses come from two artworks; one is a face from a paint company, at far left in Fig. 4.16. The other is the portrait of a old soldier by Rembrandt, dark and pensive, see far right in Fig. 4.16. The discussion went on for almost half an hour and the students (24 seventh graders) asked engaging questions. The importance of *imagination* is complex and affects such things as empathy. The students' imaginations were "turned on" as they found "eyes" in the abstract portrait relating the "eyes" to planets. Their imaginations "turned on" as they discussed the events that the soldier experienced in his life. The students' imagined him as weary and stressed. Their empathy reached out to the soldier. The students' also talked about the violence that the soldier could have seen and related it to their lives.

"He would have used a sword, but where I live they use guns."

Aesthetics serves as sensory experience, commendable or damnable, that is a matter of intention and context. These sensory experiences provide connections, overlaps, associations, integration, comparison, and reference that schools need (Thayer-Bacon, 2000). Forming self is an important opportunity that comes through aesthetics literacy. As students explore how one develops their sense of self through their situatedness (family, culture, or religion), they collect knowledge. An aesthetics curriculum facilitates the development of empathy, a form of care, thereby enabling participants to reach beyond themselves. Empathy puts us in touch with our emotional selves.

As shown in the class discussion previously stated, the students were projecting their emotions, their thoughts, and attitudes. Some were projecting their weariness onto the soldier. I know this because we talked about this "action." Others did the same with

stress that they were feeling. I know that some of my probing questions came from the fact that the students know soldiers involved with the War in Iraq and that my son was soon to return to Baghdad. This wonderful experience as a teacher served as an opportunity to see the students' growth from this encounter with the arts. What began as a teaching tool, the picture wall, became a socially engaging aesthetic experience that allowed participants to connect to their selves and their world. The example of the classroom discussion proves that the arts are socially relevant as a dialogic and that one role of the arts is to open cultural conversations. Cultural conversations generate knowledge and understanding. Using the above artistic example, the artist has a "visual conversation" with the viewer and also creates a record of particular times and places within the culture.

Another example came in my classroom as I shared with my students an artwork of mine, see Fig. 4.17. I talked with them about the emotional aspects of art. Art can affect you on deep and personal levels; my son's silhouette is in the lower right. As an artist, I am trying to pull the viewer in, in this case to help you experience my fear. The artwork shows a soldier's silhouette against blowing sands. The sky is darkening with distant airships flying in. The army has a convoy carefully crossing into position. A woman's figure is staring back at the viewer with fear in her eyes. Small images are also attached that show some current results of war. As the class (8th graders) began to talk, the first several comments were about the fearful woman. Several asked why she was afraid. Almost immediately, other students who are usually very quiet responded that it was from the things in the pictures. The class looked, and then looked again. They



Fig. 4.17 Return to Baghdad

shared stories from family or friends that they had heard or from reports on the news. Others brought in information from their social studies classes. Another excellent opportunity to broaden their minds was occurring. The art acted as the catalyst to open cultural conversations. The students questioned the woman in the black *burka* and the lack of human rights. The students were generating knowledge of their times. The artwork served as a record of our particular times and places in our cultures. As in the statement, these experiences are polyphonic, multi-voiced, and multi-cultural.

Aesthetics education helps students to encounter “difference.” It embraces the multicultural aspects of modern curriculum, which introduces the generative themes of others, seeing through others’ eyes, exploring the meanings of artworks in terms of social and historical contexts (Anderson, 1990). To ensure a more thoughtful approach to other

cultures, it is important to represent “others” as dynamic individuals and groups that are changing and evolving in contemporary times (Desai, 2002). One way to do this is to involve the students in an energetic program of diversity, a celebration of connections from this American culture to other cultures. An example of this within a school is through a celebration, including the different cultures that are found within a school. This has been successful through holiday music programs at a former school where I taught. Many of the students formed meaningful questions about a particular religious rite when the students saw a menorah lit by a Jewish family whose children attended the school. Later, in the same program, other students beat upon African drums as Kwanzaa was included. Popular music was mixed with religious hymns and the program was a rich experience for the entire school.

An aesthetics application example in this school is called, *Taste of the Arts*. This yearly event primarily serves to build the sense of community with the school. It is a fun-filled evening which offers delicious food, delightful singing and instrumental offerings, and exciting visual displays. Almost every student in the school takes part in the aesthetics education program during their middle school years. The program varies with the skills of the students and their maturity. Since my classes are in visual art, that is my focus. Each year the advanced art students work for weeks preparing their displays. This year the focus is two-fold, sculptural food and art history.

As the students began to develop their ideas for food they worked in small groups. Each talked about ideas and then drew sketches. The second class the ideas were taken one by one and discussed as a class. My favorite part was when the students began to realize the proportions that their sculptures would take. Their eyes were “huge” when the

proportions were understood. What was imagined as life-sized became super-sized within the classroom. Using poultry netting and paper mache', the students began to experience a new sense of wonderment and excitement for art.

The art history focus comes in various ways. The first year of the *Taste of the Arts*, the fascination with the *Mona Lisa* became a photo-op. Since then, a student dresses up as the famous lady and other students or community members pose for a picture creating a reenactment of sorts. The student who portrays *Mona Lisa* is not to smile. Some young visitors try to make her laugh (much like we might try to make a British soldier smile). Another art history moment this year is with "an opening." During a recent field trip to the McClung Museum, the docents told the students about a Victorian customs of the grand tour. The last stop during the tour was often Cairo where the wealthy art patrons would purchase an Egyptian mummy. One group of students is currently sculpting a *sarcophagus*. Another student will become a "living mummy". At seven o'clock the "opening" takes place. It is theatric, it is fun, and most importantly these students are excited and involved aesthetically.

The displays apply the six statements of the *Web of Betweenness*: The sculptural process requires team work at this age and builds the students sense of themselves as developing artists. They have taken abstract ideas and are developing the ideas using visual language. The students are learning another form of communication. The students are linking their thought process to their culture, which is exemplified in the foods they chose: pizza, tacos, and fruit. These students are creating vistas that will inspire the visitors' imaginations.

Through this creative process, their perceptions and interactions are constantly changing and growing. The students are exhibiting cognitive growth as they analyze and synthesize their imaginative food forms. The entire evening is developing and encouraging the social relevancy of the arts. Many cultural conversations will begin that generate new knowledge for many of the parents. The students will be asked to explain their exhibits, the process, and the initial ideas. Finally, the notion of imagination operating as a *Web of Betweenness* lives through the students. The students have taken their creative thoughts into a three-dimensional world and beyond into a multi-dimensional world while seeking creative form. They are forever changed.

Summary of Web Applications

The last section of this dissertation applied the concepts of the *Web of Betweenness* to a classroom where the students explore forms of aesthetic language in light of cultural events. Through aesthetic education, in particular visual art, the students begin with imagining a better future. Through different encounters and experiences the students sensibilities refine for cultural awakenings with social implications. The visual arts, in particular, offer forms of cultural conversations that generate for the students knowledge and understanding of their culture and others around the world. The visual arts record and add to a historic record of a culture. To imagine is a wonderful ability; developing imaginative richness through aesthetic adventures forms a *Web of Betweenness* from the students with the larger world. As an art educator, I strive to help my students make sense of their experiences while learning more about themselves. I work as a facilitator of critical inquiry, and as a supporter for their aesthetic experiences. I strive to fill my

classes with meaningful interactions so that the students make interconnections. An aesthetics curriculum facilitates the development of a socially engaging imagination that explodes into the world beyond, see Fig. 4.18. Socially engaging aesthetic experiences allow participants to transform themselves, their communities, and the world(s) in which they live.



Fig. 4.18 The explosion of a cultivated imagination

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