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Art as idolatry or sacred possibility: A hermeneutic study of art education

Wright, Sylvia Jean, Ed.D.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 1987

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ART AS IDOLATRY OR SACRED POSSIBILITY:

A HERMENEUTIC STUDY OF

ART EDUCATION

by

Sylvia J. Wright

A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education

Greensboro
1987

Approved by

David E Purpel

Dissertation Adviser

APPROVAL PAGE

This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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WRIGHT, SYLVIA J., Ed.D. Art as Idolatry or Sacred Possibility: A Hermeneutic Study of Art Education. (1987) Directed by David E. Purpel. 214 pp.

This investigation focuses on the problems of viewing education in the visual arts through a technological curricular framework that limits human potential and on the possibilities presented by expanding the art educator's view of curricular decision-making through appropriating a moral aesthetic. Particular emphasis is given to the way a wholistic rationale honors both the dialectic between self and society and that between the self and one's sense of what it means to be fully human. A hermeneutic methodology (Ricoeur, 1978a) based upon this dual dialectic (Macdonald, 1978b) is used for this study because it allows the author to develop greater understanding of how a teacher's personal and professional realities are socially constructed (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) and how a critical and imaginative consciousness (Macdonald & Purpel, 1987) of this process might develop the necessary sense of agency for meeting her social responsibilities as an art educator.

Chapter II connects the general tendency within a technological rationale toward reification of knowledge and its management as objectively existent phenomena--a use of knowledge in which its origins in human intent are both hidden and exploited. This partial, or idolatrous use results in unequal power arrangements whereby certain people determine

what counts as knowledge while silencing the voices of those who draw meaning from more just standards for human relationship that would lead to a cooperative rather than competitive social reality. Recognized here is the inherent violence in reification (Freire, 1982) and the need for an aesthetic rationality (Macdonald, 1978b) that celebrates the value of each person's participation in the creation of knowledge.

In Chapter III, ways in which certain curricular frameworks in art education represent a dehumanizing technological rationality are presented and the need for a moral aesthetic (Stinson, 1985) is demonstrated. The placement of human need above transmission of subject matter culminates in the concept of teaching through art. This use of art to serve a transcendent vision of justice and love is developed in the final chapter.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to:

David Purpel, who encouraged me to trust my own experience as a valid part of the whole of existence and thus challenged me to take responsibility for moral participation in the world;

Svi Shapiro, who helped me to understand myself as a social being and whose passion for social justice made me see the creation of new realities as not only possible, but essential;

Fritz Mengert, who asked questions about the nature of being and knowing that made clarification of my values inescapable;

Robert Wineburg, who helped me see curriculum as social policy and required me to balance the theoretical with the practical aspects of decision-making;

Sue Stinson, who set a precedent for the study of aesthetic morality in arts education, whose example gave me the courage to unbend my knees in the presence of art as a false god;

James Macdonald, whose transcendental developmental ideology has consistently aided me in connecting my concern for human relationship to the process of education at increasingly deeper levels throughout my course of study;

My parents, Louis and Elizabeth, who enabled me to build my life on such a firm foundation of loving relationship that I could never be completely dissuaded by apparent limits placed on its power;

Ashley Jill Gleiter, who, in the first three years of her life, taught me more about the wonder of learning what it means to be alive in this world than I had ever dreamed was possible in all the years I lived before meeting her;

The Gleiter Family--Sue, Tom, Ashley, Tommy, and my godson, Wesley--who opened their home and their hearts to me and offered constant support throughout the writing of this dissertation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As a high school art teacher, I have struggled with what role I should play in the lives of my students regarding so subjective an experience as self-expression. Who must I be and what must I do to present information about and provide experiences in the visual arts without violating my students' right to participate in the construction of a shared reality? To gain insight into this problem, I have found it necessary to investigate my own pattern making, the ways in which I respond to the human project of co-creating the world. What you are about to read represents my confusion over a number of issues that arose in my life that have bearing on the perception I hold of myself as an educator.

Clarification of the Problem and the Emergence of Methodology

The prospect of writing this dissertation necessitated a process of bringing my confusion about art and curricular concerns into a manageable focus. At first I tried to simply recollect and record incidents that seemed important to my development as a person interested in art and teaching. Two concerns emerged from this initial attempt. First, I was too nervous about providing a formal report of deeply felt personal and professional anguish to associate freely

with my past experience. Taking the presence of pain as evidence of failure in both areas, I found myself editing out the very aspects I needed to confront, those which created the most conflict in my mind. Secondly, it became evident that the process of identifying relevant issues was, in itself, a viable part of my research. How I approached my questions could not be separated from the questions themselves without losing a sense of the whole context from which they emerged.

Together with my chairman, the decision was made for me to write a series of letters to him expressing whatever thoughts and feelings I had over a period of several weeks involving curricular concerns in general and teaching art in particular. This change in form made so much difference that we decided to include both the initial form and the letters in the dissertation as original data, for it comes as close to my primary experience of the research problem as possible. The importance of viewing experience as data in this study and using it as a particular form of data--as text for interpretation--will become more apparent as phenomenology and hermeneutics are discussed in the context of alternative approaches to research methodology.

The problem of self-understanding with respect to its effect on my praxis in the area of teaching has determined my need for a certain mode of inquiry. Popkewitz (1980)

outlines three paradigms of educational inquiry: the empirical-analytic used in searching for law-like regularities among phenomena, the symbolic or linguistic which focuses on how human interactions produce rule-governed action, and the critical which is concerned with theory as illuminating the ways in which social relations have historically developed and the mechanisms of social life that obscure human involvement and social interest in that development. Understandings gleaned from critical theory have led, however, to a concept of critical consciousness (Freire, 1982) that implies a positive as well as a negative potential for human involvement in the construction of social reality (see also Berger & Luckmann, 1967). At this point, recognizing the responsibility between cooperating with oppression and contributing to a liberating praxis becomes a spiritual matter in the sense that it becomes important for the individual to see his or her own well being as linked to the welfare of all others, to be able to hold in his mind the image of another person in place of himself and recognize their essential oneness. This is both religious, in that it reconnects man to the fundamental nature of his existence, and aesthetic, because it involves manifesting a vision, giving form to imagination. The methodology that emerges, then, from the question regarding my responsibility toward the co-creation of reality, is thus

both critical and imaginative (Macdonald & Purpel, 1987), involving a dual dialectic, one social and the other spiritual (Macdonald, 1978b).

It seems obvious to me now that teaching and learning are dialectical in nature, that teacher and student enter into a relationship with each other by sharing information and experiences, but that was not always so. That the dominant paradigm for educational research has been empirical-analytic, a search for objective knowledge we are taught to count on, has certainly affected my life. I believed, as I assume most students did who succeeded in schooling based on this kind of research, that everything could be reduced to a usable fact. It only dawned on me gradually, over many years of teaching, that this assumption led to using people instead of communicating with them. Shapiro (1983) reports a declining faith in nomothetic research due to recognition, by graduate students like myself, of the dissonance between the promise and actuality of positivism. The failures of generalizability, causality and prediction are especially difficult to overlook when, applied to human relationships, they tend to separate and destroy. Facing this sense of alienation and violence led me to ask the kinds of questions that lend themselves to a phenomenological mode of inquiry.

Suransky (1980) offers two summaries useful for noting the differences between a positivist and a phenomenological

approach to research in the human sciences. Based on Giorgi's (1971) critique, she lists the following implications of objective consciousness for research:

(a) The point of departure for the empirical approach is through controlled observation.
(b) Speculative content must be discussed or translated into known empirical or mechanistic laws.
(c) Reductionism is employed, i.e. the phenomenon is made equal to its operational definition.
(d) The phenomenon should be described quantitatively, i.e.: expressed by a mathematical equation.
(e) Determinism is assumed--as all phenomena are supposed to have causes--and if the causal situation of a phenomenon can be duplicated, then that phenomenon will recur.
(f) Whatever the price, certitude must be established--facts must be certain and immutable.
(g) Precision is demanded and predictability is made the "raison d'etre" for research. We need facts that will yield laws enabling us to predict future behavior.
(h) The phenomenon must be analyzed and broken down into its essential elements.
(i) Repeatability is essential: for the phenomenon must be defined in such a way that replication can occur at any other time by any investigation.
(j) The independent, detached observer is necessary--the data must not be influenced by the "idiosyncracies" of the experimenter. (Suransky, 1980, p. 168)

In contrast, the application of phenomenology to research embodies the following tenets:

(a) An attempt to penetrate to the essence of a phenomenon be it learning, behavior, social process or interpersonal relations.
(b) A founding of research on the primacy of experience. This includes the experience of an encounter with the-other (Heidegger's "Mitsein") as researcher, of the co-constitution of meaning with "the-other" being researched.
(c) A critical perception adopted toward all existent theories and a refusal to employ these theories as technique.

(d) One must be "led by the things themselves" (Husserl) in the treatment of the material, i.e. the subject of investigation must prescribe the method. The researcher is required to ground h/himself in field observations: the ultimate goal being intentionally directed back to the field as opposed to the alienated creation of an external set of generalizations removed from the people, the original subjects of the research data. One cannot manufacture a pseudo meta-reality to verify the second order constructs of science which are often alienated from the primary encounter of one's social experience.
(e) The phenomenological method involves the process of intuition, reflection and description. Process rather than product is emphasized.
(f) W/man can only be understood from w/man--from the phenomena and actions of human life itself--which is an open existence. Hence one's point of departure must always be w/man in h/his totality in a world relatedness. This implies intentionality, a project for being, and a situatedness in the world involving choice and responsibility.
(g) W/man cannot be treated as the passive object of research, for phenomenology is a theory of encountering subjects. (Suransky, 1980, pp. 170-171)

She states that "all knowledge is sustained by a ground of postulates derived from the primary experience with the world," that "experience provides the original data" and theories are only formulations which should be utilized to disclose experience (Suransky, 1980, p. 165). It is this view of data that makes sense of my need to gain entrance into the cycle of theory informing pratice informing theory at the point of questioning my own personal and professional experience.

In using my experience as data, I will be doing for myself, to some extent, what Freire (1981) does for others when he observes events in their lives and presents them

back for reflection: using a critical consciousness of my social reality to empower myself to change that reality. Hargreaves (1984) has found that most teachers base curricular decision-making on their own classroom experience, but that this process generally remains circular, non-reflective, because the possibility of seeing something new emerge out of our own lives is generally not recognized. Even though any kind of research begins with autobiography--who and where we are determine the very questions we can think to ask and the language in which we can pose them (Burgess, 1984; see also Habermas, 1971)--this is rarely made explicit. It seems we fail to think about our own thinking and how it affects our choice of subsequent action because most of us believe the answers to our questions are objectively existent (Greene, 1983). This dissertation is an attempt to find a way out of that trap, to find out how my own consciousness affects the meanings I take to be real.

Hermeneutics as a Phenomenological Approach to Research

Phenomenology, critical theory and the religious/aesthetic come together for me in Ricoeur's writings on hermeneutics. I can see my life as a certain kind of data--as text--and reflection as research because Ricoeur's connection between the tradition of hermeneutics--the theory of

interpretation--and philosophical reflection (P. Thompson, 1981) makes sense of what began to happen as I wrote the series of letters and looked back on them. "Reflection," writes Ricoeur, "must become interpretation because I cannot grasp the act of existing except in signs scattered in the world" (Ricoeur, quoted by P. Thompson, 1981, p. 17). I can see distanciation and appropriation operating in my understanding of being and my relationship to other beings as a hermeneutic characterized by suspicion at times and affirmation even within suspicion because Ricoeur (1978a) writes of these approaches to interpretation in a way that fits my understanding of critical theory revealing the need for a religious/aesthetic aspect to praxis.

P. Thompson (1981, p. 6) explains:

> According to one view, hermeneutics is construed as the restoration of a meaning addressed to the interpreter in the form of a message. This type of hermeneutics is animated by faith, by a willingness to listen, and is characterized by a respect for the symbol as a revelation of the sacred. According to another view, however, hermeneutics is regarded as the demystification of a meaning presented to the interpreter in the form of a disguise. This type of hermeneutics is animated by suspicion, by a scepticism towards the given, and it is characterized by a distrust of the symbol as dissimulation of the real.

Ricoeur (1978a) suggests the latter type, a hermeneutics of suspicion, when practiced by such critics as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, brings with it yet another possibility:

> Beyond this suspicion, beyond the work of deciphering, we finally come to a third trait, to discern a common power of affirmation: we have thus to struggle in

> ourselves not only with suspicion, with deciphering, but also with the affirmation. For all three of these men, finally, are positive thinkers, in the sense that they have pressed fundamentally for the restoration of man's positivity. (Ricoeur, 1978a, p. 217)

He goes on to write about this hermeneutic of affirmation as an interpretation that goes beyond the smashing of idols and lets symbols speak, but this time to the possibility of man (Ricoeur, 1978b). His example of such a hermeneutic of affirmation, his own interpretation of the Parables of Jesus, can be described as wholistic and transcendent, for it requires of the interpreter a shift in perspective from who supposedly constructed the symbols to an inclusion of the content of the symbols as well (Ricoeur, 1978c). As I understand it, Ricoeur is asking here that the doubter/believer take responsibility for his own participation in the meaning of Biblical text. I am intrigued by the parallel that can be drawn between Freire's (1982) concept of the co-creation of reality and Ricoeur's hermeneutic of affirmation.

For a detailed listing of Ricoeurian hermeneutic principles, I refer the reader to Croatto's (1981) Exodus: A Hermeneutics of Freedom (pp. 1-3). For my purposes here, however, I have collapsed the concepts of human event (whether founded or foundational), word (written account of an event) and exegesis (interpretation of a written account) to mean simply "text." I take the liberty of using my

understanding of Ricoeur on awareness of existence through reflection as interpretation as ground for viewing all human experience as text, of viewing the very perception of experience as interpretation and thus viewing our understanding of being here and being in relationship to others as a hermeneutic.

Because I have so generalized my use of text to encompass all human experience, I will refer to distanciation as any occurrence of distance between the world of the text and the world of the interpreter. I use distanciation as a term of respect for distance, for the perspective made possible by recognizing I cannot know, can only imagine another's interpretation of existence. Distance keeps me mindful that I am only my part of the world at a given time and cannot even today be the same part of the whole configuration of my own life as I was yesterday. It appears all response to that which is other, even within myself, is to some extent projection. If this is so, then imagination necessarily operates between distanciation and appropriation and its conscious and creative use is to be taken as a serious responsibility to self and others.

As I understand it, distanciation gives rise to appropriation and the farther the distance to be crossed, the more possibilities there are for new meanings to be found in a given text (see Croatto, 1981; P. Thompson, 1981).

Croatto (1981, p. 3) also points out that "there is a surplus-of-meaning in all human praxis," so appropriation is always to some extent agonic. The existing conflict between possible interpretations, the need to choose among different meanings, gives rise to a still wider range of opportunity for new appropriations. This appears to actually set confusion and struggle in a hopeful light, revealing the formulation of questions as entrance into the dynamics of change.

Before I present the first stage of my struggle with decision-making, it is important to note specifically what has already been implied, that the appropriation of meaning from any text, even the text of my own life, guards against solipsism:

> To appropriate, Ricoeur (1981) explains, "means 'to make one's own' what was initially 'alien,'" so that "interpretation brings together, equalises, renders contemporary and similar" (p. 185). The act of appropriation does not seek to rejoin the original intentions of the author, but rather to expand the conscious horizons of the reader by actualising the meaning of the text. Although interpretation thus culminates in self-understanding, it cannot be equated with naive subjectivism. Ricoeur emphasises that appropriation is not so much an act of possession as an act of dispossession, in which the awareness of the immediate ego is replaced by a self-understanding mediated through the text. Thus interpretation gives rise to reflection because appropriation is bound to the relevatory power of the text, to its power to disclose a possible world. (P. Thompson, 1981, p. 19)

What you are about to encounter in the remainder of this chapter are my beginning attempts at making sense of a past world of experience bracketed out for the purpose of

recognizing new possibilities for future action. For me this is a hermeneutic of affirmation.

I have taken from Ricoeur, and from phenomenology and critical theory, that which is helpful to my search for meaning in the areas of art and education. I do not, however, intend a formal application of any theological, philosohical, psychological or sociological tradition per se. I will instead draw from those areas of concern the theories that can inform my focus on praxis in teaching.

The initial report of those experiences considered important to my development as an art student and teacher is not dated, but was written approximately 1 week before I began the letters. This report is included here as Section One. Sections Two through Six are comprised of the five letters written during the weeks beginning on October 20th and ending the week of November 17, 1986. Comments appearing at the end of each section were written on December 2, 1986, after an initial re-reading of the report and letters as a body of data. Introductions and summaries were written for the sections after a period of focusing on the dialectic between my study of Ricoeur's hermeneutics and a deeper consideration of these sections, this time as text.

SECTION ONE: A FORMAL REPORT

My Past Experience as an Art Student and Teacher

Introduction

This initial attempt to remember and record experiences pertinent to my identity as an art educator, while it includes significant events, excludes much of the underlying conflict I felt about art and the power others had to define it for me from elementary school, through high school and college, and on into my years of teaching. Believing a part of my life could be so prescribed, while feeling violated by such prescriptions, is the major conflict revealed throughout this section. Stark shifts in my position on what art is and/or should be indicate extreme discomfort with the prospect of struggle, a desire to situate myself beyond doubt by choosing one "side" or the other.

At the time this report was written, the possibility of there being many viable alternatives, different perspectives that could co-exist, simply overwhelmed me, despite the evidence of this within my own experience. That realization, however, seemed to provide the only way out of the dissonance accompanying a view of life as an "either/or" proposition. Fox's (1979) "both/and" viewpoint can be reached only by letting go of the dualistic framework for choice. That one can enjoy skill and imagination at the same time could not occur to me as long as I believed I had to choose between the two. The evidence in this section of my difficulty at looking on the whole of my experience points both to a need to admit and confront the

presence of conflict in my life and the need to develop a greater capacity for wholistic vision. Those particular needs prompted the change in format from this kind of straight reporting to the writing of letters to my chairman for the five remaining sections.

The Report

My second grade teacher stared in disgust at the muddy pools of tempera which had been, only moments before, a carefully traced and filled in Thanksgiving turkey.

"Your cousin wouldn't have made a mess like that," was all she bothered to say.

It was enough. My regular classwork had often been compared favorably to the standard set by an older cousin the year before; I hadn't seen it as praise for being someone other than myself. Virtually no personal meaning could be invested in memorizing and repeating correct answers in other subjects. It took failing at this exciting, unfamiliar task of painting to jar me out of my complacency, make me see that when I hadn't been told exactly how to do something, it just wasn't safe to rely on my own resources.

You see, the purpose of the project was to allow us "self-expression." The feathers on our turkeys provided that opportunity. Although the image was traced from a standard pattern, each painting would be different because we could choose which colors were to go where. I knew it was still important to "stay in the lines," but I didn't

know how much more difficult that was to accomplish with paint than with crayons. She didn't tell us to let one color dry before applying another right next to it, so when the wet colors on two adjacent feathers of my turkey began to bleed into one another, I panicked.

The decision to mix all the colors together originated in my feeling the need to "fix things" so the teacher wouldn't be too displeased. When I did that, though, something else happened. I became totally involved for a brief period of time in what paint does, in what I could do with it. I kept mixing and adding more colors just to watch those streaks and swirls of liquid create hues and patterns I had never seen before.

Perhaps it is ascribing too much power to one incident to say that the dissonance experienced then, between my fascination with the process of painting that turkey and my teacher's disapproval of the resulting product, actually set off the love/hate relationship with art that haunts me still, but my mind does go back to it when I feel particularly threatened by the conflicting demands of doing or teaching art. Conformity and competition have plagued both roles. The color-in-the-lines, paint-by-number requirements in elementary school gave way to more subtle, complex pressures in high school and college. Originality, self-expression, these were emphasized, but within the limited

scope of what kind of "uniqueness" would win contests, which way of expressing "oneself" would fit current fashion and bring success in the art world at large. That paradoxical mesage, "Do what everyone else is doing, only do it better," simply grew louder, reached farther over the years, drowning out more and more of what art could be but isn't.

Art promises us something--a way to "make our mark," a means for visibly affecting the environment which threatens to overwhelm us with its power. It seems, though, that my early interest in drawing was born, not of some need for unilateral control over people and things, but of an earnest desire for cooperation, a sense of uniting forces with my surroundings. There was something celebratory about it then, something holy.

Art offers power over separation, the power to know ourselves in the context of relationship, recognize ourselves as sacred parts of a larger whole. As such, it is power that can only be shared, not wielded or seized. When interaction with media is used to limit experience and enforce alienation, then it becomes idolatry and violence, not art. In having been asked to conform and compete in the name of art, I feel I was asked to deny the very creativity and communion art could have made possible. My desire for cooperation was twisted into an ugly need to appease.

After failing so miserably to paint that stupid turkey to specifications in the second grade, I was determined not to be found lacking again. I learned to maintain rigid control over art materials. According to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982), spontaneous art activity generally ends between the ages of 12 and 14 as a child's attempts at realism reveal shortcomings in his drawing ability. It happened for me at age 7.

Until then, drawing had allowed me to spend hour after hour in another world, making up stories in my mind and on paper all at once. My pictures were more than illustrations; in some ways I felt like I was actually watching them appear. My parents kept me supplied with paper and pencils and crayons since as far back as I can remember. I can't recall specific instances of verbal praise, just a very constant sense of encouragement. I felt very sure my art activities were highly valued. In addition to being given ample opportunity and materials, my drawings were often saved.

Experimenting with the paint when those turkey feathers ran together seemed like a very natural extension of my freedom to explore pencil and crayon at home. Having no brothers or sisters, my art materials literally "kept me company" when my parents were busy with other matters. Unlike toys, they responded to my touch. Together we made

things happen! But all of this went underground once I realized such an approach was frowned upon in school. There, art was like everything else--something you did either right or wrong. I felt I had no choice but to subject my love for making things to another's will. I was going to be in school for a long, long time. I had to learn to do everything the teacher's way; art was not exempt.

So I started to watch carefully for just what pleased that second grade teacher and I found it to be neatness. The ability to trace and cut out construction paper letters and figures with precision was a skill in great demand, for few second-graders can use scissors very well, so I became proficient at it. I found I could get out of boring classwork and bring acclaim to my teacher at the same time by volunteering to work on bulletin boards. Appearances meant so much to her. I guess an attractive room made her look like a good teacher.

I don't remember trying to draw realistically that year, but in the third grade I met a girl who could and she became my idol as well as my best friend. We copied illustrations of beautiful girls out of library books. I kept my practicing a secret from teachers for several years until I could really draw well. Meanwhile, my reputation for doing good bulletin boards grew. Actually that was the only kind

of art activity I remember being available in school during most of elementary school, with the exception of coloring those dittoed sheets for various holiday displays. We were all required to do them and always to comply with certain specifications.

It was the sixth grade before I ever had to copy something for an assignment. The teacher flipped slowly through various illustrations of a piece of classical music after we had seen the entire filmstrip along with hearing the record. We were to choose one frame to draw as we listened to the music again. My teacher was astounded at the speed and accuracy with which I reproduced not one, but two of the scenes in the allotted time. From then on I was considered an "artist."

Everyone was required to take Exploratory Art in the seventh grade and in that class we did just what the course title implies, we explored! I got to experiment with all kinds of media and techniques. There was no pressure to perform, to produce a prescribed product. Our teacher seemed happiest when we were simply enjoying ourselves. I could finally relax the controls and have fun again, this time with not only paint but clay and plaster and numerous other messy substances. This was art as I had once believed it to be. I reasoned that it must just take a "real" art teacher in a "real" art class to know. That's when I

decided to become an art teacher msyelf. Then the rules changed again.

Ninth grade art was an elective, so only students who were "serious" about art could sign up. The warm, friendly woman who had liberated and inspired me two years earlier had by this time quit to have a baby, so there was a new, strange lady to take her place. This art teacher wore lots of black eyeliner and bright, flowing clothes. I knew a little bit by then about beatniks from seeing them on television, but I had no corresponding sense of "cool." My best friend from the third grade did, however. She had not been in any of my classes since the third grade until this crucial year. I was shocked to even see her again, much less find out that she knew exactly what our weird teacher wanted and that our teacher, in turn, knew just what pleased the judges in art contsts. I'd missed something somewhere along the way. The very person who had taught me how to draw so realistically was now doing abstract work and winning awards for it. Her drawings had "soul," people said. I didn't know what they were talking about; I just felt inadequate and, somehow, betrayed.

Well, if I could copy realism, surely I could mimic craziness, too. I tried for awhile, in high school, to play the game. I'd think up the wildest picture or sculpture I could imagine and spend weeks carrying out the idea in

paint or plaster. I laughed about how easy it was; at least I laughed at first. Then I started to win contests and to feel ashamed. It embarrassed me to attend the receptions, to take my parents to see a hoax--work that meant nothing to me but made everyone else wonder what "deep" thoughts gave rise to it. I finally told my teacher I was planning to teach art, not do it for shows, so she let me become a kind of teacher's aide. I spent my senior year matting other students' work for contests. By then it was merely useful, not anything special, to be able to cut a straight line.

A story like this one is supposed to end with the individual rising above all odds to go her own way and "make it" in spite of the system. In a sense I did get my way. I just felt horribly guilty for not even wanting whatever it was I supposedly could have won by using my "talent" to fight. I thought going into art education would free me of the battle. I planned to spend my enthusiasm liberating other people from those pressures I myself could not stand, inspiring them to participate in that special relationship to the world through art I knew was possible. What actually happened, though, only multiplied my guilt. As an art student I had failed to value award-winning art, so naturally, as an art teacher, I failed to produce award-winning students.

When I started teaching art, not only did I get caught up in sharing what art materials could do, I got lost in the excitement of watching my students enjoy themselves, the excitement of simply being with other people and having fun. Teaching took me farther away from the "real" world than I had ever been before and that had consequences my university training hadn't led me to expect. For the most part, those 4 years of undergraduate school reinforced my sense of what art education could be, but without reference to the institutional constraints that work against it actually happening. As far as the public schools were concerned, I had simply changed roles, from that of rule-follower to rule-enforcer, but the rules themselves had remained the same. My teacher's certificate had earned me the position of being required to do to others what had been done to me. Failure to meet the demands of conformity and competition was no longer a choice I made for myself alone. When I shunned that responsibility in the classroom, I was letting my students believe things could be other than they are.

They thought I was pretty funny, my students did. When I started feeling too guilty about our "making ourselves at home" with each other, I'd try to get down to business and take the subject more seriously, but they just went along with me, knowing it wouldn't last. The power of a group of

people experiencing together even a little bit of freedom to respond to their environment honestly and make choices about how to spend their time and energy within it, that power is too different to deny for long.

What is it about freedom and happiness that makes us think we're failing to take life seriously enough? What should be taken more seriously? Exercising or enduring oppressive control? Suffering or causing others pain? Teachers in this country are not allowed to strike their students physically, yet they are paid to reduce a child's world of infinite possibility to a few "correct" facts and figures for which he must fight his friends to "own." It is this, what Freire (1982) calls "banking education" that I can't take seriously for very long. I wish I couldn't take it seriously at all, but I, like many others in my culture, spent the greater portion of my youth in a world of someone else's "right" and "wrong." I am thus well conditioned to respond with guilt when I exercise my preference for another reality.

Comments

My pain is evident in my defensiveness, but I still reify art and defend it as well as defend myself against it. The reduction of experience looks to me now like an extreme effort to control my discomfort, to find some means of explaining it away. I couldn't afford to see ambiguities at

this point; it was too frightening. What if I only uncover questions, don't find answers? What if I appear to be as confused as I really am?

Summary

Here it is revealed that the search for order in control and the strong desire that there be some other way of making sense out of conflicting definitions threatens my very identity. If art, a process in which I involve myself extensively, can be controlled by others, then so can I. If that is the case, all I can do is learn to adapt to whatever view is held, of art or of me, by the ones I find have the greatest power to judge. If art cannot be so controlled, then neither can I, but that alternative is even more frightening. Does it not leave me to a world only of my own making, to isolation and the chaos of my own mind? These questions identify several issues and indicate the depth of my need to investigate them: the place of reification in blocking understanding of the social dynamics involved in the construction of reality, the link between identity and relationship and the possibility of choosing harmony over control as a means of meeting the human need for order.

SECTION TWO: THE FIRST LETTER

Taking the Freedom to Struggle with Conflicting Meanings

Introduction

Because the first attempt to enter my past kept prematurely closing over experiences rather than opening them up, my chairman and I experimented with the letter format beginning with this section. The freedom to accept a wider range of experience as applicable to my search for self-understanding is evidenced here. There is a willingness to let hope and doubt lead me through the questioning process instead of the feeling that I have to know the right answers in the same moment I dare ask a question.

The Letter

Week of October 20th

Dear Dr. Purpel:

I'm taking you at your word that organization and style can come later, that the important thing for me right now is simply getting my thoughts out and onto paper. Letting them just run around in my head, worrying about how I'll ever make sense of it all, these habits immobilize me. I've decided you are the one to write to because it is your help I need in learning to trust myself with the freedom to let this work flow.

I need to trust you with my messiness and repetition. I'm always "presenting" my writing to you. A long time ago I used to just share my thoughts with you in letter form,

back when writing a dissertation seemed remote. Now no matter how much I know I should know better, my most basic beliefs just don't seem good enough for a formal piece of work. This is a battle I fight with myself all the time. Whom will I side with? The part of me that still wants to impress or the part that is grateful to you for the freedom to speak and wants more than anything just to take advantage of it? A return to writing to you from the heart and not the editor's mind at this point is a commitment to be more "real" with myself.

You understand my arrogance. You know that, whether it is being played out in ambition or self-hatred, it is a painful trap. I want out. I want to enjoy the peace of being "boring."

Today is Thursday. It's taken me all week to begin writing, so you won't see much volume yet. What I did to get my energy level up was to act out some of the things I'd written about for last week. I cut out paper dolls for one of my friends' children and made a set of stencils for a little girl I'm very close to. I needed to use what I could do with craft materials to feel in touch with media again.

From doing those things for the kids, I went on to explore an old interest in ornament and decorative pattern; I played around with graph paper and the mandala format

some. These give me a sense of order and harmony, connect me to history and religious symbolism. I used to feel terribly guilty for indulging myself in this interest. It's so far from the surrealism and abstraction popular in the art world during my lifetime; even depicting nature has seemed like an unforgivable crutch.

It doesn't take very much for me to invest myself in things, really. Blake's (1949) "to see a world in a grain of sand" and hold "eternity in an hour" (p. 50) never seemed like vision to me, but like the natural state of being alive. Dewey (1934) writes about appreciation, literally making that which we experience "appreciate," become more than it was before, simply by valuing it. Imagination, it seems to me, should be a way of beholding that honors the idea or material involved, works with it. I'm not comfortable imposing something on the world. That doesn't feel creative.

I've read that faith is simply recognition of the truth. I have faith in Fox's (1983) art as meditation because release from duality to experience union through relating to materials has been a truth for me. This <u>does</u> feel like creativity, but for me a break somehow occurs when I'm supposed to hang the results on a wall, subject it to a judgment far removed from the reality I experienced in making the art object.

I could hardly believe it when you said to me that art museums don't make much sense to you. This was after the cut-paper assignment in one of your classes. I learned so much about myself from the interplay involved between myself and the material in expressing my concept. I never can remember the exact theme, but I can still see my work in my mind's eye and I still learn from it.

One of the forms of decorative pattern I like a lot is interlacing. There's a lot of it in Celtic art. My sculpture in your class was nothing like ornament, but the element of weaving two colors into a spiral was a kind of interlacing, I guess. I remember thinking a lot more about male and female energies than I had before. I must have been reading Bakan (1966) then on agency and communion.

There's more I want to say about being female, but not yet. The point for now is how deep a meaning I take from something as supposedly simple and unimaginative as interwoven bands on medieval manuscripts. I love to recreate them. It's like a ritual. I like the spinning effect of certain quilt designs, too. It does something for me to work out a patchwork pattern like that. I know the idea of the spiral is rich with symbolism and I know I want to live out some of its meaning very consciously, but something else goes on when I work with it visually and manually. I'm living it out this way, too, but somehow on a different level.

I said I have faith in Fox's (1983) art as meditation. What I mean by that is I believe it does affect all of our relationships when one relationship makes us feel more holy, more complete. You and I have talked about this and you reminded me of the high culture enjoyed by the Nazis in Germany at the same time they were destroying millions of human lives, but I don't think it's the same thing. People involve themselves in media for different reasons; both artists and their audiences do. Now that I have been bold enough to declare my belief in what art is and isn't, I think I can say something about what art "appreciation" may or may not be as well. Many know a lot about the visual arts but don't seem to have any sensitivity to the life of works they know well. They use their knowledge of "art" the way academics often use their knowledge of some other subjects to get somewhere else. They aren't really there with the work at hand.

I can't judge what another perceives. I just want to say that I believe it is possible for the spirit of one relationship to carry over into others. In my art classroom this did seem to happen. It didn't go on in a vacuum, the teaching and learning. Actually the relationships I had with students were far more important to me than my relationship to materials. We were there to "do art" so I often felt guilty about this. The entire atmosphere

mattered. I didn't really "develop a sense of community," a term I'm a little embarrassed about after reading over my old program plans and writing that letter revising its content. All I did in teaching, as in the play rehearsals for Dusa, Fish, Stas and Vi (Gems, 1977), was care and assume those with whom I worked also cared.

We cared about each other's integrity and the quality of our experiences together. I've been casting about for so long to find some educational theory that really fits what happened, what I enjoyed with students. Freire's (1982) sense of solidarity and subjectivity comes close. Greene's (1978) "wide awakeness" is part of it....Dewey's (1934) philosophy of experience, Fox's (1979) philosophy of compassion, Richards' (1964) of centering and Macdonald's (1978b) of transcendence, these are part of it, too. But it was both simpler and more complex than anything I've read about in art education literature.

Fox (1979, 1983, 1986a, 1986b) comes closest in a spiritual way. It wasn't so much empowerment as power with instead of power over or power under. Macdonald's pattern making (1978b) as both right and responsibility enter here. I like "pattern making" better than "centering" sometimes. I get tired of the pottery metaphor, even though it is useful. Metaphors are so easily drawn out beyond their usefulness. Anyway, it just makes sense to me, spiritual

sense, for us to respect each other's meaning-making. That's the only way we can create anything new, the only way a true spirit of sharing can enter in.

Two things stand out from my oral comprehensives, both of which came from you. I was saddened and made hopeful at the same time when you asked where the fun was in all of my writing about art. There wasn't any fun there and I really wished there could have been. Then I was stunned to hear you call relationship, I-Thou relationship (Buber, 1970), the "Holy Ghost." I didn't think I could talk about that. I didn't think anyone would understand the meaning I take from that term--the spirit of sharing a reality that goes beyond any specific (and, to me, idolatrous) meaning given by a particular religious dogma. It seems people get scared when the sense of sharing is spoken of instead of just an idea of spiritual oneness. We're so afraid of union. That's the complexity of speaking seriously about relationship. The simple part, though, is we all seem to want such reconnection more than anything else. If only we could operate more from the possibility rather than the fear.

That's the thing about considering alternative realities, the power of possibility you and Dr. Shapiro have encouraged in your students. Gradually, with much fear and back-sliding, I've really been able to start changing the way I approach "facts," my assumptions about what is real

and workable. I still haven't altogether demystified my outlook. I doubt one even can. But because this department keeps us mindful of alternatives, my tolerance for ambiguity has grown. Writing like this, for instance, is still very uncomfortable for me on one level, but on another it simply feels more honest.

For some reason, life in the classroom was very different regarding my ability to take stands, different from just considering "facts" at the level of ideas. The presence of my students meant facing the effect ideas have on people's lives. Responsibility like that, realizing how my assumptions affected the way students had to spend their time and energy in our classroom, this made it necessary to clarify my values. De-humanizing aspects of certain "realities," of conformity and competition, of holding subject matter above the importance of people themselves, these were easier to see and more difficult to stomach when I focused on sharing experiences with my students. At the very least, I felt compelled to "name the games" (Macdonald, 1966) when it was obvious to me that we were being required by the institutional structure to play them. I couldn't hide from over 100 young people, day in and day out, year after year. It seemed just too crazy to try.

When it's just me, however, I can get terribly lost in ideology. "Real life"--being with the kids--kept me more

honest. I just wish I could learn to respect myself as much as I respect them. I'm working hard on that. The goal seemed a lot farther away just months ago, when I was writing my comps. Maybe I don't have much to show for it yet, but just being willing to write this way, to act as though the meanings I value count for something more than wishful thinking, even when it's "just me," means I'm starting to say, "Why not?" to some possibilities.

The dark side of my ability to invest myself, to get excited about life, is my disappointment when I see it isn't easily shared by other people. I know someone who goes right on letting himself get caught up in the wonder of being alive, even when others don't understand his enthusiasm. I really admire him for that. I respond differently. I get sad or angry and start to discount my own enjoyment. I run from my optimism when others disagree with it. One of the best things about being with high school students is their openness. I could cherish my students' aliveness, honor their experiences without fear of scaring them away. They embraced real opportunities for sharing the simple joy of being in the world.

When I first read Richards' (1964) view of acceptance and honor, I hadn't realized how much one participates in the very same reverence one holds for another:

> Acceptance is not a nod of civility, nor is it approval. It is something more like ingestion, a capacity to experience the reality of another not as if it were one's own but indeed as another's, a capacity for self-surrender to the reality of another person (this is a surrender not of the will, but of perception): honor is a single flame in which all honor burns. The flame of our meeting burns, and in it burn as one warmth my regard for you and my regard for myself. (p. 140)

My students have affirmed me by allowing me to honor them. Giving them what I wanted for myself simultaneously gave it to me. Only recently have I become aware of that, of all I have received from our circle of sharing.

All of this seems to run outside of the "realities" of the system. I don't even want to focus on those long enough to criticize them, though I know I'm supposed to be preparing such a critique. I'm not ready to get to a "review of the literature" yet. I want to write next about being female. I usually avoid that because I can't jump on the feminist bandwagon, but I guess I do have gender-related ideas about art and teaching.

I cannot separate the concept of "home" and my involvement with children from my teaching experience. My views of competition and isolation come from the importance I place on receptivity and responsiveness. When reduced to appeasing or manipulating others, those impulses aren't cooperative, though; they are destructive. More about that later.

Before I end this letter, I want to mention one more act of heresy committed this week. I asked my close friends,

the parents of the three children I spend a lot of time with, for an adult coloring book for my birthday! ("Adult" implying complex designs, not "dirty" pictures!) You may not know it, but coloring books are absolute anathema to art educators!

Thanks for "listening."

Sincerely,

Sylvia

Comments

The change to letter form allowed me to admit ambiguities, confusion. I got back in touch with feelings about art that I hadn't allowed myself in years. The defensiveness is still present, however, in descriptions of guilt and hints of rebellion rather than in rigidity of style this time. I hadn't felt free before to say what I wanted to say, I only felt I had to justify every word I wrote in that other form.

A lot emerged from this initial letter. I'd forgotten how much until I re-read it. I do feel distanced from what I've written now. It doesn't look so bad to me anymore, not once I've let it stand for a while. I'm surprised. I expected old ways of hating myself through justifications and explanations to be renewed by reliving the ways I fell prey to them while writing before, those ways I felt so

guilty and silly. That hasn't happened. I can actually be more gentle with myself than I ever would have imagined I could be. It really helps to feel that I am not "there" now, but "here." Time has passed. I've turned some of it into eternity, at least. I can actually see that when I look back! Remember Heschel's (1951) Sabbath? I can rest where I am to some extent.

It seems to me that rest, a sense of peace, both comes from this kind of reflection and strengthens me to enter into it again. I've "talked to myself" and survived! This is very different from the kind of confronting myself I've done less consciously. Deciding to look at myself, for better or worse, and to take responsibility for what I find--for what I like and what I want to change--gives me the power to cooperate with my own experience.

Summary

The issues of reification and harmony are still here, but appear, to some extent, cloaked in romanticism. Beneath the emotional outbursts of rebellion and adulation regarding art and relationship, there is a true sense of delight in sharing. Themes of appreciation, celebration and transcendence need to be explored, but only after a serious investigation of my tendency to reify positive, as well as negative, views of art and teaching. The shift from report to letter form has been instrumental in allowing me to remain open to contradictions long enough to gain some perspective on them.

SECTION THREE: THE SECOND LETTER

Identifying the Central Problem

Introduction

This section is a "coming down" from the high hopes of the first letter to struggle with identity and relationship in terms of feminism and art in terms of negative definitions I have yet to let go of at this point. The process of seeing reification "bring me down" into the old conflict over who is right about what art should be leads me to make a connection here between the power I have given to the concept of "art" and the power I once gave to the idea of "God." Recognizing the power one must have in order to give it away to an idol may not seem to be cause for celebration at first, but if the grief over having made a mistake in the use of one's power can be transcended, it is possible to then ask under what conditions that same power might be used more responsibly.

The Letter

Week of October 27th

Dear Dr. Purpel:

When I closed last week's letter, one of the issues I said I would discuss this week is how I feel about art and education as a woman. You suggested I address the "power of naming" that rests mostly in the hands of men. In dealing with this subject of labelling, or rather, the subject of having been labelled, I must come at the problem from several different angles.

First I want to deal with what I feel has resulted from women seizing the power to label women, at least to deal with what it has done to me. I don't think self-definition comes naturally to women in the first place. I do not speak lightly when I say this, for receptivity and responsiveness have been incredibly powerful tendencies in my life and it has been painful not to understand them--to try to embrace them indiscriminately or deny them as part of my nature.

The feminist movement encouraged denial of my sense of connection in insisting on stark individualism and self-determination. It is an old argument by now, that to become more free as women, women should become less like themselves and more like men, but the pressure to follow that contradictory pattern still exists. Gilligan (1982) made some inroads into this problem in her book, In a Different Voice, but she seems so uninformed by the possibility of blending both male and female perspectives that her arguments, too, even for a relational morality, are left hopelessly lopsided in my eyes. Imposing feminine values onto the world as the answer makes no more sense than imposing male views alone.

I've personally become more and more confused by feminism. It is a label that, even when including communion along with agency in theory (see Bakan, 1966), leaves me

feeling more fragmented than ever when I try to apply it to myself. Male definitions, if they truly insisted on women having no choices, would be a violent trap. But feminist definitions that merely juxtapose some insistence on self-determination with deification of "Woman" for her capacity to relate, takes me out of context, too.

There is no getting around mutuality. Men and women need each other, need to be informed by both energies, need to learn the delicate, miraculous art of blending male and female perspectives. I don't think I will ever be very agentic, but I do benefit from agentic characteristics displayed by the men in my life. I don't want to be some entity apart from everyone else; I don't feel comfortable trying to formulate some "unique" perspective all by msyelf and then try to impose it on the world. I want to work with others. I expect to be defined to a great extent by the environment I choose to repsond to. This is where I see my responsibility for choice as a woman lies. I cannot get away from being receptive and responsive and still be myself, but I can recognize the destruction inherent in opening myself up to negative influences. I can choose, instead, to be discriminating about the quality of the forces I allow myself to receive; I can withhold response from the negative, reserve these tendencies for positive, life-giving choices.

Working with positive energies instead of spending myself rebelling against the negative ones is a kind of self-direction, but it involves sharing--seeing myself in connection, in context--not living unto myself alone. The whole point of being free to make meaning of our lives instead of having definitions imposed on us is to learn from and, in turn, affect our relationships, is it not? It is oppressive to think women should be utterly independent. To be asked to believe that one even can be all-in-all to oneself is to be asked to be less than human--to participate in a kind of self-imposed violence:

> The pursuit of full humanity . . . cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity. (Freire, 1982, p. 73)

We have to do our naming together--to let it be as alive and growing as relationship necessarily is.

I don't know if my love of craftsmanship has anything to do with being a woman or not. I do know that keeping a comfortable home and working with materials in the art classroom in a skillful, sensitive manner give me similar pleasure. That craft is not acceptable as "fine art" unless it makes some abstract "statement--says something that fits into the current fashion--feels like a denial of what art can and should be. Just as schools are meant to, art galleries are supposed to enhance experience, intensify our sense of connection through representing the dynamics of

interaction (see Dewey, 1934). When they, instead, reduce this process to evidence some pat theory, they are anaesthetic--they take us away from sensitive response and into numbing complacency. I felt guilty trying to pass certain "works of art" off as culturally significant; I hated making apologies for visual expressions that made no sense to me or my students. It wasn't because we didn't try to understand them that they made no sense to us; it was because some works were not meant to be understood.

My guilt shows just how seriously I've taken the "art world," doesn't it? Is it really so strange, seeing myself as an art teacher who isn't at all sure that teaching art is moral? Why should I have to apologize for things that don't make sense? Isn't this the danger in making images? Isn't there, in the very essence of doing art, the danger of idolatry? Making things and enjoying the way they look and feel, even what they stand for, this honors life. But falling down on our knees before advertisements for a certain kind of culture (J. Berger, 1972), that immobilizes us, kills our spirit. There can be good reasons for stopping to "frame" part of the art process--to celebrate the mystery of synthesis in concrete form, for instance--but to allow any one representation of life to take the place of its ongoing possibilities is a tribute to death, not life. How many people never try again to draw or paint or

sculpt after their initial attempts in early childhood were held up to some external standard of what art "really" is?

I feel the same way about naming the spirit of love, that there is such a powerful tendency to create idols instead of more life. Religious symbolism is difficult for me to handle. When some part of "the Good" is labelled "God," I want to run in the other direction. My experience with investing in dogma has always led to death--to a denial of relationship. Dr. Purpel, you've seen in religious terminology the potential for affirmation, but my fear of idolatry has kept me from sharing that vision. Perhaps now that I have made a connection between the arrogance of guilt and the separation resulting from idolatry, I can approach the connecting sense of religion more responsibly.

Sincerely,

Sylvia

Comments

I'm not comfortable with talking much about feminism. I feel like I'm attacking something I do not really understand. I liked re-reading what I wrote about art and idolatry, though--recognizing my growing awareness of having reified art. I see progress in this section. I'm leaving guilt behind and thus I'm leaving behind the need for rigid rules to obey or break.

Summary

I choose not to address the issue of feminism in later chapters. The concept, as I understand it, is dualistic--embodies in just another form the very sexism it purports to eradicate. How can communion be achieved through attack? I have been challenged to consider a distinction between feminist activism and feminist theory. If Gilligan (1982) and Dinnerstein (1976) are to be taken as exemplars of such theory, then I am left unconvinced. I find in Stinson (1984, 1985) and Welch (1985), however, a sense of principled relationship. I see this aspect of their work as a healing blend, though, of both male and female perspectives.

It is the level to which the issue of reification is taken in this section that seems most important now. The other themes identified thus far appear to hinge on this one. Seeing reification at the root of idolatry makes sense of the one mistake I have made over and over again.

SECTION FOUR: THE THIRD LETTER

Addressing New Questions to the Old Problem

Introduction

This letter represents the lowest point of the series. I express here my anger at any definition of art, whether it offers a process I would normally find enjoyable or one I would usually consider confining. The pressure of having to do an honest review of the literature in art education (a self-imposed requirement) drove me to a virtual temper tantrum of which I can neither be proud nor afford to ignore. For the first time I really ask, "What is important to me?" instead of "What is art?"

The Letter

Week of November 3rd

Dear Dr. Purpel:

This will still not be a review of the literature. I became scattered last week when I started looking into art ed curricula again. That's okay with me now. It served several purposes.

First, I realized that the art which had earlier energized me was being used this week for escape. I'd forgotten how easily that can happen. This makes me wonder about Fox's (1983) art as meditation. The tendency to withdraw, to use nonverbal activity to get away from thought rather than for reflection and clarificaton, seems more prevalent than the kind of meditation of which Fox (1983)

speaks. Active meditation, meditation that inspires action, this I am not sure I can get from art.

Am I fooling myself to so readily accept the potential Fox (1986b) said art has for gaining insight into relationship? Is person/material a relationship? I ended the few short pages I wrote last week wondering whether or not I could ever really care about the production of art. Do I value art enough to make it the focus of this dissertation? The answer from my heart is, "No."

Why have I centered in so much on art? Why haven't I let it be merely a vehicle, simply part of my experience? Why have I felt I needed to act in this work as an art advocate? Justification, glorification--the literature on art education is steeped with this stuff. I don't like myself when I join in that cause. My perspective is going to have to shift more radically than it has as of yet if I am to be able to live with myself while writing this dissertation.

A friend and I went to see the film version of Children of a Lesser God (Medoff, 1980) on Saturday. I'd seen the play years earlier, but from such a defensive stance that I missed the whole point back then. My friend is also a teacher and after the film we talked late into the night about how much he wanted to express the kind of warmth and caring in his classroom that James shared with his students in the film. Know what my friend said? He believes it is

the subject matter that gets in the way! Covering the material takes precedence over connecting with human beings. If we would just turn those priorities around, I really think teachers could do both--share information and honor humanity--and do them both very well!

Why does the subject stand between the teacher's experience and the students, between the student and his own experience? This keeps us from sharing. Subjects could so easily be shared if we allowed the questions, the needs to come first. You've often asked me how doing art could serve my values. I didn't really understand, did I? I thought I had to choose between the two.

I care about human relationships, Dr. Purpel. I care about our impulse to care--our impulse to join our energies and work together for something good. Art just happens to be a subject I did well in and thus was encouraged to teach. It was supposed to take something special to excel in art, but being special separates us from each other. I feel downright silly making grandiose claims for art as though it were somehow more than one interest among many possible interests. Sometimes I don't even think it is that great even as an interest. Other times I see good things happen through it.

Our impulse to care isn't just an interest, though. This is really important to me. This is what I live with all the time, what I want to be true to in spite of my

interests. I'm finally beginning to see that if interest does not serve importance, something goes very wrong. People are then used to prop up things. That's how we come to view other human beings as objects, as either expedient or expendable.

Sincerely,

Sylvia

Comments

I'm still too close to this part to feel comfortable looking back on it yet. Here my confusion appears in raw form, but realizations are there, too. The theme of idolatry is brought into sharper focus.

Summary

The concept of teaching through a subject, using the subject as a tool for manifesting that which I value most, this way of viewing art finally surfaces--and turns my professional world upside down! Instead of tyring to find a theory of art "out there" somewhere in "the literature" that matches my concern for developing caring human relationships, I can put the impulse to care first and look for those aspects of art which serve that purpose. I don't have to apologize for "betraying" art. These two issues certainly require further investigation: basing curricular decisions on the question, "What is important?" and the prospect of teaching through art instead of teaching art per se.

SECTION FIVE: THE FOURTH LETTER

Identifying Sources that Inform a Shift in Perspective

Introduction

It can be seen in this letter that I still could not let go of doing a review of the art education literature. I seem to be trying to go both ways at once, to find some key word or phrase true to my values that matches the literature, to find art education literature that at least loosely corresponds to my basic concerns. Failure to do this points to my need for a broader perspective on what constitutes "the literature," the body of writing that can inform my questions.

The Letter

Week of November 10th

Dear Dr. Purpel:

I think I can give you some idea of how I'm approaching the art ed literature now. Yesterday I re-read some Dewey (1934), some Lowenfeld (Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982) and part of a relatively new book called Doing Art Together (Silberstein-Storfer, 1982). Like Read (1958, 1964), Lowenfeld advocates a sensitivity-toward-life approach to teaching art. Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) wrote the art education textbook on which I was "reared." There was always strong advocacy for the student's development, but art had the aura of being some kind of "miracle growth inducer" for the developmental process.

As a result of being trained under the influence of Lowenfeld I came to believe in art's "magic" power and hated it for not living up to its claims. I do believe in educating for a sensitivity toward life, but I was so focused on the means as the end, on art as the goal and learning to be sensitive to environment and materials as the method of reaching "it," the narrowly prescribed product.

I remember a paper I once wrote for you on the Tyler (1949) "rationale" for curriculum planning. It drove me crazy to make "straight lines" (confine to a linear model) out of what I consider to be a "spherical" existence. To take any developmental theory so seriously that it causes the teacher to deny what is taking place with the child right before her eyes makes no sense. There are developmental theorists in art who actually wonder if children are aware of having hands and legs before they reach the stage of drawing them! It doesn't take a full-blown philosophy of wholism to realize that labels can't tell the whole story. It seems to me it takes an incredible commitment to the denial of certain phenomena to live and teach within such narrow boundaries.

It seems to me that we as teachers are the ones who need to develop our sensitivity toward life. I'm sorry. I sound angry and impatient. I don't want to just rail against these problems. I want to see how we can become

more "wide awake" (Greene, 1978) to the dialogue that can exist between those with more experience and information and those who are just beginning to gain theirs. We have so much to learn from each other.

When you asked me what I would write about if I weren't writing about education, I answered immediately, "Forgiveness." By that I meant learning to forego the prejudiced agendas we tend to have for ourselves and others. Giving over our expectations to the spirit of the moment, this I can get excited about. This inspires me, the withdrawal of imposition to make room for choice.

Children of a Lesser God (Medoff, 1980) is about the beauty of two human beings recognizing transcendent existence in connection, in allowing two worlds to intersect instead of using them against one another in fear and judgment. You have referred to my writing about art education as a way of casting out my "demons." I thought that had to be done by critiquing the idol of art, but it seems to be leading to a study of idolatry itself, an understanding of the violence inherent in prejudging any human experience.

It's difficult for me to see clearly just how much I need to dwell on the particulars of what I've felt was wrong in art and education. In turning to discuss their promise, I still feel stuck with old paradigms that I'm afraid will only keep me restricted to those views if I try

to do it in the context of existing art education literature per se. For example, Doing Art Together (Silberstein-Storfer, 1982) looked promising, but it turned out to be a disappointment. There is an "Even you can do it!" attitude that points back to accepting an objective assumption of what art is. Art remains this amazing thing most people think they cannot do and the teacher's function is still to convince them that they can. Togetherness is just a technique, collaboration a method of accomplishing the task. I believe it is important to encourage a sense of efficacy and in contributing in whatever way I can to an atmosphere of belonging, but there is something false about setting art up as the measure of these. I don't see in even the most "sensitive" articles on art education a switching around of the goals, a view of human project as a need to be met coming first and the process of art as just one means of meeting that need.

I tried to find in Dewey's (1934) view of "appreciation" some sense of putting people first, but to be honest, he ends up being even more prescriptive than someone like Hegel (1905) who devised such hierarchical categories for the different forms of visual expression. Dewey (1934) starts out in Art as Experience with a certain reverence for human interaction, but when he "gets serious" about outlining a philosophy of art, even experience gets classified

to death. For art to really be art, it has to reflect a certain kind and level of experience. The concept of valuing adding value gets turned around somehow to become judgment based on standards just as set as those of Hegel. I have to turn to the Kabbalah (see Scholem's 1969 The Kabbalah and Its Symbolism) for a sense of appreciation involving release of the spark of life within, honoring each other and our world by revealing and thus manifesting inherent value.

Sincerely,

Sylvia

Comments

Art as a tool, this is becoming clear. An open agenda, a curriculum based on sharing that makes connection and communication possible, this, too, is emerging here. I'm way too close to this part, still, to comment more on it.

Summary

No entirely new issues emerge here. This section is an attempt to work through the confusion brought on by residual reification of art by holding on tightly to art education literature and failing to see beyond it. It appears throughout this letter that I have not gained enough distance from viewing art education as an objective body of knowledge at this point to benefit from literature in this area in a new way. It is probably not as impossible as it seems to find some promise

there, but because of my own need to overcome idolizing it, I find it necessary to turn to other writers who do not trigger that response. Writers who are overtly addressing the concept of knowledge as human creation and art from standpoints outside of the "field" of art are revealed here to be more appropriate to my research at this time.

SECTION SIX: THE FINAL LETTER

Moving from Identification to Investigation

Introduction

This final letter is basically a reflection on the other four, showing the growth of my respect for this process of approaching my own experience as data and a readiness to move on to more intentional and informed reflection, issue by issue, in the next chapter. At this point I am still confused and, as a result, still frightened by the way I have used power in the past. Facing the struggle between doubt and hope to this extent has, however, clarified some of the problems and revealed within them enough promise for me to want to go on with asking questions about authority that include my participation in its investment.

The Letter

Week of November 17th

Dear Dr. Purpel:

I want to keep writing in letter form this week, to let ideas flow for a little longer before I begin checking back through the other letters for themes and organization. I haven't felt as comfortable doing this since I wrote the first letter. I guess I've overwhelmed myself with inconsistencies, contradictions, and felt that to be "wrong" at the same time I gave myself permission to see conflict as all right. I'm used to conning myself into taking a stand,

leaving out my doubts when I write. That's why, though, as I told you, I've not been able before to live with what I've written. You have validated my need to feel honest in my writing, to show both, or should I say many sides. I appreciate the clarity that affords, but more than that, the acceptance. I've really been afraid that if I could not take some unequivocal position and successfully defend it I wouldn't be "doing my job" here. Instead of pressing that perspective on me, you have encouraged my expressions of ambiguity. Thank you. It will be easier to continue writing now, even after leaving this letter format. I've had a different kind of experience, one I can build on in other contexts.

I keep going back to the question, "Is sensitivitiy to materials transferable to human relationships?" and perhaps in dealing here with the written word in a more consciously open way and seeing its possibilities for carrying such a spirit into the rest of the dissertation, I have begun to answer my own question. If, as an interest, art can be for students a shared interest, that sharing counts for something important to their whole sense of being.

Sharing one's sensitivity, celebrating human capability, these could so easily be focused on in doing art. When I see a well-crafted piece of art work, I can feel the care another had for his materials. That draws me close

to another person's experience, not just the product left by a process. Artifact becomes then evidence of the human touch behind it. Even if he used his craft to escape from the world of human interaction, his work might still mediate between him and those who can appreciate his skill and expression.

I found that students love to watch each other do art. That is the closest thing in my experience of teaching to seeing a sense of mutuality emerge from the art process. You mentioned last week the distinction between control and harmony. Maybe control seen as a part of harmony isn't bad. There has been so much misuse of control in our times; it has been thrown out by many who seek a more liberative order. The art world, especially, has rejected control in favor of chaos in such a way that we are left with a sense of alienation, with the feeling there is no hope for achieving harmony. We only further fragment our existence when we give in to despair.

An overemphasis on self-expression seems to have little or nothing to do with communication of being; it's just as bankrupt as the overemphasis on controlling media. Imagination and skill belong together. A choice does not have to be made between the two. The more I think about it, the more it appears we can learn a lot about what is important through an interest in the dialectic between man and material.

Perhaps transference of one process to another doesn't take place automatically, but what is to prevent us from making the possibility conscious in our teaching?

You once told me that Dr. Macdonald said it would be enough if through our teaching we could just encourage students to be good to one another. What if we viewed each subject as a tool to be used to that end? Isn't that what Dr. Stinson (1984) has done with the teaching of dance? In taking Macdonald's (1977) value questions seriously:

> "What is the meaning of human life?"
> "How shall we live together?"

the content of Stinson's curriculum is not impoverished by putting people first; it is enhanced by connecting an interest in the arts to a fundamental sense of meaning and purpose.

If certain ways of appreciating art can lend itself to increasing the value we place on each other, then it belongs in a life-affirming curriculum. If a certain way of learning to master skill and technique can bring a sense of harmony to my students' lives, then that, too, belongs. Teaching through a subject would involve deciding what is important enough to make time and energy spent on an interest worthwhile.

Your lecture on authority versus power is finally coming into focus for me, Dr. Purpel. With what authority may we use the power of knowledge? Does that not depend on who

we believe is responsible for creating it? It seems to me that if we try to take hegemony apart piece by piece, it will always remain ahead of us, but if we begin to honor our own experience as knowledge along with maintaining a critical consciousness, as writers like Giroux (1981) and Shor (1980) suggest, then we will not be left as Macdonald (1978b) puts it, always "one step behind the world" (p. 99).

The other night at dinner a fellow student and I laughingly spoke of how we cannot "teach." She cannot "teach" English composition and I cannot "teach" drawing if by teaching we mean breaking a process down into fragments, feeding information to students out of context with the expectation that the sum of those parts will somehow convey the ability to perform the whole process. We have to trust our students to enter into a process, involve themselves in it to learn how it can serve their purposes. Of course we can share information and suggest experiences that make sense of it, but that is so different from what it often appears is expected of us as teachers. About the only thing a banking approach (Freire, 1982) can serve is misuse of power. It doesn't make sense for helping people learn.

It is the use of a subject, finally, that really makes the difference between participating in the sacred or the profane, isn't it?

Sincerely,

Sylvia

Comments

You have said that this section may belong in my last chapter instead of here. All I know is that trying to go beyond what I've already accomplished in letter form hasn't really worked. It feels to me like I've come around a circle, spiralled up to a new place. Maybe this section is just a review of all the others with some foreshadowing of what can happen throughout the next chapter. I hope it is.

Last night I couldn't sleep for dreading spending all day today re-living this entire thing. Now, at the end of it, I am encouraged instead of depressed. I see movement; I see an opening up. I can at least bear to look at the process, accept it as part of a whole. Again, this surprises me.

Summary

The question of authority versus power, of searching out ground on which to stand, from which to choose the sacred over the profane, reaches back through all the other issues previously identified. Reification of art, teaching through art values such as relationship, harmony and transcendence, these are tied together by the desire to realize a sense of moral purpose. This letter represents the ending of one cycle, that of the identification process, and the beginning of the next, an in-depth study of those themes which have emerged.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Throughout these sections and the reflections made thus far, it can be seen that distance created by either the passing of time or a shift in perspective determined the particular meanings that could be appropriated at each instance along the way:

from report to letter

from letter to letter

from letters to comments

from the study of report, letters and comments as text, in light of a Ricoeurian sense of affirmation, to the introductions and summaries written for each section.

These are only the more obvious cycles of events and interpretation present. There are wheels within those wheels, too. Each cycle brought greater significance to areas of meaning identified for further investigation.

The next chapter will begin yet another cycle, this time involving both my own thought and that of writers who speak to the issues of reification, knowledge as creation, and the place of values in curricular decision-making. From there I will proceed, in subsequent chapters, to a discussion of the possibilities and limitations of teaching through art, including reflections on those areas of focus I find important for such a curriculum: embracing identity through relationship, establishing order through harmony rather than control and achieving transcendence through appreciation and celebration.

CHAPTER II

FROM REIFICATION TO RESPONSIBILITY

Preface

In my first chapter I described my difficulties with the teaching of art and my difficulties with the parallel issues of reification and idolatry. This chapter serves to set an agenda for further study, particularly the need to clarify issues of reifying art as subject matter and the relationship between art curricula and social justice, through developing a general understanding of the social construction of reality and the dangers of reifying any "body" of knowledge. I shall devote a chapter to each of these general concerns. In this chapter I will discuss my questions concerning reification and social responsibility as they have been both generated and informed by various writers outside the field of art education. In the following chapters I will focus this analysis on art education.

I will begin with a reflection on Berger and Luckmann's concept of the social construction of reality in light of Greene's and Richards' warnings against the objectification of knowledge. From that discussion of the objectification of knowledge I will move to Freire's understanding of the part such objectification plays in the objectification, and

thus oppression, of human beings, particularly with regard to the use of knowledge as power in the teacher-student relationship. In an attempt to resolve some of my own dilemmas within that relationship, I turn to Macdonald's curriculum model based on identification of the need for an aesthetic rationality to inform the dual dialectic between self and environment and oneself and his spiritual ground of being--a need Macdonald suggests can be met by development of the process of centering the person in the world, thus making him more capable of contributing to the manifestation of transcendent reality. From Macdonald's advocacy of centering, I go on to discuss centering as it is viewed by Richards and by Fox. Their connection between centering and co-creation leads me through a discussion of the problems brought about by dualistic thinking and the possibility of bringing compassion to bear on our understanding of the creative process--a sense of "power with" in the part-to-whole relationship of the individual to all that is other.

By asking the question, "What is important?" with regard to the use of knowledge and responsible social relationships, I come to focus more clearly on my own values: the importance I place on finding one's identity in relationship to others, the importance of recognizing the inadequacy of control ideologies for creating a growing sense of order--of harmony as order that resonates with the whole of being, and the

importance of actively appreciating and celebrating the value of human beings and their project of co-creating the world. By daring to place priority on the person's part in creating knowledge rather than on knowledge itself, I begin to see art and the teaching of art from a radically different perspective--one which allows art to serve us as human beings and develop our capacity for transcendence.

This chapter is written as a process of discovery. It is an attempt to make the connections between the problems of reification and idolatry to curricular decision-making in general and the teaching of art in particular that will lead to further investigation of art education. In this sense, it serves to connect the first chapter--the identificaton of issues, to the third and fourth chapters--a discussion of the idolatrous use of art in art education in the next chapter and of sacred possibilities for its use in the final chapter.

"What is important?"--The Insufficiency of Technological Rationality for Meeting Human Needs

The process of viewing my educational experience as data for research and, more specifically, as text for interpretation has revealed reification of art as a central problem regarding responsible teaching of art as a subject. The reification of any body of knowledge with which I've been confronted has been a constant source of conflict, trapping

me in either rebellion against or blind obedience to idea after idea, robbing me of consciously choosing how I will participate in my own life. The meaning I make of any situation and the action I take in repsonse to it have been controlled by my tendency to objectify knowledge. As a result, I have objectified human beings, starting with myself. The use of knowledge to either liberate or oppress students (Freire, 1982) depends on how the teacher views herself, on whether or not she can see herself as subject, as co-creator of the reality she expeiences.

Greene (1983) says of those involved in curricular decision-making:

> Preoccupied with priorities, purposes, programs of "intended learning" (Crary, 1969, p. 13) and intended (or unintended) manipulation, we pay too little attention to the individual in quest of his own future, bent on surpassing what is merely "given," on breaking through the everyday. We are still too prone to dichotomize: to think of "discipline" or "public traditions" or "accumulated wisdom" or "common culture" (individualization despite) as objectively existent, external to the knower--there to be discovered, mastered, learned. (p. 168)

The danger of believing knowledge must be objectively existent is not the prevention of what we know affecting how we live, but the distortion of that process. If the product of that which we project is considered out of our control because we take no responsibility for the meanings we use to achieve an end, we are not only alienated from the

resulting experiences but actually violated by them. Knowledge "turns" on us to impose a partially foreign reality, one we helped to make but feel helpless to fully understand.

A very graphic description of knowledge turning on life instead of turning into life is given here by Richards (1964):

> That which we consume, with a certain passivity, accepting it for the most part from our teachers, who in turn have accepted it from theirs, is like the food we eat. And food, in order to become energy, or will, is transformed entirely by the process of metabolism. We do not become the food we eat. Rather the food turns into us. Similarly with knowledge, at best. Hopefully, we do not turn into encyclopedias or propaganda machines or electric brains. Our knowledge, if we allow it to be transformed within us, turns into capacity for life-serving human deeds. If knowledge does not turn into life, it makes cripples and madmen and dunces. It poisons just as food would if it stayed in the stomach and was never digested, and the waste products never thrown off. (p. 16)

Relating this misuse of knowledge to curricular concerns, she goes on to say, "One of the reasons formal education is in danger today is that a sense of work is split off from human earnestness" (Richards, 1964, p. 18). What I like about Richards' view is the underlying assumption that human earnestness, what I have come to refer to as the "impulse to care," is our natural state; making life-giving meaning of our interactions with the world should be as normal for our minds as the process of metabolism is to our bodies. When Richards (1964) asks, "How might this

split be healed?" (p. 18), a state of health, of wholeness, is seen not only as possible, but essential to being who we really are.

Beneath my own despair at trying to handle objective knowledge and human relationships simultaneously in the classroom, there was always a hopeful aspect to the dissonance between feeling compelled to transmit "facts" and wanting to simply share a sense of meaning and purpose with other beings, but I could not see it until I began to recognize dissonance as mental pain. When I feel physical pain, I take it as a natural warning that my body is no longer functioning properly and needs to be treated in some way that will bring it back to a healthy state. Wholeness is such an obvious goal when the body is sick. Why is it so difficult to see as illness the mental habits we form that separate us from each other and thus disrupt healthy functioning of social life? I hated to admit something was wrong with the way I was thinking. I felt ashamed and defensive at the same time. There just did not seem to be a way out of being controlled by my own thoughts.

Although I had been involved in studying phenomenology and the sociology of knowledge for some time before beginning this research project, I generally took from those fields what I believed to be "better" facts than those I thought were true before. I replaced former ideas about reality

with new ones, but I always tried to apply them to my life. Even a theory about taking one's own experience seriously was held apart from its meaning because I could not ever seem to start with my own life; I started with some judgment made on the basis of a perspective I thought existed outside my epxerience. I used theories to justify explanations of my life that were part of those theories. Only as I began to unravel that process through my letters to Dr. Purpel did I start asking of my own experience, "What do I want this to mean?" It was only after seeing some hope that there is a way out of reifying that I felt I could afford to admit the extent to which I had participated in reification.

In The Social Construction of Reality, Berger and Luckmann (1967) trace the steps man takes from producing a world through making meaning of shared existence to institutionalizing those meanings, giving them objective reality, to apprehending that reality as meaning that must be taken as unalterable fact:

> Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms . . . the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products--such as facts of nature, results of cosmic laws, or manifestations of divine will. Reification implies that man is capable of forgetting his own authorship of the human world, and further, that the dialectic between man, the producer, and his products is lost to consciousness. The reified world is, by definition, a dehumanized world. (p. 89)

When I forget the whole truth about how knowledge is created and focus only on its existence apart from my participation in making meaning of phenomena, I give the power of creation over to that which was created and allow the product of my actions to rule the process. In my letters, I have connected this tendency toward reification to idolatry. Idolatry, as I understand it through Tillich (1957), is the act of mistaking a symbol for that which it was made to represent, of attributing consummate meaning to a partial expression of reality. Whether in reverencing an idea of art or one of God, in letting my own thinking split off from its effects and use the resulting illusions to determine subsequent thought and action, I am denying responsibility for my own praxis.

I cannot avoid making the assumption that we forfeit our freedom to choose life's meaning because we have so little faith in our ability to respond creatively. I remember having been absolutely startled by the contrast between the Christ spirit and the idol the Church had made of Jesus in The Brothers Karamazov (Dostoyevsky, 1950). The Grand Inquisitor claims that "So long as man remains free he strives for nothing so incessantly and so painfully as to find someone to worship" (Dostoyevsky, 1950, p. 263), but it is interesting that he goes on to explain this by citing the need for a community of worship. If it is communion we seek through

idolatry, then, turning that around, if we dare to face our responsibility for creation through communion, might we not give each other the strength to sanctify rather than profane our existence?

It seems no accident that the quality of my relationships at different times in my life led to these questions about objectification, reification and, finally, idolatry. The destructive effects of an irresponsible use of knowledge can so clearly be seen in the oppressor-oppressed relationship. As Berger and Luckmann have stated, "All human knowledge is developed, transmitted and maintained in social situations" (1967, p. 3). To whatever degree we fool ourselves into mistaking ideas for reality, giving power to the product rather than the process of living our lives, we do it together and what any one person does has consequences for both himself and others.

In his analysis of the teacher-student relationship in banking education, teaching that becomes merely an act of depositing, Freire (1982) casts the teacher in the role of oppressor, the one who presents reified knowledge as fact and thus reinforces a dehumanized world view. The following contradictory attitudes and practices characterize this banking approach:

(a) the teacher teaches and the students are taught
(b) the teacher knows everything and the students know nothing
(c) the teacher thinks and the students are thought about

(d) the teacher talks and the students listen--meekly
(e) the teacher disciplines and the students are disciplined
(f) the teacher chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply
(g) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the action of the teacher
(h) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it
(i) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students
(j) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects. (Freire, 1982, p. 59)

Freire acknowledges the possibility of students perceiving, at some point, the contradictions about reality that the banking concept maintains, of the oppressed discovering through existential experience the dehumanization involved, but he does not address in a similar way the fact that the oppressor (whether she is one knowingly or unknowingly) was likely once a student under the same system and thus has another level of experience with which to compare and contrast the role she is asked to play as teacher. Freire does indicate that the oppressor is freed from a dehumanized world with the oppressed when the oppressed revolt successfully, but the potential for the oppressor to become critically conscious of her own oppression in the very act of participating in the oppression of others receives no emphasis. The oppressor is constantly violating her own humanity by limiting her own choices and possibilities for co-creation. In short, she suffers, too.

The beauty of Freire's (1982) statement, "The pursuit of full humanity . . . cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism, but only in fellowship and solidarity" (p. 73) is that it is completed by the acknowledgment that humanization cannot unfold in antagonistic relations between oppressors and oppressed. If, as Freire (1982) writes, "any situation in which some men prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry is one of violence" (p. 73), if "no one can be authentically human while he prevents others from being so" (p. 73), then consciousness of the antagonistic relationship by either the oppressor or the oppressed in a given situation could initiate change. I am not claiming here there is no need to concern ourselves with institutionalized imbalances of power, only that both oppressor and oppresssed are disempowered in a fundamental way by living in a reified world, that any entrance into a critical and imaginative consciousness (see Macdonald & Purpel, 1987) is important because it has consequences for us all.

"What is important?"--Curriculum Theory Informed by Aesthetic Rationality

Because, as a teacher, I hungered for the kind of solidarity Freire describes, it became important to my own sense of being human to develop my capacity for both critical and imaginative thought. Because I began to see the need for all of us to recognize the dehumanizing forces in our lives and thus the need for envisioning more biophilic means of

co-creation (see Freire, 1982), it became important to my sense of responsibility as an educator to investigate the possibilities of a curricular framework designed to promote that kind of development in my students. It was to be years after I first encountered Macdonald's (1978b) concept of the dual dialectic and his transcendental developmental ideology of education before I actually believed such a framework could inform art education curricula. This is ironic, since Macdonald views his work in this area as meeting the need for an aesthetic rationality to balance the predominately technological outlook of our society. Not only that, the doing of art itself plays a strong role in Macdonald's suggested means for developing such a rationality.

I appreciated Macdonald's goals right away, but I could not take them in from the actual context of my own teaching before now; I could only idealize them and use my previous failure to achieve them to discount my own experience. That one's values inevitably come through in one's teaching (Purpel & Ryan, 1976) made sense enough once I was asked to think about it. That a teacher's values should, therefore, be made explicit in curricular decision-making (Macdonald, 1981a) appeared to be the only alternative to a dishonest pretense of neutrality. Asking, "What is important?" (Macdonald & Purpel, 1987) has, for the duration of my program of study, been important to me; I just could not apply that question

to the prospect of teaching a moral curriculum in the visual arts. As has been shown through my collection of data, I fully believed "my" subject was an exception to the theory. Anything I taught that conveyed my ultimate concerns couldn't really have been "art." Art was too self-indulgent, too decadent to serve the goals of centering and transcendence.

Now, finally, after recognizing the way I have allowed definitions of art to rule over my experience of it, I am preparing to ask of this interest what it can do to serve importance. Before I do that in the following chapters, I want to review Macdonald's dual dialectic and his transcendental developmental ideology of education as a viable approach to using any subject as a tool, to teaching the importance of both critical and imaginative thinking through subject matter in general. First I will set the conception of Macdonald's framework in the context of those he found to be insufficient for meeting our most basic needs, but which point to the need for Macdonald's ideology.

In Macdonald's article, "A Transcendental Developmental Ideology of Education" (1978b, pp. 95-123), he identifies four educational ideologies other than his own: romantic, cultural transmission, developmental and radical, considering each one on the basis of its implied ontology, epistemology and axiology. He uses these particular frameworks because his transcendental developmental ideology is largely a response

to their use by Kohlberg and Mayer (1978) to promote a developmental ideology. I represent them here according to my understanding of their contributions and limitations to a broad sense of balance between inner and outer experience, but as Gress and Purpel (1978) have been careful to note, these labels are not necessarily agreed-upon realities.

The romantic ideology as Kohlberg and Mayer (1978) refer to it and Macdonald (1978b) uses this category, regards the individual as primary. Left to unfold without societal constraint, both knowledge and values emerge from inner experience and result in beneficent action on the world. Environment can limit the individual's choices and thwart his inner growth or expand his possibilities and nourish his existence, but none of these are claimed to affect the individual in ways that constitute a reality based on a dialectic between himself and the world (Mead, 1936).

Cultural transmission, as I understand Macdonald's (1978b) interpretation of it, fails to acknowledge interdependency, as well, only for opposite reasons. This ideology assumes that environment shapes one's knowledge and values in the behaviorist, stimulus-response manner (Skinner, 1971), leaving nothing to individual choice. Personal meaning is denied and the knowledge and values transmitted are taken for granted as inevitable facts.

With the developmental ideology as it is portrayed by Macdonald (1978b), it does become explicit that inner and outer phenomena create reality through transaction. The dialectic between individual and society affects that which either one holds as true and good, but society is assumed here to have reached a certain level of evolution to which the individual must develop in order to contribute to its progress (see Dewey, 1944). Though the transaction here requires personal investment in social concerns, resolving the relationship between inner and outer structures of one's reality pits the developing against the developed. Allegiance to the illusion of a progressive democracy is a danger here, for transmission may occur which feels like authentic transaction because it appeals to a sense of participation that obfuscates constraints present due to an imbalance of power.

Although it is acknowledged in both developmental and radical ideologies that the individual and society together constitute one's reality, Macdonald's (1978b) assessment of the radical ideology involves the necessary but not sufficient critique of unequal power arrangements currently existing within that relationship. One must be critically conscious of the weight held by external structures and actively seek new social conditions that allow fuller development of the individual and greater opportunity for co-creation (Freire, 1982) if he is to consider himself a viable

participant in the dialectic between inner and outer reality. Solidarity with others in this process empowers the individual through sharing critical reflections on experience and resulting changes in consciousness. Reflective transaction, however more effective for all concerned because it is more equal on both sides, is still not full interaction.

According to Macdonald (1978b), the uneven approaches to individual and society in the romantic and cultural transmission ideologies point to the need for a balanced emphasis on inner and outer experience partially met by developmental and radical approaches. I say "partially" because even in the radical ideology the interpretation of outer experience through reflection is still intended to serve that outer experience and inner experience is thus only informed by practical need and used to function more profitably in the material world. Absent here, and preventing full interaction, is an emphasis on spiritual reality. Macdonald's (1978b) transcendental developmental ideology includes an aesthetic rationality, a way of thinking about interaction that honors the importance of making conscious the effect of what I call "innermost" experience on the whole of one's praxis:

> My position [Macdonald writes] is best approached through the concept of a dual dialectical process. A dialectic exists not only between the individual and his environment but also within the individual himself. (p. 103)

Once conscious of an innermost realm of experience, it becomes possible to approach the process of transaction with intentionality based on both critical reflection of the outer reality we see and an imaginative vision of the way it could be. (See Figure 1.)

Macdonald (1978b) points out that inner and outer experience is constantly affected by information coming to us from this other ground of being whether we recognize it or not:

> Values are articulated in the lives of people by the dual dialectic of reflecting upon the consequences of an action and sounding the depths of our inner selves. (p. 105)

If this process remains unconscious, however, we stand little chance of allowing the innermost self to speak with a clear voice. What actually informs the part of us that meets the world directly may, instead, be a fearful interpretation of this overwhelming power to conceive of and manifest new realities. It is at this point, I believe, in my own experience, that reification is embraced in thought and idolatry, chosen over creative action. If, looking inward to our heart of hearts, we find we care so deeply, yet in looking outward we find few social structures available for the release of this spirit, we may mistakenly believe it is futile to attempt expression. It is easy to lose sight of the fact that we have the power to create opportunities, to change the outer structure through acting on inner vision, to honor our "real" relationship to the world.

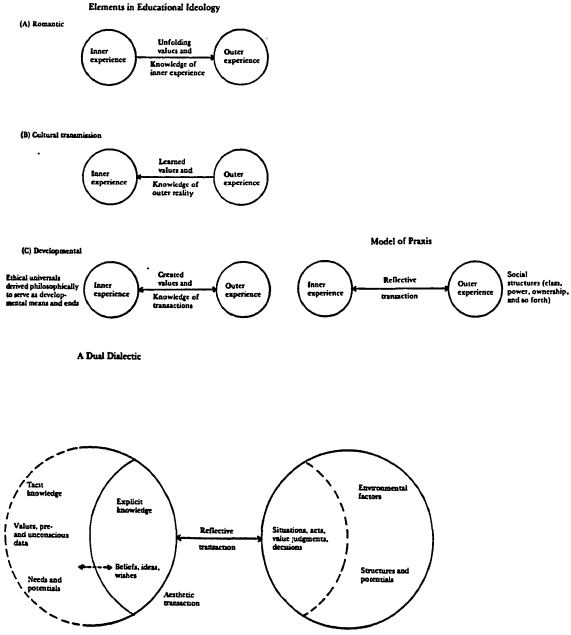

Figure 1. A visual comparison of the five ideologies.

Source: Diagrams are reprinted, with permission, from Gress and Purpel (1978, pp. 97-98, 104).

Note that in the dual dialectic explicit knowledge and beliefs, ideas and wishes are formed by and inform the acts, value judgments and decisions we make in response to larger environmental factors and social structures and potentialities. Through reflective transaction those outer elements can be affected by, as well as affect, actions, decisions and values. This constitutes the dialectic identified in the radical ideology. Tacit knowledge, values formed from pre- and unconscious data and largely unconscious needs and potentials inform all elements of the first dialectic, either directly or indirectly, in the second.

Berger and Luckmann (1967) describe the tendency to turn that relationship upside down, to so objectify meaning by institutionalizing experience that reification becomes the status quo:

> Typically, the real relationship between man and his world is reversed in consciousness. Man, the producer of a world, is apprehended as its product, and human activity as an epiphenomenon of non-human processes. Human meanings are no longer understood as world-producing but as being, in their turn, products of the "nature of things." It must be emphasized that reification is a modality of consciousness, more precisely, a modality of man's objectification of the human world. Even while apprehending the world in reified terms, man continues to produce it. That is, man is capable paradoxically of producing a reality that denies him. (p. 89)

The extent to which man has now produced technological realities that deny him is reason enough to appreciate Macdonald's insistence on recovering our awareness of an aesthetic rationality. Macdonald (1978b) urges us to face the evidence:

> An epistemology that does not recognize tacit knowledge components, or the fantastic possibilities and implications of our most advanced fields of inquiry, is simply weighted down with the baggage of philosophical and materialistic biases. How, what and why are far more open questions than we are often led to believe, and the possibilities of accessibility to knowledge from "hidden" inner sources operating on acausal, or integrative, or serial and synchronistic bases point directly toward the awareness of another ground of knowledge in human being. (p. 112)

The dangers of reification and idolatry, of denying our part in what we make and allowing those creations to rule over us, these culminate in the prospect of nuclear annihilation. It is no wonder that Macdonald identifies the aesthetic ground of knowledge, and not the prevailing technological

rationality, as "reason." The existence of reason as aesthetic rationality is explained, he claims, by the concept of a dual dialectic, the concept to which I have turned in this research to help me make sense of my own reversals regarding our "real" relationship to the world.

Macdonald (1978a) takes seriously Dewey's charge that educational philosophy is the essence of all philosophy because it is "the study of how to have a world" (Dewey in Macdonald, 1978a, p. 51), so he therefore regards curriculum theory, the study of how to have a learning environment, as a frontier for developing an aesthetic approach to human project. Macdonald and Purpel (1987) challenge the prevailing paradigm in the field of curriculum planning, "the Tyler rationale" (Tyler, 1949), for its representation of the technological, linear and positivistic thinking of our contemporary culture. Taking an aesthetic approach themselves, Macdonald and Purpel (1987) address the basic problem they see in the Tyler rationale, that of separating means from ends inherent in the technical planning approach:

> Ends are stated and means are then emphasized. In many instances the means become another sort of ends in themselves. Aesthetically many activities are worth doing for the sake of engagement in them, and the value of such activity lies in the dynamics of participation. The outcomes of such pursuits are neither known nor relevant to the justification for doing them. Thus, inherent in an aesthetic concern is the realization that outcomes of any tangible sort are unknowable until after the fact. (p. 182)

From this kind of aesthetic viewpoint, curriculum planning, as well as the living environments it brings into existence, should reflect qualitative concern for the personal and meaningful engagement with others in the process (Macdonald & Purpel, 1987). Under these conditions, knowing can be seen for what it is, as a moment of praxis, an opening, as Greene (1983) puts it, into "what has not yet been" (Sartre, 1963, p. 92).

In recognizing the existence of a dual dialectic, Macdonald's (1978b) transcendental developmental ideology sets forth curricular goals that make possible what he calls "good" praxis (Macdonald, 1981b), putting theory into practice in a way that emancipates us from previous understandings and thus frees us to reinterpret situations and reach greater understandings (p. 133). Such a curriculum, Greene (1983) believes, can offer students the "miracle of related experiences" (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. xix), a view of themselves as part of the network of relationships from which meaning emerges.

Before moving on to those aims Macdonald sets forth, I want to emphasize the miraculous aspect of finding oneself a part of related experience. I tend to write of transcendence in terms of results, but in the process of speaking here to the concept of an aesthetic rationality I am reminded that my answer to the question, "What is important?"

involves the state of being in relationship, not only the co-creation of new realities that can result. It is so difficult to get away from instrumental thought patterns, even when expressing the desire to do so. It is easy to place the ends of developing imagination over the means, yet it is in the process rather than the product that we enjoy the greatest sense of connectedness, of being and doing together. I have earlier referred to an imaginative consciousness as both aesthetic and religious. Implicit in Macdonald's ideology is this sense of the religious, I believe, the feeling of being a part of, related to the whole of existence. Explicitly, his view of transcendence is based on P. Berger's (1969) "natural theology," the existence of experiences in common human activity that appear to point beyond everyday reality, those of ordering, playing, hoping, damning and finding reason for humor (see Macdonald & Purpel, 1987, p. 183).

The sense of living into one's part of the whole is more completely expressed in Macdonald's (1978b) belief that the centering of the person in the world should be the aim of education for both students and teachers. He does not take this to mean achieving mental health in the sense of adjusting one's attitude to social norms, nor does he mean self-actualization of the personality, for he says spirit should be served by personality, that personality should

not be allowed to develop as an entity in itself. Macdonald is, instead, interested in bringing all aspects of being into a state of integration. His position is largely based on Richards' (1964) blend of religion and psychology in using the centering concept:

> The imagery of centering is archetypal. To feel the whole in every part: The Mystery and Action and Being of the whole living organism of oneself and of that Self which all of us together make, and of that earth where we are humanly born, and of that sun-sphere that nourishes us, too, and of all that universe that beats its way to us now through millions of trillions of light years, making our future its long past. (p. 4)

Macdonald's (1978b) own definitions reveal, true to the dual dialectic, both spiritual and socio-cultural concerns:

> [Centering] is a human experience facilitated in many ways by a religious attitude when this attitude encompasses the search to find our inner being or to complete one's awareness of wholeness and meaning as a person. . . . Centering as the aim of education calls for the completion of the person or the creation of meaning that utilizes all the potential given to each person. It in no way conflicts with the accumulated knowledge of a culture; it merely places this knowledge in the base or ground from which it grows. As such, centering is the fundamental process of human being that makes sense of our perceptions and cognitions of reality. (pp. 113-114)

Macdonald (1978b) suggests we ask ourselves these questions in planning a curriculum based on the value of developing ability in students and teachers to center themselves in the world:

1. What kinds of activity are encouraged that provide for opening up perceptual experiences?
2. What kinds of activity facilitate the process of sensitizing people to others, to inner vibrations?

3. What kinds of activity provide experiences for developing close-knit community relationships?
4. What kinds of activity encourage and facilitate religious experiences?
5. What kinds of activity facilitate the development of patterned meaning structures?
6. What ways can we organize knowledge to enlarge human potential through meaning?
7. How can we facilitate the development of inner strength and power in in human beings? (p. 114)

He further suggests certain processes, particular kinds of engagement of students in human activity that he sees promising for the facilitation of centering: pattern making, playing, meditative thinking, imagining, using the aesthetic principle, attending to the body and understanding our biology and educating perception. It can be seen that these questions could be asked within the teaching of a variety of subjects; the processes could be applied to any number of students' interests. Because I will be looking in the next chapter at how some of these processes can be offered through art, I proceed wih a general discussion of them here.

Pattern making, according to Macdonald (1978b), is a process of creating order in search of meaning and responds to the individual's need to transform reality symbolically. This personal ordering of one's existence requires opportunities for subjective encounter with cultural substance if the student is to be informed rather than controlled by outer reality. The imposition of presenting any subject as a collection of unalterable objective facts exacerbates the tendency to reify and therefore misuse knowledge. The kind

of order found in centering is one of harmony rather than rigid control. The process of pattern making necessarily honors the dialectic between inner and innermost self, together with that of inner and outer experience, both in receiving and giving expressions of reality. Symbols, when not confused with the essence of that which they represent, can then be used for communication rather than idolatry.

Playing, Macdonald (1978b) says, is the freedom to engage in encounter without the pressure of utility. Emphasis on process rather than product allows one to open up to relationships with the world that would otherwise be overlooked in the rush from means to end. The courage to trust the whole of an experience is developed when focus is shifted from outcome to interaction.

Meditative thinking deals with the question, "Why?", with an examination of the fundamental meaning of things, Macdonald (1978b) writes. He quotes Heidegger, saying it is "a releasement toward things," an "openness to the mystery" that we must foster rather than utilitarian thinking (1978b, p. 118). This would involve providing students with opportunities to dwell in primary experiences, giving them the time and an atmosphere conducive to reflection on experience.

Imagining, Macdonald (1978b) offers, is a way of approaching pattern making, play and meditative thinking nonverbally. Opportunities to picture in the mind what is

not present to the senses, he says, can put the individual in contact with the ground of his being. As has been mentioned in the first chapter, imagination necessarily operates between distanciaton and appropriation in any act of interpretation and we can only know our very being through interpretation, through reflection on the perception of experience. Making this process conscious and developing its creative use would have a profound effect on one's ability to center himself in the world.

Using the aesthetic principle involves, for Macdonald Read's (1956) argument that the preadolescent education of individuals "should move from feeling to drama, sensation to visual and plastic design, intuition to dance and music, and through to craft" (Macdonald, 1978b, p. 119). Macdonald does not make it clear just what this principle involves past that stage other than a general respect for the development of feelings, sensations, and thinking as the individual grows toward cultural art forms. On the basis of this, he believes the activities of dramatization, designing, dancing, playing music and making or crafting are important in a transcendent ideology. I assume here that Macdonald believes the teaching of any subject can and should involve the arts, but this is not the kind of teaching through art with which I will concern myself in the next chapter since my subject is one of the arts. A discussion of Read's (1956) "education

through art" is beyond the scope of my work here. I see his theory as a prescripton from the outside while I am attempting to develop a concept of teaching through art from the inside, out, from what I believe is important to the possibilities for conveying those values through teaching art. I take "aesthetic rationality" to mean creative and wholistic reasoning which may or may not be evidenced by doing any particular kind of art.

By attending to the body and understanding our biology, Macdonald (1978b) urges us to come to grips with our own biological being. "To be at home in our bodies," he says, is critical for human centering" (p. 119). Because centering is a creative process going on continually in nature, man could not ignore the place he takes in that process and still hope to center himself in his world. That world is apprehended and influenced by both the mental and physical aspects of our being. To ignore one or the other or fail to recognize that they inform each other would be to remain hopelessly fragmented.

Educating perception involves recognizing there are many worlds of consciousness that exist aside from our present one (W. James in Macdonald, 1978b, p. 120) and that the creation of altered states of consciousness is a human potential important to the process of centering. I am personally more comfortable with the concept of paradigm shifts (Kuhn, 1970)

than altered states, but on the importance of one's ability to open up to different perspectives, I agree. It is the use of perception that most concerns me.

Every time I return to Macdonald's transcendental developmental ideology it becomes more evident just how complex the development of centering can be and how very different a curriculum based on centering as an aim would be from anything we see in public schools today. I do return, over and over again, because this model comes as close as any I have seen to reflecting my own values. This time, however, I regard Macdonald's work with less idealism and a greater sense of coming to it from my own experience than I ever have before. I believe he would say this is the result of my own centering process and thus more true to the spirit of his thinking than a dogmatic application of his suggestions. Throughout the remainder of this work I will refer back to aspects of centering and the processes that facilitate that process, but a part of my own centering has been to bring those aspects into clearer focus. I have, to some extent, simplified my view of centering and added to my sense of transcendence this time around.

The importance of recognizing one's identity is found in relationship, of ordering one's existence through harmony rather than control and of achieving transcendence through appreciation and celebration; these values are both reflected

in and, I believe, move beyond my concept of centering. I stay with centering and, therefore, with Richards for a time, in investigating identity and relationship, but move on to Fox to look further into harmony and transcendent compassion.

"What is important?"--Relationship, Harmony, and Transcendence

> We exist as respiring, pulsating organisms within a sea of life-serving beings. As we become able to hold this more and more steadily in our consciousness, we experience relatedness at an elemental level. We see that it is not a matter of trying to be related, but rather of living consciously into the actuality of being related. As we yield ourselves to the living presence of this relatedness, we find that life begins to possess an ease and a freedom and a naturalness that fill our hearts with joy. This does not mean that our troubles are over. It means that we are readier to live into and through our troubles, reaping their meaning. (Richards, 1964, p. 39)

When I first read this passage in Richards' Centering (1964), I had to ask, "How does one hold all the diverse elements of existence more steadily in her consciousness?" My own identity seemed to constantly be spinning off in one direction or another. I had trouble enough relating its many parts to each other, much less finding relationships among those parts to the rest of the world. This mess resonated, though, with what it was like to attempt wheel throwing for the first time in my undergraduate ceramics class, so Richards' use of centering in pottery as a metaphor for centering in the person made a lot of sense to me. In throwing

pots, she explains (Richards, 1973) the substance of clay is brought into a condition of stillness at the same time it is spinning. That is the initial centering, but the same balanced condition must be maintained as the potter works the clay up into a vessel. It has to be handled in such a way that there is no difference in quality between outer and inner surfaces, keeping the balance constant between inner consistency and outside influences. Anyone who has ever put her hand to this task knows that stillness and spinning seem, at first, to be in hopeless opposition to one another. Both force and receptivity are required in just the right measure to bring the raw lumps of clay into a smooth, even mound. Too much force and the clay goes spinning right off the wheel, but with merely passive reception to mass and movement, it is the hand itself that is thrown helplessly about to flop over the uneven surfaces. Once the mound is centered, one may rest the hand and enjoy the serenity of spinning smoothness, but unless she moves on to yet other, even more precise, cycles of pushing and yielding, pulling and squeezing, no form can emerge. Without the give and take of relationship, centering the clay would be impossible, thus no pots could ever be thrown. So, I believe, it with centering and creating ourselves.

My discussion of reification and idolatry, at both the level of identification of these as problems and of

investigating the unevenness they have caused in my life and teaching, reveals the extent to which I allowed outside forces to overwhelm me and internalized some of them as ideals so unyielding that there was little chance of achieving a balanced praxis, centered movement between thought and action in my life or theory and practice in my teaching. Figure 2 represents this struggle. Imagine the inescapable hermeneutic circle, the process of making meaning against which our lives are inevitably cast, as the potter's wheel and Macdonald's (1978b, p. 104) dual dialectic, as the inner and outer forces. The failure to consciously sound my innermost depths, to allow my interaction with the world to be informed by the ground of aesthetic knowledge, the rationale that knowledge is created and I am part of those who create it, this failure to use power reasonably is represented by the uncentered lump of clay that veers hopelessly off to one side. The metaphor of throwing a pot is useful, but troublesome if I extend it much past this point in illustrating the process of centering. The understanding I want to convey is just how distorted my identity remains as long as I cannot acknowledge the authority man has over his own existence. We <u>are</u> co-creating reality all the time, but collectively uninformed by our connection to the ground of being, the rsults cannot escape being, to some extent, mad.

When I take the outer world of experience as the authority in my life, when I allow that which is external to the

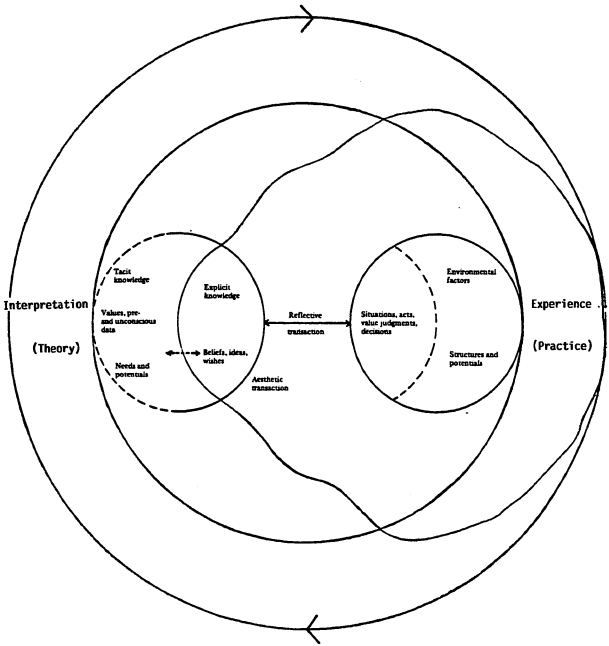

Figure 2. The dual dialectic within a hermeneutic circle including implications for praxis.

Note that the centered circle is informed by aesthetic knowledge, while the off-center blob represents distortion caused by failure to recognize my whole self as subject in responding to the outer world of experience.

sense I make of being alive to be "right" in my mind, I sacrifice meaning to symbolism. In school I learned to prosper from taking in and giving back "right" answers with near perfection and to believe that, because I could do so, I could actually be right most of the time. No distinction was made between the simple usefulness of correct spelling or reading of words, accurate computation of numbers, and identifying ourselves as correct, accurate individuals for being able to use cultural capital. Such indoctrination robbed me of any understanding that one moment in time is never the final one--something new may be revealed in the next, rendering that which I have already learned obsolete--and one's person's perspective is never the only one. Believing life was a collection of right answers I needed only to manipulate, this separated me from the I-Thou miracle of sharing time and subjectivity with others (Buber, 1970), left me other-directed in an I-it sense, dependent on getting and spending energy from outside sources. It taught me that my own perspective could never be a valid basis for the use of my own time and energy and thus separated me from myself, as well as alienated me from others.

"Sometimes one starts to dream," Merleau-Ponty (1965) writes, "about what culture, literary life, and teaching could be if all those who participate, having for once rejected idols, would give themselves up to the happiness

of reflecting together" (p. 242). As Greene (1973, p. 270) presents Merleau-Ponty's words here, she states her belief that at some level of consciousness the teacher insists on just this happiness, that there are no good arguments against such a desire. What a contrast she shows, between this happiness and the despair caused by a teacher's pitting students against one another, by sending a message to the student "that the proper attitude is not pleasure but competitive horror at the success of his classmates" (Henry, 1963, p. 291). As my data shows, seeking that happiness, yet experiencing and causing others to experience so much of that despair, made me question my identity as a person and as a teacher. In the face of seeing objectively existent knowledge separate me from the other human beings in my classroom, remembering how it had separated me from my friends as a student, I had to consider the possibility of there being some better authority, some ground on which we could stand together.

Richards (1964) poignantly connects our problem with knowing who we are to believing we should be something different, some successful representative of the idols we have made of knowledge:

> It is difficult to be as simple as we are, and as natural, and as beautiful. We are oppressed and inhibited by concepts which are Luciferic in their pride and in their disobedience. They are temptations. We may, for example, be tempted to think that when we speak, we must say something intelligent and worth hearing.

> But we don't really know what intelligence is. Nor may we easily judge worth. If we would speak simply to one another, sincerely, in our most natural human concern, with body warmth--if we say "hello" in such a spirit, what could be more poetic or wiser or more dazzling? (pp. 92-93)

So far from the prescriptive methods and techniques one encounters in teacher training courses, Richards (1964) suggests we simply be as simple as we are:

> An act of the self, that's what one must make. An act of the self, from me to you. From center to center. We must mean what we say, from our innermost heart to the outermost galaxy. Otherwise we are lost and dizzy in a maze of reflections. We carry light within us. There is no need merely to reflect. Others carry light within them. These lights must wake to each other. My face is real. Yours is. Let us find our way to our initiative.
>
> For must we not show ourselves to each other, and will we not know then who are the teachers and who are the students? Do we not all learn from one another? (p. 18)

Fox (1986a) speaks of the gifts we give each other when we come to recognize the light within, learn to uncover its brilliance and manifest our natural wisdom. He sees centering as a practice of meditation in which we return home, using "home" in much the same sense as Macdonald's "ground of being" and Richards' reference to archetypal images. Fox believes the result of making contact with our deepest and truest images is an act of giving birth to them in some particular form. This gift, he says, is given to the entire universe:

> To center is to make contact with our origins, our beginnings, our original wisdom and original blessedness. Then we take this centering energy and release it in our creative gifting back to the universe, back to the community. (Fox, 1986a, p. 10)

The purpose of education, then, is to educe that gift, for education Fox says, is educing; its aim is commensurate with that for all of life: "to draw out the radiance of the universe" (Fox, 1986b).

Again, as Freire (1982) so clearly states, this pursuit of our full humanity can only be carried out in fellowship and solidarity, it cannot unfold between oppressor and oppressed (p. 73). Throughout my report and letters the problem of control and the promise of harmony are identified as important concerns. The concepts of compassion and creativity, as Fox (1979) uses them, connect my concern for finding identity in relationship to finding order in harmony. Both compassion and creativity mean, for Fox, connection, compassion being the thought, in a sense, the impulse to connect, and creativity being the action, the practice of connection. It is in "art as meditation" that Fox reveals compassionate creation as harmonious use of power to experience and manifest relationship: "The power that is practiced and refined in art as meditation is not and can never be a power-over or a power-under. . . . It is power with" (Fox, 1983, p. 195, emphasis mine). Before I move on to investigate the use of art in such a power relationship, I would like to spend some time on the way this compassion/creation praxis reflects an aesthetic, rather than a technological rationality.

First, compassion is, according to Fox (1979), by definition, shared--the root of the word coming from cum patior meaning "to suffer with, to undergo with, to share solidarity with" (p. 3). Fox presents a series of statements further clarifying the meaning he makes of compassion:

> Compassion is not pity but celebration.
> Compassion is not sentiment but is making justice and doing works of mercy.
> Compassion is not private, egocentric or narcissistic but public.
> Compassion is not mere human personalism but is cosmic in its scope and divine in its energies.
> Compassion is not about ascetic detachments or abstract contemplation but is passionate and caring.
> Compassion is not anti-intellectual but seeks to know and to understand the interconnections of all things.
> Compassion is not religion but a way of life, i.e., a spirituality.
> Compassion is not a moral commandment but a flow and overflow of the fullest human and divine energies.
> Compassion is not altruism but self-love and other-love at one.
> (From the Table of Contents to Fox's A Spirituality Named Compassion, 1979) (no page no.)

As I understand Fox (1979), creativity does--makes connections--what compassion is--the realization of the innerconnectedness of all things:

> The very heart of being creative is seeing relations between matter and form that no one has ever imagined before or that people deeply want and need to see. It is this act of seeing connections that seems to form the heart of creative consciousness. . . . Perhaps compassion and creativity are in fact the same energy. For both seem to operate at the deep level of interconnections! Compassion is seeing, recognizing, tasting the interconnections; creativity is about making the connections. (p. 127)

Implied here is that an aesthetic rationality, a creative consciousness, is "intellectual," a word generally reserved

for technological rationality. It is intellectual because it is compassionate--compassion being inherently intellectual because it seeks to know and to understand not merely the usefulness, but the innerconnectedness of all things.

Fox (1979) uses two mystical symbols to illustrate the contrasting dynamics of linear and circular views of relationship in Christian mysticism, but looking back at positivism and the Tyler Model of Curriculum Planning as Macdonald and Purpel (1987) compare them to aesthetic rationality and a critical/imaginative model, these symbols can illuminate differences between linear and wholistic approaches to education, as well:

Climbing Jacob's Ladder	Dancing Sarah's Circle
a. up/down	a. in/out
b. flat earth	b. global village
c. climbing	c. dancing, celebrating
d. sisyphian	d. satisfying
e. competition	e. shared
f. restrictive, elitist: survival of the fittest	f. welcoming, non-elitist survival of all
g. hierarchical	g. democratic
h. violent	h. strong and gentle
i. sky-oriented	i. earth-oriented
j. ruthlessly independent	j. interdependent
k. zealous and judgment-oriented	k. pride-producing and non-judgmental
l. abstract, distance making	l. nurturing and sensual
m. linear, ladder-like	m. curved, circle-like
n. theistic (immanent or transcendent	n. panetheistic (transparent)
o. love of neighbor is separate from love of what is at the top	o. love of neighbor <u>is</u> love of God

(p. 45)

The image of dancing <u>with</u> others, of celebrating our connection to one another rather than stepping <u>over</u> or being

trampled under each other on the narrow way to questionable success, this to me is a beautiful use of our energy, a harmonious way of experiencing and establishing order. Fox (1979) believes the hierarchical, up/down, climbing symbolism of Jacob's Ladder legitimates secular violence, but when one applies it to Freire's (1982) identification of the banking concept in education, legitimation of violence to students, too, is characterized by this view of maintaining order through rigid control.

Richards (1964) speaks of centering as a process in which "freedom and obedience marry in love" (p. 132). What kind of obedience can be married to freedom? I believe I was asking this question when I tried, in my reports and letters, to deal with the issue of duality, of not being able to choose skill and imagination at the same time because from a linear point of view they appeared mutually exclusive. When one is looking down a straight path, that on which one focuses can obscure the viewing of something else farther on down the line or cause the viewer to ignore the surrounding context that connects what is seen to all that could be seen. At one point in my letters I turned from rigid categories in art education literature to the Kabbalah, to Scholem's (1969) presentation of the myth of the sparks of life to be recognized and recovered in all things (see pp. 58-140). Looking back at this symbolism, I am reminded that the

Shekhinah, the "indwelling" of God in the world, was scattered by separation of masculine and feminine principles in God. Bringing "home" the fallen sparks is seen as a marriage festival, as acting in accordance with the law of Sabbath rest. Might this not be a resting in each other? An obedience to the presence of that spark of life in every one of us?

> Beauty is truth, truth beauty--that is all
> Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.
> (Keats, quoted in Dewey, 1934, p. 34)

Resting in the truth, this makes sense to me, but only if it is the truth of relationship--of moving in "the between"--that order Buber sees in the beauty of the person meeting his world (Friedman in Buber, 1965, p. 58). We have lived for so long with another idea of truth, of absolutes that Welch (1985) says give us the false security of "safe boundaries" (p. 77) and prevent us from shifting focus and striking new balances. Welch (1985) makes a striking comment on this when she warns, "In the United States we could conclude that the statement is the opiate of the people" (p. 82). I do not believe this is limited to our country or any one ideology. Definitive statements that are not allowed to change with the shifting context of our lives, these are the means by which we reify and idolize, participate in the decadent praxis of social control. Here is where competition, compulsion and dualism murder compassion.

Neither competition nor compulsion can be lived out on any basis other than dualism. To see life in terms of "either/or" (Fox, 1979, p. 80), this robs us of a dialectical consciousness, of a "both/and" (Fox, 1979, p. 83), relational way of thinking and living. Fox provides a list of dualisms that, upon consideration from a both/and perspective, automatically spark the imagination:

old/young
fixed/mutable
in/out
urban/rural
yin/yang
handicapped/non-handicapped
strong/weak
black/white
churched/unchurched
conservative/liberal
static/fluid
light/dark
verbal/non-verbal
work/play
art/life
sane/insane
sated/hungry
atheism/theism
science/religion
rich/poor
literal/symbolic
mother/father
left/right
east/west
authority/power
formal/informal
push/pull
ugly/beautiful
sharing/keeping
open/closed
saint/sinner
warden/inmate
ordained/lay
complexity/simplicity
good/evil
work/leisure
night/day

college educated/life educated
employed/non-employed
Christian/non-Christian
life/death
joy/pain
happiness/sadness
hopeful/desperate
creative/styling
violence/non-violence
love/hate
doors/windows
heterosexual/homosexual
God/human
gay/straight
marxist/capitalist
potent/impotent
contextual/literal
body/soul
spiritual/sensual
male/female
clean/dirty
Catholic/Protestant
Christian/Jew
believer/non-believer
body/soul
first world/third world
war/peace
powerful/powerless
nation/state
blue collar/white collar
teacher/student
parent/child
management/union
we/they
I/you
humans/animals

natural/supernatural	earth/heaven
God/devil	future/now
haves/have-nots	past/present
majority/minority	urban/suburban
win/lose	roles/person
being/having	be/do
	religion/health

(Fox, 1979, pp. 81, 82)

I have presented this list in its entirety because a reading of it, with conscious intent to hold in one's mind the dialectical possibilities, is bound to bring out in the reader some competitive and compulsive emotions. One experiences how different this way of thinking is and can only imagine what it might be like to be able to embrace all aspects of just one of these dualities.

I have referred to harmonious order as "beautiful," related the praxis of compassion and creativity to Keats' "beauty as truth." The concept of beauty as harmonious order is connected to a both/and, dialectical, consciousness in Fox's (1983) words:

> Beauty has to do with seeing all of life as blessing, with returning blessing for blessing, with forging blessing of pain and suffering and tragedy and loss. Beauty needs to be made and remade. It is the vital work of the artist within ourselves. (p. 218)

This brings me to the final issue identified in my data, that of valuing the possibilities of transcendence through application and celebration. How <u>do</u> we co-create transcendent realities, order shared existence in such a way as to include rather than exclude the spark of life within all things? To make and remake beauty, to bless the world with

ourselves, involves an understanding of the creative process as well as the truth of our interconnectedness; it involves creativity as the acting out of compassion.

The way I see it, appreciation involves recognizing the universal, being so in love with eternity that we are capable of embracing all things. Celebration, then, involves choosing, among those elements embraced, some way of manifesting the ones that resonate with our particular experience of them in time and space. I have come to see these concepts in this way through a synthesis of a number of writers' thoughts on art and religion. My concept of transcendence has been influenced by Macodnald and Heschel. Macdonald quotes Soleri here on matter becoming spirit, the transformation of matter through conscious living rather than the belief that matter determines the nature of our existence.

> I see most of the equivocation, the inability to act, as the gap between the nuts and bolts fanatic and the spiritualist . . . the bridge between the matter and spirit is matter becoming spirit. This flow from the indefinite-infinite into the utterly subtle is the moving arch pouring physical matter into the godliness of consciousness and metaphysical energy. This is the context, the place where we must begin anew. (Soleri in Macdonald, 1981a, p. 147)

Close to Macdonald's belief in matter becoming spirit is Heschel's urging us to fill time with spirit:

> Eternity was not attained by those who bartered time for space but by those who knew how to fill their time with spirit. . . . The great problem was time rather than space; the task was how to convert time into eternity rather than how to fill space. (Heschel, 1951, p. 41)

As I understand Heschel, if we decide how we want to use our time, the way we work with space will reflect that decision. It is Heschel who tells me to work with the things of space, for I am in space and I must respond to it, but to deal with matter from a certain perspective on time. Heschel (1951) urges me to work with space "but to be in love with eternity" (p. 48). This way the symbols we create can participate in the whole of our existence as particular instances of eternal truth.

Living one's life as art is, according to Dewey (1934), unavoidable, because even the simplest interaction of organism and environment creates, transforms apparent dualities into new unities (p. 23). "Art as experience" (Dewey, 1934) has always made more sense to me as a process involving the whole context of living rather than in the narrow sense of producing artifacts. Hegel (1905) speaks to "living as artist" and situates that process in the dialectic between universal and particular:

> For every human being while he lives, seeks to realize himself, and does realize himself with respect to beauty and art this receives the meaning of living as artist and forming one's life artistically. (p. 160)
>
> The philosophic conception of the beautiful, to indicate its true nature at least by anticipation, must contain, reconciled within it, the two extremes (particularity and universality), by combining metaphysical universality with the determinateness of real particularity. Only thus is it apprehended in its truth, in its real and explicit nature. It is then fertile out of its own resources, in contrast to the barrenness of one-sided reflection. (p. 77)

Consciously living out that which is born of our experience is the holy result of participating in the creative process, a process in which we move, as individuals, in relationship to the whole of existence. Fox presents this dialectic, in three stages, from Arieti's view of the creative process. I include it here in simplified form:

A. The Primary Process involves recognizing the need for disorder experienced as an openness to all elements and is expressed through play and imagination.
B. The Secondary Process involves recognizing the need for choosing experienced as decision-making and is expressed through ordering and forming that which has been imagined.
C. The Tertiary Process involves realizing a synthesis in which a new apprehension of the whole is made possible through manifesting a subjective combination of its parts. (From Arieti [1976] in Fox, 1979, pp. 129-131)

Fox (1983) believes when we fail to create it is because we fail to choose one image in preference to another, we fail to trust our partial view of the whole. After making this study of reification and idolatry, I believe, with Dewey (1934), that we cannot fail to create, but that we can certainly fail to create with wisdom. When we trust a partial view as the whole instead of as part of the whole process of making meaning, we are still making a choice. Something comes from every choice we make, whether it is informed by the recognition of our interconnectedness or not. This is why an emphasis on appreciation and celebration is important to my understanding of a moral curriculum. If appreciation

of life as a whole is encouraged and opportunity is provided for celebration of our part in it, the realities we co-create stand a greater chance of being transcendent, of taking us on and on into positive possibilities.

I speak with care of the creative process, of art, of any use of symbols. It is too easy to make monsters here to take up space and waste our time. I still, after all this struggle to turn my thinking aruond, move on to art as a subject, with some sense of dread. Relationship, harmony and transcendence, these concepts mean more to me now than I could ever have imagined they would when I first began to identify them. The light in them reveals, not just the error in reification and idolatry, but a way to avoid future mistakes. I carry them with me into the next chapter as guides I trust will see me through what has been before a tangle of doubt and fear.

In opening my mind to the possibilities of teaching "what is important" through art, I will be moving back and forth between my past experience and present hope. It is, again, a relief to note that at the end of yet another cycle of this study I can say I have more hope than when I started, that I can see its development throughout this chapter and feel encouraged to move on to the next.

CHAPTER III

ART AS IDOLATRY

In the previous chapter I followed a general cycle from developing my understanding of reification to recognizing the implications that understanding holds for becoming more responsible in curricular decision-making. I discussed the way in which I see reification can lead to idolatry--how the objectification of knowledge allows us to worship some aspects of the meaning we co-create and ignore others. Such objectification fails to take into account the socially constructed nature of reality, denying our part in choosing future realities and limiting our choices to dualistic alternatives which do not reflect the whole realm of what is possible. The sense of responsibility that grew out of this understanding is characterized by an "ability to respond" to my world from an aesthetic rationality rather than the technological rationality that tends toward reification. This ability to respond comes from a recognition of the need for allowing my epistemological position to be informed by a wholistic ontology and thus reform the axiological base from which I move to take action in the world. That cycle has led me to see within an aesthetic rationality the possibility for a praxis of compassion and creativity that honors

our relationship to one another through participating in art as a sacred process. Before discussing such possibility, however, I need to apply my understanding of reification and idolatry to art as a subject, to ways in which art has been viewed that have not been transcendent.

Reification and the Idolatrous Use of Art

Because art can be seen as both a process and a product, because it can be both a way of knowing--of making meaning, and a symbol representing that which is known--of the meaning made by the process, reification can occur at either level or on both levels at once. Both the process and the products of that process, be they knowledge about art--art history and theory--or the artifacts themselves, can become so objectified that we reserve the process for an elite few and even regard knowledge about their work to be understandable only through expert analysis. Recalling Berger and Luckmann (1967),

> Reification is the apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things, that is, in non-human or possibly supra-human terms . . . the apprehension of the products of human activity as if they were something else than human products. (p. 89)

When art is set apart from everyday life--set above it as an objectively existent cultural tradition characterized by a specialized set of standards against which all visual communication must be measured to qualify as art-- both a

way humans make meaning and those meanings which can be made are reified, thus limited in scope and use.

Recalling my understanding of idolatry through Tillich (1957)--the act of mistaking a symbol for that which it was made to represent, of attributing consummate meaning to a partial expression of reality, when only a portion of all that could be art is taken to be the definition of either the art process or the art product, then either making or consuming becomes idolatrous. Art can be used by both artist and art critic/historian in a way that dominates and alienates those without the "correct" form of talent or specialized knowledge. It has been left open to question by Marx and Engels whether or not art can be used for anything but domination and alienation as long as any one group of people have the power to control what counts as knowledge, to enforce those particular meanings which serve their own interests (see Arvon, 1970; Habermas, 1971; Young, 1971). This view has been tempered by the Frankfurt School's emphasis on art and consciousness in everyday life and culture (see Giroux, 1983), but for now I will remain with the problem of domination and alienation in art and reserve a discussion of possible solutions for the final chapter.

I have written at length in the previous chapter about reified knowledge used by teachers as a kind of currency in the oppressive "banking approach" to education (Freire,

1982). Now I turn to the specifics of viewing art as cultural capital. Art is considered so special by our culture that people who can do or understand it well within its institutionalized boundaries are set apart and above the general population. This elitism involves domination of the art specialist (artist or art critic/historian) by the reified meanings and processes in which he participates, as well as domination over those who are "ordinary" by the specialist. This elitism also involves alienation for both. The art specialist is alienated from his own processes and products because he has given his power to make meaning over to art as an objectively existent field of endeavor and the ordinary person in everyday life is alienated from the very prospect of doing or understanding art--making or receiving meaning through art--because the concept of what counts as art is controlled by the institution called "art." That there may be many ways to do art and many different kinds of objects that can symbolize this way of knowing and doing stays outside the awareness of most people, the aritst and art critic/historian included, because one particular way or another is accepted as the only way at a given time or within a given power structure. "Only" ways acceptable in one time or place may very well contradict an "only" way acceptable in another, but these contradictions are easly overlooked because of the very linear, dualistic way of thinking encouraged by pressure to maintain a status quo.

With regard to what art "should" be according to some set standard, Richards (1964) writes:

> A pot should this, and a pot should that--I have little patience with these prescriptions. I cannot escape paradox when I look deep into things, in the crafts as well as in poetry in metaphysics or in physics. (p. 11)

Perhaps most of us feel this way on some level--that our personal meaning making and its expression is too subjective, too much a part of our own complex ordering of experience to be easily judged by an external, fixed measure. I felt that way when I disappointed my second grade teacher by painting a messy turkey, as I related in Chapter I, but I also felt I had to cover up whatever it was inside of me that insisted on my being allowed to "speak with my own voice." I have referred to Freire's (1982) concept of violence as "any situation in which some men prevent others from engaging in the process of inquiry" (p. 73)--any means of alienating men from their own decision-making. The art teacher who prescribes, according to Barnes (1954), literally robs students of the opportunity for genuine experience, creates, according to James (1974), a "false gap between perceiving and thinking" (p. 111). Welch (1985) writes of the "indignity of speaking for others" (p. 44), but it seems to me that in art there can also be the indignity of asking others to speak for the teacher and the art world she represents instead of for oneself when making art. When this happens,

art--a subject we profess to be all about the processes and products of imagination--actually alienates the student from his own imagination.

Bowers (1974) notes the effect such alienation has on the student:

> When the individual experiences alienation he is less able to use his freedom in an autonomous and constructive manner. The feeling of meaninglessness or apathy that he experiences also cuts him off from seeing possible choices that can be made. In effect, the existential mood we associate with being alienated tends to restrict imagination and to erode one's will to act. In not being meaingfully involved in an experience the individual tends to act more passively and, thus, to not take responsibility. Events control his behavior, not because he believes in them or has a deep sense of commitment but because his level of personal involvement is so low he ceases to exercise his own imagination or to take responsibility. (p. 76)

One of the most startling accounts of how school life in general violates the students' very sense of being is presented by Gross and Osterman (1971) in their printing the diary entry of a 13-year-old student in a New York City public school:

> November 20. I think I lost my social studies book. This is a major crime, but it can happen so easily. Maybe I left it home. Any little thing that happens to you in school that's not right or any mistake you make is like one piece taken out of you by the teacher, and by the end of the year, you're virtually nothing. (p. 89)

How much more diminished must the student feel in an art class when he is required to use his own eyes, his own mind, his own hand to express someone else's vision?

Dewey (1934) says we cannot live without the process of ordering our experience, for our very survival depends on finding ways to incorporate our environment into ourselves. When Henry (1963) relates the prevalent attitude that "He (the student) must learn . . . that the proper way to paint is the way the teacher says, not the way he sees it. . . ." (p. 271), I believe Dewey would say this is evidence that the most basic level of existence is being tampered with. External organization, according to Dewey (1934), is not order because it does not integrate growing experience. He has harsh words for those who interfere with the student's right to authentic experience:

> Arrest of the process of growth is really the arrest of intelligent living, of education. Growth, intelligent living, education have many enemies. They are, unfortunately, re-enforced by the practices which dominate the professed agencies of education, the schools and institutions called educational. (Dewey, 1954a, p. 4)

There is a danger here of appearing to advocate laissez-faire chaos in reaction to authoritarian didacticness, both extremes that James (1972) warns are disenchanting to the learner--prevent necessary sense of involvement and development of competence (p. 104). Dewey, especially, has been read this way, so it is helpful to turn to his own attempt to set the record straight:

> Unfortunately, the history of schools not only in art but in all lines shows a swing of the pendulum between extremes, though it must be admitted that the simile of the pendulum is not a good one, for the schools remain,

> most of them, most of the time, near one extreme, instead of swinging periodically and evenly between the two. Anyway, the two extremes are external imposition and dictation, and "free-expression." Revolt from the costly, nerve-taxing and inadequate results of mechanical control from without creates an enthusiasm for spontaneity and "development from within," as it is often phrased. It is found that children at first are then much happier in their work . . . but gradually tend to become listless and finally bored, while there is an absence of cumulative, progressive development of power and of actual achievement in results. Then the pendulum swings back to regulation by the ideas, rules and orders of someone else, who being maturer, better informed and more experienced is supposed to know what should be done and how to do it. (Dewey, 1954b, pp. 32-33)

Dewey's Art as Experience (1934) cannot be used to support either extreme, for it is the dialectical nature of experience he intends art to express:

> Experience, in the degree in which it is experience, is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height, it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. (p.19)

Dewey (1954b) is neither anti-tradition nor anti-skill. Tradition and skill represent human experience with which the student can profitably interact. Of this he writes:

> As a general proposition no one would deny that personal mental growth is furthered in any branch of human undertaking by contact with the accumulated and sifted experience of others in that line. (p. 33)

It is only when "tradition is no longer tradition but a fixed and absolute convention" (1954b, p. 36) that Dewey objects to subjecting students to external authority. As for the other extreme, a policy of nonintervention, Dewey (1954b) find this so implausible that he says of it:

> There is a present tendency in so-called advanced schools of educational thought . . . to say, in effect, let us surround pupils with certain materials, tools, appliances, etc., and then let pupils respond to these things according to their own desires. Above all let us not suggest any end or plan to the students; let us not suggest to them what they shall do, for that is an unwarranted trespass upon their sacred intellectual individuality since the essence of such individuality is to set up ends and aims.
>
> Now such a method is really stupid. For it attempts the impossible, which is always stupid; and it misconceives the conditions of independent thinking. There are a multitude of ways of reacting to surrounding conditions, and without some guidance from experience these reactions are almost sure to be causal, sporadic and ultimately fatiguing, accompanied by nervous strain. Since the teacher has presumably a greater background of experience, there is the same presumption of the right of a teacher to make suggestions as to what to do. (p. 37)

It seems so simple to Dewey that teacher and student can just share in a discussion regarding what is to be done if the teacher's experience is not idolized, nor the subject nor the position of the student. It is interesting to note that Welch (1985), in addition to warning of the indignity of speaking for others, writes also of the power of conversation to reveal truth.

When culture is reified, symbols representing it get in the way of our discourse with each other and the world. When cultural expressions are allowed to be "lived interpretations," Winter (1981) says they empower participation in symbolic discourse (p. 67); the dialectic between what has been created and what might be created is honored (Winter, 1985). This is why Macdonald's (1978b) "pattern making" is

so important to me. It involves finding identity in relationship, harmony and transcendence--all three of my major curricular concerns:

> This critical process reflects itself in the need to transform reality symbolically, to create order in search of meaning, and it is fundamental for locating oneself in time and space and for providing cognitive awareness that may facilitate centering. The pattern making process must be distinguished clearly from the transmission of preformed patterns to the individual. Although cultural substance can never be formless by definition, the emphasis placed upon the nature of the individual encounter is critical. Thus, pattern making would emphasize the creative and personal ordering of cultural data as the individual engaged in activity. (p. 118)

It seems to me that all the other processes Macdonald includes in his transcendental developmental ideology--playing, meditative thinking, imagining, the aesthetic principle, the body and our biology are the education of perception--are involved in this one overall process of pattern making. With regard to teaching art, I believe reification and idolatry can be avoided at both the level of process and product, if teachers and students remain aware of their part in co-creating the very culture in which they participate when they study or practice art.

To remain aware of the intersubjective nature of reality, neither the individual nor society (I include a reified notion of the subject in using the term "society") can receive exclusive focus. Whenever a curriculum bases instruction on one at the expense of the other, information will inevitably

be partial and thus idolatrous. Dewey's (1954b) "swing of the pendulum" view of trends in art education provides a general picture of the problem of moving between the extremes of "laissez-faire chaos" and "authoritarian didacticness" (James' 1972 terminology is the most useful I have found for describing these extremes, p. 104), where the individual is everything at one point and society, as in social structure, is all at another. A more specific discussion of the history of art education will reveal, however, that the swings have been less dramatic and the focus more blurred than the general picture would indicate.

A Brief History of Art Education

From reference to Dewey's (1954b) general assessment of broad swings in education between emphasis placed on the individual and emphasis placed on fitting the individual into the existing social structure through imposing tradition as absolute convention rather than allowing tradition its place as cultural substance from which the individual emerges and to which he responds and contributes, I turn now to a specific discussion of the idolatrous use of art in art education when either the place of individual expression is overemphasized or art as subject matter is reified through the imposition of fixed cultural standards for both making and viewing art. There are certain tensions and contradictions within and between the various movements that have

taken place in the history of art education. Skill development and the place of art history and art theory in art curricula have received emphasis over individual expression at times while the reverse has been the case at other times, as can be seen in Hamblen's (1984) art education chronology. Since it is difficult to promote creative expression without some emphasis on developing skills and understanding the sociocultural context within which the individual does art, and difficult to present skill as important and tradition as important to art education without situating the individual within that tradition as having a dialectical purpose for using skills to create expressions that transform cultural substance, the question of a teacher's choosing between the extremes of creative expression and cultural transmission as rigid and opposing categories for curriculum development presents blatant contradictions.

The instrumental use of cultural substance to promote competition and conformity through dependence on certain standards of excellence in using media and interpreting art history and theory within strict boundaries of a reified body of knowledge is not an issue particular to teaching art per se, but an issue that involves this "hidden curriculum" (see Giroux & Purpel, 1983) in the teaching of all subjects when emphasis is placed on opportunity for individual achievement of certain goals seen by society to have merit without regard

to the individual's need to confront cultural substance in a personally meaningful way. Because the movements in art education have led curricular decision-making in the field closer and closer to the same sense of "acceptable academic standards" as that characteristic of other subject matter taught in public schools, however, the gap between art as a joyous activity for creative human expression and art as instrumental to achievement in a meritocracy has grown increasingly wider. Reduction of the tensions and contradictions that have characterized this movement is part of the movement itself. Reviews of art education history may be reduced to several pat categories for the purpose of advocating this view of curriculum development in art as necessarily evolving toward the clarification and establishment of art as subject matter crucial to the overall movement of education toward excellence (for example, see Eisner, 1984). When this is done, much of the ambiguity and thus the confusion that the classroom teacher faces is lost to the generalizations. For this reason, I have chosen to present Hamblen's (1984) art education chronology because she seeks to avoid reduction as much as possible in representing "the" history of art education as "a" history--avowedly her history of the field.

Hamblen (1984) is careful to explain that any history is "a process of selection and interpretation" (p. 111). In

presenting her categories with their descriptions and focus, because she is committed to a very broad selection and multiple interpretations, I believe Hamblen's chronology will illustrate the complexity of curriculum development in the field of art education over a long period of time. For considering later the most current trend--the development of discipline-based art programs promoted by the J. Paul Getty Trust (Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985), Hamblen's work provides a basis for understanding movements leading up to this approach that does not exclude instances when goals overlap.

An art textbook for teacher training will generally cover the broad swings between emphasis on society (including the subject as a social institution) and on the individual. Gaitskell, Hurwitz and Day (1982), for example, move from a discussion of Walter Smith's incorporation of European models of art education for industry into the schools here in the United States during the nineteenth century to Frank Cizek's emphasis on the child's artistic expression early in the twentieth century. Then there is presented the swing from the Child Study Movement to Dow and Sargent's more structured teaching of the elements and principles of design and Farnum's narrow offering of art appreciation in the twenties and thirties. From the Synthetic movement and Picture Study movement, however, there is another swing over to Victor

D'Amico's and Viktor Lowenfeld's emphasis on the psychological implications of creative expression for the individual, a movement which began in the forties and fifties but has continued throughout the sixties and into the seventies. Finally there is the current swing back to an emphasis on external structure in the view of art as a body of knowledge held by such educators as Edmund Feldman, Elliot Eisner, and Ralph Smith.

The divisions between these movements, even the dates including their influence, become less clear as Hamblen sets them in her chronology. I present here, for the purposes of comparison and setting out a detailed background of information for further discussion of the trend toward a technological rationale, a view of Hamblen's categories--their descriptions and focus--along a time line divided into three parts that loosely correspond with the Gaitskell et al. (1982) overview. These charts are adapted from Hamblen's (1984) seven charts (pp. 118-120) depicting in greater detail the development of art education from 1750 to 1983, from Industrial Drawing through the Progressive movement and Age of Art Education Heroes to the identification of art as subject matter in Aesthetic Education up to the current trend toward establishing a discipline based curriculum as is represented by the J. Paul Getty Trust program. (See Charts 1, 2, and 3.)

Chart 1

Art Education, 1750-1880

Date	Descriptor	Description	Focus
1750	Puritan Ethic	Art for moral and practical uses	Society
	Industrial Drawing	Drawing primary, copying from two-dimensional examples for disciplined thinking	
		Art to train industrial designer	
1825		Step-by-step lessons	
		Monitorial and rote system	
		Geometric, linear drawing	
1840		Drawing related to writing and language skills	
		Emphasis on drawing accuracy for perceptual skills, disciplined thinking	
		Linear renderings of geometric forms, nature and ornamentations	
1830	Child Guided	Unfolding of child's potential through art	Child-
	Pictorial Drawing	Pictorial/free drawing	Society
		Originality fostered	
		Learning through experience	
		Based on Froebel's kindergartens	
		Transcendental base	
1850	Disciplined Perception	Prussian rote methods (Peter Schmidt)	Society
		Copying of type forms	
		Art for respite from "academics"	
		Drawing related to penmanship	
		Linear geometricism	
1870	Systematic Instruction	Simple to complex drawing lessons	
		Through art instruction, beauty accessible to all citizens	
1870	Industrial Drawing	Art for occupational training	Society-
	Systematic Instruction	Teacher-directed copying	Subject
		Step-by-step geometric to ornamental, drawing exercises	

Date	Descriptor	Description	Focus
1871-1881	(Walter Smith)	South Kensington System	
		Art skills as logically analyzable	
		Subject matter	
		Outline, nonexpressive drawing	
		Geometric and ornamental	
		Distinction between design and fine arts (pictorial)	
		Applied arts, arts combined	
		Training of designers, engineers	
		Analytic approach to nature	
		Drawing accuracy related to correct thinking	
		Adult learning behaviors as models	
		Product oriented	
		Knowledge primary over experience	
1875	Sensory Learning	Use of visual instuctional aids	Child- Society
	Oswego Movement	Learning based on concrete experience	
		Drawing from actual objects	
1880	Form Study	Prevalent use of type solids, model casts	
1880	Correlated Study	Art related to other subject areas	
	Integrated Study	Manual, fine arts, crafts integrated	
1880	Progressive Education (theory)	Self-active learner	
		Learning based on child-environment interaction	
	(John Dewey)	Art as self-expression	
		Social utility of art through development of responsible citizens	
		Drawing from natural world and later geometric simplification	
		Child's process of learning	
		Art as expression of ideas rather than training of manual skills	

Source: Based on Hamblen (1984, pp. 118-119).

Chart 2

Art Education, 1880-1945

Date	Descriptor	Description	Focus
1880	Child-Study Movement (theory)	Stages of child art and child development Child as possessing unique qualities	Child
1890	Multi-media	Color incorporated in drawings Use of water-colors, crayons, colored paper, clay Interest in compositional prinicples Media used for self-expression, not just production	
1890-1925	Picture Study Movement (Art Appreciation)	Spiritual and moral consequences of art appreciation Beauty equated with morality Standard art collections available to schools "Post card" size reproductions, noncolor Art to beautify school and community Academic ideals of beauty Teacher-originated curriculum "Great" works to be studied	Society-Subject
1900	Aesthetic Movement	Nobility of art study (for integration of humanity) Instinct emphasized over intellect Pictorial drawing rather than academic outline Expressive line and color Art for self-actualization, but specific exercises in logically stepped instruction Art as subject matter Art nouveau ornamentation popular Drawing from nature	Society-Subject-Child
1900-1930	Synthetic Method (Arthur Wesley Dow)	Composition studied (line, color) Forerunner of basic design classes Related to Bauhaus approach	Subject
1920-1940	Progressive Education (practice) (John Dewey) (Frank Cizek)	Variety of art materials used and their character studied Child-initiated learning process oriented Teacher as guide Whole child vs. training of artist Copying avoided Sensitivity to individual differences	Child-Society

Date	Descriptor	Description	Focus
1930	Social Consciousness	Art integrated with community life	Society-
	Owatonna Art Project	All art forms studied	Child
	(1933-1938)	Art study for morality	
		Promotion of good taste and aesthetic responsibility	
		Self-expression for social good	
		Decline in art appreciation (fine art) approach	
1940	Art as Therapy	Art for personal adjustment, for emotional release	Child-
	Art for Morality	Art indicator of personality (used as a diagnostic tool)	Society
	(Frank Cizek)	Art as leisure-time activity	
	(Herbert Read)	Art integrated with other subjects	
	(John Dewey)	World understanding through artistic knowledge to promote morality and democracy	
1940-1945	Art for Social Responsibility	Practical applications	Society
		War effort incorporated	
		Individual freedom through art--democratic principles	

Source: Based on Hamblen (1984, pp. 119-20)

Chart 3

Art Education, 1945-1983

Date	Descriptor	Description	Focus
1945-1960	Creative Expression	Self-expression and creativity prime motives for art study	Child
	(The Age of Art Education Heroes: Victor Lowenfeld, Victor D'Amico, Herbert Read)	Direct experience with media (multi-media)	
		Child as artist	
		Art for personal and social adjustment	
		Freedom of individual choice	
		Psychological base for curriculum development (empirical research); stages of creative and mental growth	
		Crafts in art curriculum	
1950	Transfer Theory	Art experiences influence behavior in other areas	Child
1961	Art as Subject Matter (Manuel Barkan)	Art study based on structured subject matter	Subject
		Minimize study for self-expression and art as experience	
1965	Aesthetic Education	Student as artist, art historian, critic	Subject
		Triumvirate focus to subject matter of art	
	Essentialism	Intrinsic value of art study	Subject
	Visual literacy	Philosophical and psychological orientation	Subject-Child
		Art as visual communication	
		Sequenced study (drawing) for perceptual and conceptual skill development	
	Environmental Design	Social, psychological, anthropological approach	Society
		Social betterment through improved design	
		Focus on cultural and individual differences	
	Art for Social Responsibility	Art to promote social change	Society
	Newer Media	Film, television, etc. for instruction and expression	Society
		Study of film to understanad social/human issues	
1969	Artist-in-the-School	Artist as teacher, as role model	Society
	Personal and Social Relevancy	Study of popular arts for relevancy	Society-Child
		Canalization	

Date	Descriptor	Description	Focus
1969	Personal and Social Relevancy, cont'd.	Variety of art forms to be studied Sensitivity to subcultural and individual differences	Society-Child
	Comprehensive Arts	Commonalities among the fine and visual arts	Society-Child
	Arts Education	Transfer assumed among various types of art study	Society-Child
1975	Multi- and cross-cultural	Canalization of instruction Phenomenology of student Sociology of art classroom Popular, folk, commercial, etc. arts studied Supported by ethnographic research	Society-
1981	Nonstudio Art Instruction	Based on aesthetic education model Student as aesthetician	Subject-Child
1982	Museum Education as Art Education	Museum as educational resource to supplement/complement classroom instruction Emphasis on historical study and critical analysis Basis in aesthetic education model (Among others, J. Paul Getty Trust program, 1983-)	Subject-Child

Source: Based on Hamblen (1984, p. 20)

Given the diversity of elements shown in Hamblen's chronology, even within a particular movement, it would be inaccurate to imply that there is only the movement of action and reaction involved at the extremes of emphasizing either the individual or society. Even Dewey (1954b) notes this problem with the pendulum metaphor; he uses it primarily to gain entrance into a discussion of the need for a dialectic between the meaningful experience of the individual and the traditions he encounters through subject matter. What I would like to point out here is that regardless of apparent emphasis on the individual at times, there has not been a steady movement toward achieving harmonious balance between the individual and society while there has been, even underlying movements emphasizing the individual's creative development, a constant aim on the part of art educators since the turn of the century to clarify and establish boundaries within which art can be seen as subject matter essential to the individual's overall educational experience. The weight has been increasingly given to making a place for art in the public schools and even such concepts as creative expression and aesthetic literacy have been used to justify the presence of art in students' lives in such a way that art has become as reified a body of knowledge as other subjects in public school curricula. To fit the prevailing technological rationale in curriculum planning in general, curricular

decision-making in art education has increasingly conformed to demands for accountability based on pre-determined results. Rather than being presented as an opportunity for the creative process to be understood and enhanced as an open-ended process valuable to the appropriation and creation of new meanings, the aesthetic rationale art could contribute to education is placed under the control of a systems approach that distorts, if not dismisses its power.

The constant movement toward taming art so that it may be treated as a serious academic subject instead of a dispensable frill (see Hamblen, 1984, p. 117) culminates at this point in time in what has come to be known as "discipline-based art education" (Greer, 1984). I see this development as movement away from any hope for allowing a true dialectic to exist between the individual and media and the individual and cultural substance--as a movement toward more and more emphasis being placed on art for art's sake, not art for people's sake. I believe the recent culmination of this discipline-based approach in a highly polished presentation by the Getty Trust is a danger signal, an indication that art in reified form, but not in its essential substance as the process and product of human meaning-making, is gaining a destructive place in general curricula along with an already overly technological approach to education via other subjects. I would not like to see art gain a place in public schools only to promote the values of competition and conformity that

serve a meritocracy rather than democracy, a use of art I consider idolatrous. It is to the way advocates of discipline-based art education have begun the task of taking a reified view of art very seriously, particularly in the Getty Report (1985), that I now turn.

The Current Trend Toward Discipline-Based Art Education

The degree of prescriptiveness necessary for an effective art curriculum, according to Eisner (1984), depends on the "readiness of the teacher to handle alternatives and to cope with ambiguity" (p. 264). Putting aside what Eisner might believe actually constitutes an effective art curriculum (he enthusiastically endorses the Getty Report), implied here is that at least some consideration should be given the teacher's part in curricular decision-making. In citing the need for a discipline-based art education curriculum, however, Broudy (1985) appears to dismiss that consideration when he accepts "validating a curriculum that can be prescribed for all high school students" (p. 212). Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America's Schools (A Report by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985) comes as close as any proposal for art education I have seen to advocating a "teacher proof" curriculum. (See Apple, 1979 on the dangers of turning teachers into mere technicians.)

Before presenting the positions outlined in the Getty Report, I want to refer back to the place an aesthetic

rationality holds in Macdonald's transcendental developmental ideology (1978b) in contrast to a technological rationality and to an amplification of these terms as Macdonald used them to refer to "disciplined curriculum thinking." I am struck by two ironies here: first, that the concept of aesthetic response plays so large a part in the Getty recommendations--a concept, it will become clear, sounding so similar to but used quite differently from the way it has been regarded in this work up to this point, and secondly that the concept of discipline is used so differently by Macdonald from the sense of discipline advocated in the Getty Report.

As Pinar (1985) reminds us, Macdonald's idea of aesthetic rationality is an expansion of Marcuse's (1969, p. 91; 1964), the recognition of an area of sensibility crucial to praxis. With regard to Macdonald's (1978b) dual dialectic, I have taken aesthetic rationality to mean creative and wholistic reasoning, a sense of the concept I believe Macdonald (1967) bears out even further in his discussion of it with regard to curriculum thinking:

> Although aesthetic is more often equated with a state of the arts, it is meant here to mean man's capacity to cope rationally with the world on an intuitive basis--to return to the world for insights which will enable him to transcend his present systems of thought and move to new paradigms . . . or fresh perspectives.
>
> This is the meaning of the Hegelian dialectic (according to Marcuse, 1964). Particularized to curriculum theory it might be described as follows. A theory is

> projected which is applied (or tested or validated) in reality. Through its application and the grappling with world phenomena, new insights arise which raise questions about the adequacy of the theory. Through this movement from theory to phenomena, new schemes emerge. Then, the emergence of new theory signifies the beginning of a new cycle in the dialectic of curriculum thinking.
>
> The crucial aspect of this process is the use of aesthetic rationality in the development of new perceptions of reality. Aesthetic rationality is a rationality of means applied to ends which are always open, as opposed to technological rationality, which is a closed rationality. (Macdonald, 1967, pp. 167-168)

In this sense, curriculum theory should be "disciplined by the phenomena with which it attempts to deal within the context that these phenomena exist" (Macdonald, 1967, p. 169); the discipline of technical reason is only part of the total rational potential of man. Like Habermas (1971), Macdonald does not dismiss technological rationality, but urges an understanding of it by the whole self so that we may decide how best to use technology. I bring this out now, before discussing further the Getty Report, because I want to emphasize again that I am not anti-tradition or anti-skill; I am cautious of using cultural tradition and skills development in a closed, prescriptive manner. Unfortunately, it appears to me that the Getty Report uses not only these elements of art, but aesthetic response in a closed, prescriptive and thus idolatrous manner.

The fight to find and keep a place in the public schools has been a major aim of art educators for obvious reasons.

Some approach this task more responsibly than others, however. There have been serious questions posed regarding the morality of art. Dewey (1934), for example, notes that the imagination is the basis of both art and morality (p. 348). There have been attempts, as Hamblen's (1984) chronology shows, since the eighteenh century, to understand both moral and practical uses of art. The Getty Report seems to look at art only in the light of how it may fit into a student's life as a requirement the way mathematics, language and science are seen in the public schools. The sense of human possibility and use of art appears to be part of but restricted to this narrow concern. I believe we "have to have" imagination--as Ricoeur (quoted in Thompson, 1981, p. 17) points out, it is through the imagination that we even know we exist--and I believe it is important to develop responsible understanding and use of the imagination, but I think it is quite an overstatement to present art as a subject essential to every student's life:

> The Center believes that if art education is to be accepted as essential to every child's education, programs will need to be developed that teach content from four disciplines that constitute art: art history, art production, art criticism, and aesthetics. Such discipline-based art education programs should offer instruction in the four disciplines because each one imparts knowledge and develops skills that help children understand art better, draw inferences about art's historical and cultural contexts, and analyze and interpret the meaning of art works. The programs would employ the same standards maintained in other academic subjects: written, sequential curriculum; student assessment; and adequate instructional time. (Report by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985, p. 4)

It is interesting to note here that art production, the mainstay of most art programs throughout the history of art education (Hamblen, 1984, p. 117), would be cut back to one-fourth of the overall curriculum based on this report, hence the title, Beyond Creating.

In reviewing the Getty Report, Hausman (1986) raises an important question regarding the assumption that content comprising art history, art production, art criticism and aesthetics can be either easily defined or easily agreed upon by specialists in the field. Hausman (1986) ends his review of Beyond Creating with the statement that its greatest contribution may be in mobilizing those who disagree with its tenets. In his summary of the Report he draws out questionable catch phrases and throws them back:

> Throughout Beyond Creating there is a clear call for greater academic vigor: "a clearly stated rationale and conceptual base"; "written, sequential curriculum"; "well-specified instructional goals"; "continuing in-service teacher training"; and "strategies for program review and development. . . ." The problem, of course, is that being "clear" is not necessarily being "wise," writing it down does not make it right; putting things in "sequence" may not be appropriate; and specifying instructional goals still leaves open the issue of "what is being specified?" (1986, pp. 152-153)

Hausman does say he welcomes in the Getty approach the willingness to confront social, cultural and economic realities as they differ in imposing themselves upon the substance and methods of teaching in different areas of the country, and the language and examples involving choice in the Report is impressive on the surface.

One instance in which the language of choice appears side-by-side with the language of prescription involves the problem with which I started this discussion on discipline-based art education, that of its apparent advocacy of teacher-proofing curriculum:

> A district cannot merely deliver a statement of theory and expect teachers to tailor their favorite lessons to it. Instead, the school district needs to develop a specific, well-defined instructional approach which directs teachers' practices, making them more likely to adhere to and support local art education policies. Ironically, such a written curriculum will inspire classroom innovation, rather than restrain it, by allowing teachers to fully grasp concepts and gain confidence to explore new ideas. (Report by the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, 1985, p. 4)

This statement sounds restrictive and freeing at once for the teacher. The sense of democratic decision-making is implied at the local level of etablishing educational policy. The "new ideas," however, appear to be taken care of in the following paragraph on evaluation. Art's acceptance as a basic subject is there again stated as the Center's central goal and "strategies and objectives are to be clearly stated and understood" (p. 60) so that both teachers and administrators will have no trouble assessing how well those goals are being met. New ideas, it seems are welcome in identifying areas for improvement in meeting the goal of establishing art as an objectively existent body of knowledge essential to the educational development of all students. Each amplification of the Report's four disciplines involves a similar

tension between appearing to offer a wide range of choices to the student, but within the acceptable standards of art as subject matter.

The confusion I experienced in reading Beyond Creating is characterized by its overtly liberal tone and covertly elitist undertone. One of the Center's proponents and a consultant for the Report makes no such attempt, however, to hide this sense of elitism. Smith (1985) states avowedly:

> Art education of the sort I recommended accommodates itself quite readily to one definition of elitism that understands it as concerned with the values of tradition (a body of classics of indisputable aesthetic merit), continuity (the continued study and appreciation of the classics as well as the continuation of the tradition itself by the addition of new exemplars), judgment (the faculty of trained discernment brought to bear on works past and present), and excellence (that for the sake of which the tradition is kept alive (Hampshire, 1977). (Smith, 1985, p. 173)

It is important to note that Smith's source for this apology is Hampshire's review (1977) of a book about the nationalization of culture. An agreed-upon criteria for aesthetic excellence is not only possible, in Smith's view, but self-evident:

> As for the contention that all aesthetic judgments are relative, that is expressions of individual tastes, and hence unreliable indicators of aesthetic excellence . . . (this) requires a powerful effort at self-deception to maintain. Except for the sake of populist dogma, can anyone really propose, say, Grant Wood as the equal of Matisse? (Smith, 1985, p. 172)

Smith believes experts not only can, but must agree on set standards of art as a tradition of excellence. This

excellence, he claims, will enhance and liberate the individual, evidently by putting him on the right cultural "track." Dewey (1954b), remember, would warn that this is a case where tradition has become restrictive and enslaving because the expert has taken the position of setting up a final authority about the ends, models and standards of a human project and thus rendered the tradition "no longer a tradition but a fixed and absolute convention" (p. 36). The power and freedom of the student to enter into a dialectic with cultural substance is severely limited by Smith's dogmatic stance.

There are other examples of discipline-based art education appearing more anaesthetic than aesthetic, even though, as Hamblen notes (1985), this curricular model is often referred to simply as "aesthetic education" (p. 43). She cites an article by Bullough and Goldstein (1984) in which they discuss the Utah state-adopted curriculum guide, Art Is Elementary (Cornia, Stubles, & Winters, 1976). This guide, Hamblen says, is representative of curricular materials "supportive of delineated content, predefined skill acquisition, sequential instruction, teacher-proof procedures, and the testing of outcomes" (p. 43), so criticisms leveled at the Utah guide can be made of discipline-based art education in general.

Hamblen's argument is that there is a technocratic rationality operating in discipline-based art education. "The Utah guide was initiated," she points out, "on the premise that 'art concepts can now be identified and taught in a systematic method' (Cornia et al., 1976, p. 2)" and goes on to say that the resulting tightly sequenced, specified content with its predefined instructional outcomes and teacher-proof materials are characterized by Bullough and Goldstein as "emanating from a technocratic perspective on education" (Hamblen, 1985, pp. 43-44). This rationality, with its emphasis on manipulation and control of variables, predictability of outcomes and efficiency of means, in the attempt to legitimate art study, actually trivializes and demeans involvement in art just as it does with other subjects: "Art, like other elements of the curriculum, comes to be defined by minimum competency requirements" (Bullough & Goldstein, 1984, p. 154). It is just such a rationality Macdonald (1967) has shown lacks discipline in curricular thinking because it is only part of the rational potential of man, but in searching the literature for a truly aesthetic model of art education, I find that either those called "aesthetic" are technocratic models in disguise, or that "aesthetic" is limited in meaning to the concept of sensitivity. It is to this kind of art as idolatry I now turn.

Previous Trends: Creative Expression and Aesthetic Education

Leeds (1985) presents tempting evidence that the "Age of Art Education Heroes" (refer back to Hamblen, 1984, p. 20) involved an aesthetic responsive to the centering of the individual in the world. "Their methods," she writes, "were evolved from a unity of their personal experience with their philosophical beliefs and acquired knowledge" (p. 86). Their intent, using Lowenfeld as an example, was to foster aesthetic growth in children--development of the sensitive ability to integrate experiences into a cohesive whole (see Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982, p. 62). In theory, this sounds very much like Macdonald's concept of centering (1978b), but I was trained in undergraduate school to use Lowenfeld as a basis for my teaching and what I felt was not characterized by a sense of the dual dialectic. Self-expression seemed cut off from communication rather than integrated response to the world. The Romantic view that the individual could do no wrong left me feeling isolated and confused; it was not relational. Creativity meant being different, not being a part of co-creaton.

Read's (1964) emphasis on development of perception and sensation leading to sensitive expression of thoughts and feelings bothers me both because he prescribes this for every student in all of education and because I get from him, too, that Romantic view of "sensitivity" that can so

easily become sensationalism or sentimentality. These kinds of "sensitivity" have characterized my own experience with Creative Expression as the basis for art education curricula. It reminds me of the kind of sensitivity idolized in women that turns out to be an immobilizing emotionalism. Lessing (1984), in her denouncement of the women's movement on the basis of its exclusion of male perspectives, said in an interview:

> When you put a bunch of women together without men they invariably become rather childish, very indulgent to each other and to themselves, and it becomes a great emotional party. And they don't do anything, they don't achieve anything. (p. 90)

Dewey (1954a) cautions that emotions, when disconnected from intelligent action, dissolve into "reveries that come between the self and the world" (p. 5). The splits between cognitive and affective domains (Greene, 1980a)--between reason and emotion (Dewey, 1944), science and art (Macdonald, 1981b), these dualisms characteristic of positivism distort human experience regardless of which "side" is emphasized. The artist locked into a purely subjective realm of expression becomes dissociated, not only from the world but from a part of himself--who he is as a social being (see Richards, 1984).

"In speaking of aesthetic rationality," Macdonald (1978b) says "Marcuse's position is the recognition of an area of sensibility or aesthetic rationality. The dual dialectic of inner aesthetic and technical rationality and outer

individual and social condition is implicit in his statements" (p. 106). "Sensibility" implies, as I see it, not only an emotional but an intellectual responsiveness to the whole context of being, a sense of moral and social responsibility.

The curriculum movements called "aesthetic" (see Hamblen, 1984, p. 119) appear to me to be using the term as "the artist's point of view" comprising subject matter that eventually becomes part of the discipline-based approach. For example, Coming to Our Senses (Arts, Education and Americas Panel, 1977) uses "aesthetics" as the value developing artistic sensitivity is purported to have for the student, and uses it primarily to push for a place in the public schools for both art as a subject and artists as specialists (see Efland, 1978). That a certain kind of "aesthetic literacy" can in fact do all its proponents say it can do--provide emotional release, develop visual communication skills, sensitize people to their environment, be a vehicle for learning other subjects, to name a few--is widely questioned (see, for example, Lanier, 1986; Rush, Greer, & Feinstein, 1986; Serafine, 1981). My own question here is not so much one of transference as of transmission. It appears to me that not only what is known about and through art--art history/art theory, but how to see, how to know through art is being prescribed, not developed at all. Cultural substance is

being transmitted as fact rather than presented to the student as meaning with which he may interact, in which he participates.

Stinson (1985), drawing from her understanding of Buber's I/Thou relationship (Buber, 1970) and Gilligan's work in recognizing a "feminine voice" of morality (Gilligan, 1982), divided the aesthetic dimension into an objectivist view and one that reflects encounter and transcendence. She is careful to explain that the kind of transcendence of which she speaks involves not only the imagination, but a critical consciousness of social realities. Although Stinson's curriculum theory arises from her concerns in the performing arts--in dance, she speaks to the arts in general. The distinction she makes between an objectivist view of the aesthetic dimension and an intersubjective aesthetic allows wholistic meaning to be found and made in aesthetic response and that kind of response allows a sacred use of art. She recognizes that many of her colleagues, in their attempt to take their work seriously, believe art, in and of itself, must be the goal for curriculum and not a means, even though they acknowledge the existence and power of a transcendent state related to art. She repeats these words on the subject from one of her colleagues: "Art is not to serve people. People should serve art" (in Stinson, 1985, p. 78). Much of Stinson's work involves revealing the reality

that art is used to serve people even as people try to serve art, and that such "service" can be dehumanizing and even dangerous.

Just as we cannot escape making meaning, however distorted this process may become, we cannot escape "doing art" in its broadest sense. We constantly imagine and manifest imagination in our daily lives. Art is used as a tool, whether we admit this to ourselves or not. In Stinson's conception of an aesthetic model, curriculum must extend the student's consciousness of the most basic questions of existence, "What does it mean to be human? How can we live together?" (Stinson, 1985, p. 82, based on Macdonald, 1977); only then may students come to recognize, she writes, "their power to create not only works of art, but also their lives and the world" (p. 82). It is with a discussion of our responsibility for such power that I close this chapter.

Escape from Idolatry but not from Art

I have thus far applied my understanding of reification and idolatry to art as a subject--to ways in which art has been viewed that have been partial and distorted rather than relational and wholistic. I have said that because art can be both a way of knowing and the symbol of those meanings made by that way of knowing, aesthetic response can be reduced to a way of knowing called "artistic" but based on rigid standards and what counts for "art" can be limited

to those artifacts selected and interpreted for us by art specialists, be they artists or art historians and art critics. I have made the claim that when an art teacher merely transmits knowledge as though it were objectively existent fact and prescribes experiences that exclude much of the student's capacity for response to natural and cultural substance, she is using art in a highly partial, idolatrous manner.

I have given examples of dualistic thinking in the area of art curriculum development and indicated the futility of this way of thinking through presenting a chronology that shows movements in art education often overlap in both time and in theory and practice rather than appear as exclusive categories from which we must choose. I have reported some of the aspects of the current trend toward discipline-based art education I believe serve to reify art and contribute to its idolatrous use. I have shown how this approach actually developed out of movements called "aesthetic." I have implied that art as subject matter, as it is used by discipline-based and aesthetic models, is reified through objectification, but that a return to an overemphasis on creative expression merely trades the objective for the subjective--the alienation of worshipping objects for that of separation from the outer world through a kind of self-worship. Intersubjectivity and transcendent co-creation cannot, it seems, exist as goals

in art education curricula as long as the subject of art itself is seen as the primary goal.

Stinson's (1985) aesthetic morality points to both the inevitability of creation and the validity of using art as a tool in the responsible development of creative power. Before I move on to the possibilities of teaching through art--of using art as a tool, I want to explain why I have to take Stinson seriously--why I could not simply throw art out with its idols in order to avoid idolatry. Art as a way of knowing and manifesting meaning in the world cannot be avoided. In the same sense Sartre says we are "condemned to freedom" (see Sartre in Fromm, 1969) we are condemned to create. We have to make choices and those choices have consequences for the material world; we can escape neither freedom nor art.

I have used Berger and Luckmann (1967) to illuminate the concept of reification as the loss to consciousness of our part in socially constructing reality; I turn to them again now, to amplify the inescapable nature of the part we play in making the world:

> Man is biologically predestined to construct and to inhabit a world with others. This world becomes for him the dominant and definitive reality. Its limits are set by nature, but once constructed, this world acts back upon nature. In the dialectic between nature and the socially constructed world the human organism itself is transformed. In this same dialectic man produces reality and thereby produces himself. (p. 183)

Fuller (1982) suggests that the need to create symbols is part of our very biology because the nature of our existence is a movement from the experience of union in the mother's womb seeking a re-experiencing of union through reunion; symbols such as words and images mediate separation. That this movement leads toward the creation of entire civilizations is illustrated by Freud (1961) and, to some extent, it is on the basis of Freud's work that Habermas (1971) urges communicative competence and warns against losing consciousness of our responsibility for understanding our interest in and control over the way we appropriate nature (see Geuss, 1981). The question of fearing loss of union leading to misuse of agency rather than communion (see Bakan, 1966; Dinnerstein, 1976) is an important one, for it offers an explanation for why we fail to admit to ourselves the part we play in co-creation, but I am more concerned here with the possibility of correcting that mistake through recognition of our power to effect change. If what we truly want is communion and if we realize our power to create a reality that makes communion more possible, then we may begin to control our fear of loss rather than allowing it to control us. If we recognize the extent of our power to imagine and create in general, then we are in a position to choose whether we will use it to maintain our defenses or close the gaps separating us from one another.

If we go back to Marx's early writings (translated and edited by Bottomore, 1963; introduced by Fromm, 1964) the dialectical nature of the relationship between man and matter cannot be understood apart from the act of creating. Man's transformation of nature is art. Vasquez (1973) relates the Marxian sense of appropriation directly to creation and Fischer (in Baxandall, 1972) speaks to "the necessity of art"--the ongoing phenomena of consciousness bringing culture into existence that cannot be ignored simply on the grounds that much of it appears to be decadent rather than transcendent. Held (1980) cites Adorno and Horkheimer (p. 80) on the importance of understanding the need to reject any separation of culture from society, for it is just as dangerous to ignore the power of art as to idolize it. There is a "truth" to art as a way of making meaning; it is an inextricable part of the "real relationship between man and his world" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 89)—a relationship in which human meanings and human activity are world-producing:

> The truth of art lies in its power to break the monopoly of established reality (i.e., of those who established it) to define what is real. (Marcuse, 1978, p. 9)

Art, then, at the level of both imagination and creation, is power.

In a Marxian sense, the experience of alienation arises when man is cut off from meaningful involvement in the process

and product of his own labor by those with enough power over his physical survival to require him to use his own power in their interest (see Fromm, 1966; Ollman, 1976). Macdonald (1978b) locates alienation in the objectivist consciousness of technolgoical rationality, as well--in the overall tendency in our culture for people to hand their power over to the objects they make. There is an area of our lives, however, in which we experience most vividly the contradiction between the ways in which we are expected to use our power and the disappointing results of spending ourselves in those ways. In our everyday lives we want all this to mean something. Survival is not enough; having things is not enough:

> The fundamental human quest is the search for meaning and the basic human capacity for this search is experienced in the hermeneutic process, the process of interpretation of the text (whether artifact, natural world or human action). This is the search (or research) for greater understanding that motivates and satisfies us. (Macdonald, 1981b, p.132)

We are meaning-seeking, meaning-making creatures. We get through life from day to day by interpreting the realities that confront us and acting on those interpretations. We have to expect life to make some sense if we are participating in it at all; even when it does not, we can only be recognizing that dissonance from the basic belief that it should.

Shapiro (1981; 1982a), using the schools as an example of the significance of everyday life arenas, points out that criteria emerge from everyday experience for the quality of

that experience. This forming of criteria transcends and often conflicts with functional institutional arrangements. Shapiro finds hope in this dissonance, that a critical understanding of the gap between a sense of what "should be" and what actually "is" may equip us with the will to change reality. Our everyday relationship with the world, and particularly our everyday relationships with other people, hold, by nature, transforming possibilities. We "make something of" every encounter whether we are conscious of this or not. What I believe we are usually conscious of is the effect--whether or not we feel satisfied with the reality created through our participation in this dialectic. When we are not satisfied, the only way we can know this is through being able to imagine a more meaningful outcome. Dissatisfaction, I believe, gives rise to resistance against those aspects of reality that do not meet our fundamental need to make sense of our lives. Resistance may be self-defeating when we come against limits in ways that bring on more severe restrictions, such as engaging in aimless vandalism and thus getting fired or abusing others and becoming more lonely as a result (see Aronowitz, 1973; Willis, 1977), but resistance can also make us look for space within oppressive situations; it can enable us to find room for change (see Apple, 1980).

The power to imagine life could be other than it appears makes art inseparable from any action we take in the world;

communicating that which we imagine is the force which makes new realities possible. Williams (1961) urges us to realize this sense of communication as a whole social process:

> Communication is the process of making unique experience into common experience, and it is, above all, the claim to live; for what we basically say, in any kind of communication, is: "I am living in this way because this is my experience." . . . Thus our descriptions of our experience come to compose a network of relationships. . . . The selection and interpretation involved in our descriptions embody our attitudes, needs and interests, which we seek to validate by making them clear to others. At the same time the descriptions we receive from others embody their atttudes, needs and interests, and the long process of comparison and interaction is our vital associative life. Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is in fact the process of community: the sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to the tensions and achievements of growth and change. (pp. 38-39)

Shapiro (1982b) indicates the speed of social change depends on an intensification of cultural exchange--that the deepening of free communication and liberation of creative expression can accelerate the process Williams describes:

> The expansion of the means and forms of communication increases the extent to which personal and particular social experience may be shared, received and compared with the experience of others. Such sharing and comparison, increasingly infused, as it has been, with democratic meanings and images, unleashes an insistent historical force for change. (Shapiro, 1982b, p. 44)

Marcuse's (1978) "truth of art" (p. 9) is an aesthetic dimension of existence, a means of transcendence not just for inner experience, but in everyday life. Stinson (1985) reminds us that at issue here is social responsibility, each

person's part in realizing the potential for "changing the world to become one in which freedom and happiness are possible" (p. 69). "Imagination," she quotes Dewey (1934), "is the chief instrument of the good"--an instrument Stinson urges us to recognize as the basis for both art and morality.

I could run, I suppose, from dealing with art as subject matter. I could avoid the formal ways in which art has been reified in the art world and art education. But I cannot run from the "truth of art" in my life, from my own imagination, from the inevitability of creation. If I accept the implications of my study of reification and idolatry, if I take responsibility for my own pattern making and its effect on co-creation, then I can also see my way through to incorporating my interest in the visual arts with those values I deem important. I can turn my conditioning to serve art around and use art, instead, to serve life.

"In our time," Ricoeur (1976) says, "we have not finished doing away with idols and we have barely begun to listen to symbols. It may be that this situation, in its apparent distress, is instructive: it may be that extreme iconoclasm belongs to the restoration of meaning" (p. 195). In this chapter I have come through another cycle, this time facing the specific demons I once felt compelled to worship. Once again I am encouraged. My suspicion of art as idolatry has led to a sense of hope, the realization that its misuse cannot be all there is to art.

CHAPTER IV

TEACHING THROUGH ART

At the beginning of this study, my struggle with what role I should play in the lives of my students regarding so subjective an experience as self-expression led me to ask, "Who must I be, as an art teacher, and what must I do to present information about and provide experiences in the visual arts without violating my students' right to participate in the construction of a shared reality?" The investigation of my own pattern making--searching out the ways in which I respond to the human project of co-creating the world, has led me through a number of cycles of interpretation. Within each chapter it is acknowledged that there are cycles within cycles, but for the purpose of tracing the process through to this final cycle, I will refer to those represented by overall chapters.

Within the first cycle I came to regard my own personal and professional experience in art as research data, then as text. Through a formal reporting of past experiences and a series of letters to my dissertation chairman, I began to face my confusion about the morality of teaching art and gather the courage to search through the issues and identify those it would be most meaningful for me to question further.

The instance of coming to regard this cycle as a hermeneutic of affirmation was crucial to taking the necessary initiative to move on to the next. The identification of my tendency toward reification in general, and art in particular, led me within this cycle to not only question the value of teaching art as a subject of interest, but to wonder if, instead, my deepest concerns--relationship, harmony and transcendence--might be communicated through teaching art, using art as a tool.

In the second cycle I took my questions about reification and moral responsibility to those writers who first led me to this quest, interpreting their work in the light of how they might currently inform my understanding of the relationship between the social construction of reality and my need to overcome the tendency to think dualistically by developing the process of centering so that I could take more responsibility for my part in relationship to the whole process of co-creation. This led me to further acknowledge the value I place on finding identity in relationship to others, creating order in a harmonious rather than controlling way and achieving personal and social transcendence through the appreciation and celebration of life. It also led me to apply my understanding of reification and idolatry to the art world and art education in the next cycle.

The ways in which my values are not reflected in cultural standards set by art specialists and curricular models for teaching to honor art were investigated in the third cycle. The meaning of "aesthetic" was seen to be lost to anaesthetic technological rationality in art as it is typically presented to students as subject matter, and found in a moral consideration of our power to create. This third cycle ended in the realization that I could not avoid the idolatrous use of art by trying to escape from art altogether, for creation, like choice, is a part of being human. Recognizing art as a way of knowing and its products as the manifestation of meaning made it clear that I had to accept responsibility for the power of creation in everyday life. I reasoned that, if creating is inescapable on the basic level of human existence, then it would be helpful to develop and share understanding of the creative process through whatever means might achieve that end. The practice of an art for people's sake instead of for art's sake could become a sacred process. This brought me to my current cycle--an investigation of the sacred use of art. I hope to discover some ways in which I might teach visual art that honor human relationship and wake us to the process involved in our common project of remaking the world in a more just and loving image.

Stinson (1985) identifies sacred art as art that serves both personal and social transcendence: experiences in

creating, performing and viewing art are morally valid in her eyes only if they bring the student into a conscious engagement with the world that increases understanding of self and relationship and helps the student recognize the responsibility that comes with relationship (p. 80). I have stated similar values in my discussions of relationship, harmony and transcendence throughout the first and second cycles of this work with the hope that I would be able to deal with them here as appropriate goals for curricular decision-making in the visual arts. My doubts about this have been similar to Stinson's also. In cycle three I went into some of the ways in which approaches to art education have been idolatrous, and thus dehumanizing and dangerous.

I will be speaking here of art as meditation, art as pattern making and art as appreciation and celebration, but these cannot be tightly bounded categories for art any more than relationship, harmony and transcendence can be discrete values within the whole realm of moral thought and action. Macdonald and Purpel (1987) give us some idea of the limitless range and scope of wholistic vision:

> We choose to view the world as part of a larger transcendent reality, and our task as humans to be that of being in harmony with it. We believe that much is already known about these divine intentions, though we still have much to learn about them and much to do before they are fulfilled. We believe that humans are intended to be participants in the development of a world in which justice, love, dignity, freedom, joy, and community flourish. We believe that we are meant

> to pursue a path of truth, beauty, and goodness. We believe that the world exists in an imperfect and incomplete state but that man and woman possess the aesthetic and intellectual sensibilities to re-create themselves and the world in unity with the divine; the wholeness of body, mind, and spirit; earth and cosmos; and humanity and nature. It is well to remind ourselves of the common derivation of these words--whole, holy, and heal--so that we may see education as a sacred process that can lead us to be whole again and heal the wounds of history. (p. 187)

The particular aspects of this whole that I have chosen to search out are necessarily interrelated and will inevitably overlap in my discussion of them. As is the case for values, so for art as meditation, art as pattern making and art as appreciation and celebration. Art as meditation involves ordering--pattern making--as well as relationship. Art as meditation is also a ritual of valuing and celebrating our value. So it goes for each way of seeing art and, as with values, there are many other than the ones I choose to use here. As I move on to investigate these particular values and ways they may be reflected in particular views of art, I am finally beginning to recognize this search for sacred possibility as participation in the creative process.

Art as Meditation

Early in this study--throughout my letters--I kept trying to make a connection between working with art materials and improving the quality of human relationships. Blocking my way was the opinion of art educators (such as Serazine, 1981;

Lanier, 1986; Rush, Greer, & Feinstein, 1986) that it is a grave error for art teachers to assume any correlation between doing art and becoming better people. This position is seen as naive and unprofessional because there is no proof through empirical research that art can affect morality. Urging me on was my own experience of art as a kind of meditation that brought me close to paper and clay, helped me clarify thoughts and feelings through expressing them visually and aided my ability to communicate that meaning to others.

In several classroom experiences I have been asked to express concepts regarding curriculum and teaching through making art, twice in clay (Macdonald, 1982, 1983) and three times with cut or torn paper (Leeds, 1983; Purpel, 1983a, 1983b). In each instance I was to let the medium speak of my understanding of a concept ("knowledge," for example) both to me and for me, then share both the visual representation of the meanings that emerged and my verbal interpretation of the entire process. In addition to offering my expression to others, I received their verbal comments on both what I showed them and what I told them, adding their interpretations to my own. I could then respond to the new meanings made in such conversation, either privately--to myself--or in continuing the discourse. This was an incredibly powerful experience for me. It was in doing the cut paper assignment for the first time that I felt authentic for the first time in my adult life while working with art materials. This was quite

remarkable, since I had spent all of my adult life up to that point either taking studio art courses in college or teaching studio art in the public schools.

I have since experienced this kind of art as meditation from a teacher's view as well. I offered the cut paper project to several high school English classes at the last public school in which I taught and I used the same assignment with my own students and those of another graduate student when we taught undergraduate Foundations of Education classes. In the English classes I asked students to express their "ultimate concern" and in the education classes, their response to a film on nuclear war. There was always a deeply felt and openly expressed sense of community established during these experiences, on both my part and the students', whether or not I had formerly had any contact with the students involved. Some told me of the experience, similar to my own, of feeling authentic working with art materials for the first time since childhood. Others spoke of the closeness they felt to the class, of the change in the quality of their relationships to one another that took place within just a few hours. Some said they felt that closeness evolving even during the time just spent working silently, side-by-side.

Given the power of personal and shared experience, both as a student and as a teacher participating in the process a number of times, it would be difficult for me to deny the

effect doing art as meditation had on my relationship to the material, myself and others. That I questioned this and even rebelled against it in my letters indicates the depth of the problem I had with reifying art and idolizing the field of art education. It is no wonder I had such great reluctance toward dealing with the literature in art education. Almost everything I read threatened to invalidate the radically different meaning I had found art could have for me on both personal and professional levels. It was not until I could see my own experience as data for research through a phenomenological approach to this study that I began to allow my own knowledge of teaching and art to count.

I was actually angry with Fox for a period of time because his writing (1983, 1986a) and his lecture (1986b) involving a view of art as meditation agreed with my experience and challenged the technological rationality of what I thought I had to believe, instead, to be a "professional" in my field. How turned around it is to regard that word in such a dehumanizing way--how literally self-destructive. It astounds me to realize how reification can so distort the meaning of the words we use to describe ourselves that we are actually startled when someone reminds us of their original sense:

> I have realized that if one wishes to influence others' ideas and perspectives, one must literally embody these ideas and perspectives. . . . What we must reveal is our passion, our values and our justifications. . . . What we must ask of ourselves is to really profess. (Macdonald, 1981a, p. 146)

How different this understanding of "professional" is from meaning "programmatically correct."

My experience of art as meditation was vastly different from art as production of art. Stinson (1985) cites the distinction Hawkins (1969) makes between sacred and secular art. "Secular art," she points out, uses the aesthetic materials for their own sake. . . . Sacred art, by contrast, reveals the harmony, the patterns of relationship in the world" (Stinson, 1985, p. 80). Secular art involves "forgetting about what the total world of man, nature, and God is, and deals with totality in a partial way leading to triviality and naive realism" (Hawkins, 1969, p. 38). I prefer the word "profane" to describe art that serves a reified world. What seemed to be most different about my use of art in art as meditation was the feeling of authenticity--of expressing something that really mattered to me at the deepest level of my being instead of demonstrating skill to hide what I believed were unacceptable interpretations of experience. I do not know if I used proficiency to impress or to protect myself from those who required certain standards of work; I do know that it split me apart and caused me to profane my own sense of being alive in the

world. Art as meditation healed that split, brought the fragments back together. Skill served a purpose that was more important than skill alone could ever be. I felt at one with myself, with the work, with others. James (1972) writes of this kind of dialogue between objects and people and the other within oneself that the value fundamental to it is wonder (p. 112). I felt that wonder. It is a way of being I want to experience again and again and again. I did not "have" a relationship to everything else; I was in relationship. Hawkins (1969) says that the relationship revealed by sacred art is love (p. 39). It felt like being in love with the whole world all at once.

If it seems this is a lot to say for putting a few scraps of colored construction paper together with one human concept, hear Mooney out:

> Deep in all this is a center of emergence, a something that comes to be formed, not by being made something in itself, but by being the result of the dynamic field in its process-relation making; though "nothing" in itself, it is the vital, living center of the existence of the field. It is the hub of relations formed and forming, the dynamic center of the whirl of integration. Perhaps it is just this thing that accounts for the livingness of a living cell, the emergent outcome of relations-making in the structured forming of the field that is the cell. Perhaps this is what is called living spirit, the thing that makes the operational difference between life and death in man--the center of emergence that is the resultant of all else and the secret to awareness of the ways by which many things come to be one living thing.
>
> This is something the artist has a chance to know as he becomes aware of the process of his own creation. It is in the nature of his work that he compose the many into

> a living one. From hundreds of brush strokes he is to make a painting; from thousands of words he is to make a novel. It is not the specific colors and shapes for his canvas or the specific words for his novel that he is to fix upon; rather it is the larger involution to which he gives himself and through which his specifics come to be instrumental. It is the ordering of the experience that gives the painting or novel its unity and its vitality. The specifics are suggestive. Communications comes in the felt-relations that extend beyond. (1955, pp. 12-13)

"Vital energy seeking opportunity for effective expression," this, Dewey (1944, p. 72) says is the very essence of education. When he speaks of experience as the means and goal of education (Dewey, 1938) he is speaking of the condition out of which all form emerges:

> Interaction of environment with organism is the source, direct or indirect, of all experience and from the environment come those checks, resistances, furtherances, equilibria, which, when they meet with the energies of the organism in appropriate ways, constitute form. (Dewey, 1934, p. 147)

All experience yields new information and thus in-forms us (Mooney, 1976). Our very identities are created by the same exchange of energies that brings into existence a work of art. P. Berger (1963) writes, with regard to the transformability of the self, that we can know ourselves only in relationship:

> Looked at sociologically, the self is no longer a solid, given entity that moves from one situation to another. It is rather a process, continuously created and re-created in each social situation that one enters, held together by the slender thread of memory. (p. 106)

If the process of self and the process of art are seen within the whole process of life as "movement in relationship" (Krishnamurti, 1985), then the question of whether or not one can influence the other no longer needs to be asked. What does need to be asked is how we might make connections between the creative process and the way we live our lives more conscious, so that our participation can become more responsible (see Barfield, 1965).

Art as meditation returns to each of us, Fox claims (1983) responsibility for the images we believe in (p. 194), it presumes trust--"a trust that out of silence, waiting, openness, emptiness one can and will give birth to images"--images we need if the people of our society are to come to shared truth (p. 193). Fox presents this revelation from a student of painting as meditation:

> I am beginning to respond to an inner "drive" within me that is very old; it is inscribed in my archetypal depths. (John Mix in Fox, 1983, p. 196)

James (1972) notes the importance of silence in "being with" rather than merely "naming" such an experience (p. 121). Richards (1964) says that, "As we grow quiet, our love rises. We need only to get out of its way" (p. 70); Fox (1983), that allowing "silence to be silence 'lets our truth' be" (p. 193)--lets us know and live into its existence. I believe in this way art as meditation brings to consciousness the connection between imagination and identity at a

level which empowers us to manifest that identity. There are other ways art educators have tried to promote visual thinking, Arnheim's for instance (1969, 1986). His emphasis on establishing criteria for visual literacy, as Lanier's (1986) for aesthetic literacy, is highly analytic. Robertson (1982) suggests archetypal images to her students. I have tried that and found the results to be compelling, as she predicts, but felt uncomfortable about prescribing an experience at this level for the sake of having interesting paintings to display. That is not all Robertson advocates; she is concerned with a deeply felt process, too. I am just skeptical of the Jungian base involved (Jung, 1923, 1953, 1957); I worry about imposing the limitations of this particular psychology onto the process of symbolization.

Art as meditation, as I have experienced it and as Fox (1983) represents it, allows images, symbols, pictures to emerge out of trust in their source. There is no definition of that source as absolute truth. I believe this increases both our freedom and our responsibility to manifest particular, contextual truth (see Welch, 1985). "To live artistically," Richards charges, "is to embody in social forms the unique individual and the intuitions of union" (1964, p. 94, emphasis mine). When there is a concept of the absolute imposed on doing art, this usually generates fear. It also clamps down on the creative process a sense of stasis,

a reluctance to let imagination create what has never before existed, to manifest an ongoing, growing truth. Even in art as meditation fear can be an obstacle at first. Fox (1983) relates this experience through the words of another student of painting as meditation:

> The first obstacle for me to face in my painting as meditation course was and is fear--fear of doing something totally new, fear of being inadequate and inept, fear of doing it "wrong," fear of not being in control of what's happening to me, and fear of facing myself. (Marilla Barghusen in Fox, 1983, p. 197)

It seems the process of creating something new with art materials can be so intertwined with personal identity that one can become immobilized by the prospect of letting new images emerge (see Field, 1957). Richards (1964) addresses these questions to the creative process:

> Am I willing to give up what I have in order to be what I am not yet? Am I willing to let my ideas of myself, of man, be changed? Am I able to follow the spirit of love into the desert? To empty myself even of my concept of emptiness? Love is not an attitude. It is a bodily act. In my crisis of conscience I have to yield myself to the transforming condition of love. It is a frightening and sacred moment. There is no return. One's life is changed forever. (p. 141)

I suggest that this fear comes not from the change that occurs when we yield to relationship, but from fear of failure--fear that resulting changes will not meet with the arbitrary standards that have been imposed on us as absolutes by prevailing institutionalized meanings and to which we have become habituated (see P. Berger, 1963). When allowed to take freedom and responsibility seriously in doing

art as meditation, perhaps we can learn to trust not only our relationship to material substance, but to other people as well. Once one has a different experience, free of unreasonable expectations and the threat of failure, the possibility of having more creative experiences is powerful incentive to honor any opportunity to participate in authentic relationship.

It is notable that, following the experience of fear, this testimony to the rewards of overcoming fear is given by the student Fox (1983) has introduced:

> Taking the risk to choose to let go and be vulnerable with watercolor, paper, and brush is leading me to try to take the risk to let go more and be more open and vulnerable in my prayer and meditation. This is because I found that I didn't die when I made that risk with paper, watercolor, and brush. To the contrary, I came very much more alive. (Marilla Barghusen in Fox, 1983, p. 197)

In this way art as meditation serves a healing process, restores one to the whole. There is a wisdom to be learned from freely entering into dialogue with material that can inform our willingness to risk open conversation with other people: something does die--the very limitation our fear imposes on the possibility of union. Of why art is so powerful a form of healing when we allow it to serve inner truth, Fox (1983) writes:

> Neither the clay nor the piano keys nor the body in dance nor the colors in painting nor the back in massage will tolerate subject/object relationships. The holy matter with which all art instructs has a good opinion

> of itself--no one instructs it in original sin ideologies--and as a result it demands relationships of equality. With clay and dance, music and painting, one actually learns the wisdom of fifty-fifty relationships, of give and take, of action and receptivity. Nothing less holds together. Everything less, all our attitudes of war and control over self or others or matter itself, is enervating. And fails to yield fruit. The word "craft" means power. The power that is practiced and refined in art as meditation is not and can never be power-over of a power-under; it is the ultimate affront to sado-masochistic relationships of power. It is power with. (p. 195)

The process of interacting with materials can release the power of birthing (Fox, 1983)--the "passion to make and make again in a society that has enthroned unmaking or the making by others instead of making ourselves" (p. 195).

Edwards' work (1979) in the area of healing dualistic thinking through the process of drawing--what she calls "drawing on the right side of the brain"--serves also to overcome the harsh judgmental attitude most people have towards their own self-expression (see Fox, 1983). Edwards has developed a series of exercises that provide students with successful experiences in realistic drawing. An example of these is the assignment of drawing upside-down (see pp. 50-57 in Edwards, 1979). In this exercise, students are asked to turn a complex picture of a realistic drawing of a person upside down and copy it, line for line. The complexity, she believes, activates the right brain's ability to deal with part-to-whole relationships. Turning the picture upside-down, she claims, confuses and thus circumvents the

left brain's tendency to reduce visual information to convenient labels for storage and expedient use. The choice of a realistic drawing of a person is made because students generally build their belief that they cannot draw on previously unsuccessful attempts to render accurately the human figure. All of this conspires to allow the student to approach drawing wholistically rather than mechanically or naively. Regardless of questionable terminology and theory applied here, I see Edwards' purpose in using art this way as a radical departure from the art for art's sake--art for the sake of demonstrating certain standards of skill or expression--assignments typical of most art education curricula. I have experienced her exercises, and offered them to students, as art as meditation.

Nearly every detail of the drawing upside-down assignment goes against the Creative Expression approach (see Hamblen, 1985) to teaching art. Even though Lowenfeld's stage theory reveals an overriding desire on the part of children in early adolescence to develop realistic drawing ability (see Lowenfeld & Brittain, 1982), insistence on developing self-expression at the expense of skill separates students from the external realities they need to deal with. The dangers of becoming too dependent on objects have been brought out in this study in many instances: reification, idolatry--these can easily result. But copying, whether it

involves rendering an image or nature realistically, is limited by its misuse. I believe it is just as abusive to forbid children to copy at all as it would be to restrict art experience to a kind of photographic realism. Encouraging overdependence on uniqueness interferes with the development of integration and carries with it the opposite danger--that of becoming too subjective to interact creatively with the outside world.

Edwards has also been criticized for claiming to be scientific when there is no empirical evidence of correlation between split brain research and the "perceptual shift" from left to right modes of awareness she (1979, pp. 56-57) says her exercises can induce (see Youngblood, 1980). She has been accused, too, of actually perpetuating dualistic thinking by exhibiting a bias towards the right side (see Youngblood, 1983; Clare, 1983) and even fostering a kind of artistic elitism based on right brain thinking (Youngblood, 1979). In my own experience, however, from both participating in Edwards' exercises and asking students to do so, this approach "works" whether it can be explained in instrumental terms or not and serves the purpose of integration, not further fragmentation. I experienced them as an opportunity to develop skill in a wholistic way and they certainly appeared to meet my students' need to experience a sense of efficacy and their need to open up to the dynamics of relationship in visual expressions.

I believe it is the pressure placed on art educators to justify aesthetic involvement in technocratic terms that explains Edwards' apparent contradictions. It is interesting that she is caught between taboos--one forbidding educators to develop curricula on any basis but data obtained through empirical research and the other forbidding artists to admit to so "objective" a concern as skills development. I have already dealt with problems inherent in approaches to art education based on technological rationality--the reification of aesthetic response in discipline-based art education, for instance. Here there is also revealed the dissonance created by artists' shame over relying on anything other than sheer talent. In Edwards' attempt to "play both ends against the middle," she could either be read as too scientific or not scientific enough, as too aesthetic or not aesthetic enough. It is her purpose that matters to me, however mixed her justifications might be.

In theory the perceptual shift of which Edwards speaks could be seen as maintaining a sense of left-right dualism, but in practice I experienced it as a movement in relationship, a blending of thought that enabled me to experience part and whole seemingly at once. As for an elitism built on right-brain thinking, that would defeat Edwards' overall goal of wholism. Finally, as for her crossing over the "line" between aesthetics and technology to make use of copying,

this is done in a way that actually serves integration of the two.

Edwards never suggests that copying or realistic drawing should take the place of giving birth to our own images; she only asks that their usefulness in developing both wholistic perception and technical skill be recognized. It is ironic that drawing from life or from the life in another's drawing should, in modern times, be considered too literal, while abstract and "non-objective" art objects require lengthy verbal explanations if they are to be understood at all. Wolfe's (1975) feigned surprise at this realizaton in The Painted Word made sense of the dissonance I experienced throughout undergraduate school when I was asked to take "modern art" so seriously:

> What I saw before me was the critic-in-chief of The New York Times saying: In looking at a painting today, "to lack a persuasive theory is to lack something crucial." I read it again. It didn't say "something helpful" or "enriching" or even "extremely valuable." No, the word was crucial.
>
> In short: frankly, these days, without a theory to go with it, I can't see a painting.
>
> Then and there I experienced a flash known as the Aha! phenomenon, and the buried life of contemporary art was revealed to me for the first time. . . .
>
> All these years I, like so many others, had stood in front of a thousand, two thousand, God-knows-how-many thousand Pollochs, de Koonings, Newmans etc. . .], now squinting, now popping the eye sockets open, now drawing back, now moving closer--waiting, waiting, forever for--it--for it to come into focus, namely, the visual reward (for so much effort) which must be there, which everyone (toute le monde) knew to be there. . . .

> All these years, in short, I had assumed that in art, if nowhere else, seeing is believing, well--how very shortsighted! I had gotten it backward all along. Not "seeing is believing," you ninny, but "believing is seeing," for modern art has become completely literary: the paintings and other works exist only to illustrate the text. (pp. 4-6)

Interpretation is not really this simplistic--believing is seeing--but seeing is also believing--the danger comes in thinking dualistically that either one or the other must be true. It is the healing of this split that I have experienced in art as meditation. I find it remarkable that Edwards' copying exercises can offer insight merely going "into oneself" and abstracting one's subjectivity may not.

In her late work, an exploration of the creative process, Edwards (1986) writes of how the dialectic involved in drawing from life can be seen as a dialogue between oneself and the world:

> Drawing gives one a feeling of power--not power over things or people, but some strange power of understanding or knowing or insight. Or perhaps it is just the power of connection itself: through drawing, one becomes more connected to things and people outside oneself, and perhaps it is this strengthened connection which seems to signify personal empowerment.
>
> In drawing, there is always the sense that if you can just look closely enough, see deeply enough, some secret is going to be revealed to you, some insight into the nature of things in the world.
>
> . . . Drawing and creativity are both replete with paradox. . . . By looking outward and seeing the world around you in the artist's mode of seeing, you gain insight into yourself. Conversely, by looking inward to find the artist within, you gain insight into the world. These paradoxical insights, I believe, form a basis for wonder and lead one toward further creative endeavors. (p. 231)

From this we see that, despite earlier justifications that can be held in question, Edwards' use of drawing is quite holy. By coming to her defense, I do not mean to imply that the verbal explanations we give for our purpose are unimportant. Art as meditation, while it avoids dependence on words, is not devoid of the need for verbal presentation and reflection.

At one level it is simply a show of the teacher's respect for her student when she "names the game," as Macdonald (1966) puts it. The quality of a learning experience is highly dependent upon the atmosphere in which it is offered. If one purpose of an assignment is to work with art materials as a way of relating, I believe this aim should be made explicit and discussed openly, both before and after the experience. Franck (1973), for example, speaks at length "from the heart" about how drawing as meditation has become a personal way of relating to himself and the world and of how he has known other students to experience a similar sense of movement in oneness, then invites dialogue on this before students actually begin the process of drawing. Students find out what they might expect from the experience, what the instructor would like to share with them through offering the experience, but they are not told <u>to</u> experience any particular thing will be a sign of success. On the contrary, the very emphasis on honoring one's personal interpretation

is made from the beginning. In this way an assignment can be seen as possibility, not prescription.

The "silence" that the leader in art as meditation allows "to be silence" (Fox, 1983, p. 193) is not necessarily the absence of speech but an attitude of openness and trust. Fox (1986b) has spoken of art as a "ritual of relationship;" if I am to offer such a ritual to my students I must recognize my own participation in it. Greene (1985) has warned educators of the stereotype that must be overcome if we are to share in a meaningful event with students, reminding us that the very presence of teachers in the public schools can make students feel ashamed, make them fear saying who they are, where they are as human beings. Shor (1980) believes there must be a "withering away of the teacher" (P. 98) for students to feel empowered. This withering away is not abandonment, but a withdrawal of prescriptive monologue on the part of the teacher so that dialogue can take place. If dialogue is not allowed and, possibly, even if it is not emphasized and explored, by both teacher and students, as a goal, it is unlikely that art as meditation will be perceived by students as anything more than a cute little trick, at best; at worst it can be seen as an extension of the teacher's power to manipulate into the deepest level of a student's life.

One can all too easily deal with a holy symbol in an idolatrous manner. There is a vast difference, for instance, between Arnheim's (1982) portrayal of "the power of the center" as a useful technical device and the Arguelleses' (1972) presentation of many ways in which the symbolism of the center can be a dynamic force in relationship, not just within art but within our lives; in Arnheim, technique is analyzed and imposed, in the Arguelleses' work it is allowed to emerge. With regard to the act of centering in art as meditation, the same difference could occur, depending on the degree of prescriptiveness and that of possibility determined by the teacher. James (1974), Macdonald (1981a), Richards (1964), and Fox (1986b) all speak to the need for teachers to be involved in making art for the purpose of centering themselves and thus becoming a more centered presence in the lives of their students. The distinction between making an offering of experience and imposing unjust limits on students' interaction with the world is understood by the teacher at the level of her own awareness of being in relationship to a larger whole.

Art as meditation is primarily a use of art in the studio. Drawing, painting, print making, sculpture, crafts--all the media generally included in studio instruction--have potential for this kind of use. Art as meditation emphasizes quality of experience, but information about skill and

techniques is not ignored; it is, instead, handled in a wholistic way. Information receives more emphasis in art history and art theory. The quality of experience is important in those areas, too, though. In considering this, I will be discussing how the teacher's presentation of information affects the way students are encouraged to orient themselves toward cultural substance, much in the same way her offering of experience affects the student's relationship to material substance. A meditative attitude, one of openness and trust, is not put aside, but may be even more important to the student's pattern making than it is to their making art. It is to the need to order information in a sacred way that I now turn.

Art as Pattern Making

In viewing art as pattern making, I refer to the way we know and tell symbolically--how we order experience in thought and action (see Macdonald, 1978b). A part of this involves receiving information; another, the way we respond. This affects the presentation of art history and art theory and the expectation on the part of the art teacher that students will communicate through the visual representation of symbols in producing works of art.

Much has been written in this study about reification, but in order to discuss art as cultural substance I want to extend this consideration even further. Williams (1961)

reminds us that knowledge and symbolic representation of it is socially created and constantly being reinterpreted. Any "history" is a partial selection of interpreted information; it is a description of reality, not "the" reality itself. An illustration of how open events are to interpretation is Mohr's (in Berger & Mohr, 1982) use of photography in "What Did I See?" (pp. 41-57), a personal experiment he conducted involving his own photos and other people's interpretations of them. Mohr showed five photographs to nine different people and asked for an interpretation of each event depicted, resulting in nine different stories, none of which told what had "really" happened. A striking example is the difference between what was happening in the first photograph and the interpretation of the men depicted--particularly of his emotional state. We think a photograph "captures" what is really "there" and we think we can tell from a facial expression and body posture the emotion a person is experiencing. Of this photo of a man standing on a platform with his arms spread wide and an apparent smile on his face, Mohr writes:

> It was a foundary in West Germany. I was photographing a Yugoslav worker for a reportage made for the International Labour Office. A Turkish worker nearby, seeing me, shouted out: "So there are only Yugoslavs here! Me, I don't exist!" Yes, he existed too, and I took his picture. (Mohr in Berger & Mohr, p. 48)

Not one of the nine interpretations report anything close to the man's exasperation. Instead, the man is seen as

joyous, proud, happy, healthy, cheerful and noble. It is amazing how much context, too, is given by each person asked--time, place, as well as the man's emotional state and social status is assumed from the photograph. Even Mohr's choice in taking this particular picture is an interpretation. His sympathy with the man's sense of alienation, his desire to affirm the man's humanity, to honor his existence--all these responses to the event made it worthy of Mohr's artistic expression. A moment earlier the man might have simply been bending over to pick up a box and been overlooked entirely. Even my interpretation here is colored by what I know of his co-author's political beliefs and the connections J. Berger seeks to make between man and man through his art, both understandings gleaned from other sources (J. Berger, 1972, 1985).

W. Thompson (1981) believes history is so inextricably bound to the stories we tell ourselves about our being in the world and moving through time that he makes a distinction, not between myth and history, but between myth as sacred history and "the lie commonly agreed upon" (p. 247) as history misused, profaned by technological rationality. The history we are all taught in school, according to W. Thompson (1981)--the succession of kings and empires, technologies and wars--is a partial history used as the apology for a class of behavioral and political scientists who hope to build power

over nature and culture, a rewriting of history for the purpose of bringing it under their control (p. 247). It is not my task here to go into how art history might have been revised in this way, but to be conscious of the overall tendency of our culture's technological rationality to declare and use knowledge of past events as objective fact and the hope that an aesthetic rationality can restore balance.

When I first began to teach art history, I taught it as fact. Students had to take Gombrich's (1978) word for how and why certain works of art came into existence, for when people began to use certain techniques, because his The Story of Art was the textbook we were issued. There was never any question as to why the particular works with which we were to become familiar were considered representative of the best a time and place had to offer; they were simply there in the book and that was supposed to be reason enough. It was not until I was faced for several years with students' apathy toward the art history part of the curriculum that I began to feel like a liar when I presented it, and even then the sense of lying was from making empty justifications for why they should know the information, not because I had any suspicion that Gombrich's was a story rather than the story of art.

Students who enjoyed studio work and whose company I generally found delightful would turn into pouters and

rebels when the art history book came out. After justifications like, "You're going to need this for college" fell flat, I tried to simplify the information--re-wrote parts of the book to make it easier to read, provided outlines and so on. My approach was almost totally instrumental. Because the information had never been "made interesting" to me, I never learned how to do that for others. I saw it as facts and figures, names and dates to be managed because that is just what students and teachers do in school. Making board games and card games for learning information about different periods of art history was as innovative as I could get at that point. I had majored in art education for the same reason my students took high school art: I thought it could be fun. After tolerating art history classes for four years in college, I knew I was supposed to take it very seriously to be considered professional, but beneath it all I felt just the way my students did--it was the "work" end of the deal, the price one paid for getting to "play" the balance of the time.

Eventually I did become interested in history, once I began to study the work of critical theorists. When I started to see the way in which man makes history, I became excited about it. I began to see myself as a part of on-going schemes and I really wanted to understand where I fit in, how it all affected my life--not just the way it affected me materially, but the way it had the power to "make me who

I am." I felt if I could understand that power, I could use it to effect change. I did not then like who I was. I hated the compulsion to try to get people to do the "right" thing, including myself, in order to feel comfortable--to feel my life was going the way it was "supposed" to be going. I felt ashamed of telling my students what to do, what they should believe is important, when I was not even happy with this way of living myself.

As a result of beginning to feel free to interpret art history, I began to look at it through various lenses--capitalist, Marxist, Freudian, Jungian, Christian, Jewish, etc. In my teaching, I began to ask questions about the art history textbook that encouraged students to investigate various interpretations. I was not as free at that point as I thought I was. I was bound to certain frameworks that took a lot of explanation and went "over the heads" of most of my students. Some good things came of this, though. At least I started having students deal with the information in different ways--both from varied points of view and, most importantly, together. I let them work in groups most of the time and even "take tests," which were really "open book" research projects, in pairs. The students did cooperate more, but I think it was mostly because they felt they were being allowed to "cheat." The purpose was still to get the information across; encouraging varied interpretations really

just made it more palpable. I felt so much anxiety over "covering" the material that I could not trust students to respond in their own way to the entire endeavor.

A sacred use of art history would place the emphasis on pattern making as a creative process. I have to admit to the temptation to deal with "great works" by "great artists" in an entirely critical manner. There is so much demystification required to open the student's way to dialogue with tradition in art. For the most part, art history appears to exist to promote a certain cultural standard (see J. Berger, 1972), one that is highly elitist in nature. Developing a critical consciousness of the way in which "fine" art serves that purpose--its use as cultural capital (see Freire, 1982; Giroux, 1981)--is necessary if students are not to feel ashamed of their own "limited" ability and reluctant to express their own meanings through visual symbols when faced with such a highly exalted tradition. Recalling Ricoeur (1976a, 1978), however, demystification is not enough. To dismiss the symbolic content of traditional works on the basis of idolatrous use would cut us off from the meaning of the symbols themselves, keep us from re-discovering their origins in human intention.

"Traditions are a product," Gablik (1984) writes, "of the recurrent affirmations that have gone into their practice." Moving out from under the control of reified knowledge

cannot be achieved by seeking complete freedom from the store of information it holds without alienating us from the dialectical nature of our being:

> To be located in nature as human is to be located historically, living out of the past through sensibility to the present into the creative possibilities of the future. The originary disclosures of the symbolic heritage come to be in this artistic process, undergoing transformative renewal as they are creatively appropriated. Winter, 1981, p. 109)

Pattern making involves encountering cultural data in a relational way--creating order by making meaningful connections. In the creative process choices are made that necessarily preclude some possibilities so that others may become realities, but those choices are made from realities that have previously existed, not in a vacuum. It is the attempt to do away with all sense of tradition and "start from scratch," that Gablik (1984) identifies as the "failure of modernism" in art (p. 117). The "escape" from tradition simply became the next tradition. Just as imagination and creation are constantly moving the individual forward in everyday life, collective vision and cultural transformation operates in the movement from tradition to tradition.

Winter (1985) writes:

> Art and tradition live in tension but not contradiction. Every work of art, unless it is mere imitation, involves a negation of what has gone before in selection, perspective or subject matter. At the same time, the work builds on the heritage of works and craftsmanship. (p. 128)

I believe students might better understand this relationship in the context of telling their own stories through visual symbols. Whether in presenting information about art history--works of art characteristic of a particular period, theme or artist, or art theory--the various styles or techniques used for certain purposes or to achieve certain visual effects, or studio art in which visual communication is the goal, it makes sense to again "name the game" (Macdonald, 1966). Explicit explanation of the creative process, of the dialectic between the individual and tradition, of students' responsibility for their own pattern making of the social implications of communicating experiences--the discussion of these as a preface and conclusion to information or experience offered in an atmosphere of openness and trust should establish a relationship between the student and these processes.

The important thing here for me is my own recognition of and respect for the student's need to make meaning of his life and to communicate that meaning. Offering information about traditions in art or providing the materials, time and space for symbolic expression with the spoken and lived understanding that the student has a right to his own responses, to make his own choices, honors, I believe, the natural process of making meaning in which we all participate. I have faith that interest and a sense of purpose will

emerge under these conditions. Of making the artist the subject of an art course, Greene (1978) says:

> So there should be choosing and participation and experience and the search for order in all the arts. And there is a need to push back the walls of time to comprehend developing traditions in their continuities and discontinuities. Finally, each individual must somehow be liberated to transform her or his own reality, to become aware of her or his encounters and of what it means to be present in the world. Music, dance, and painting, if engaged in participatively and thoughtfully, can be distinctive in the confrontations they make possible and the personal possibilities they disclose. Only human beings can experience incompleteness, the gap between what is and what might be. Only human beings can fill the gap by moving out in search of meaning and transcendence, moving out to change their world. The focus must remain on the human being, on his or her achievement, his or her choice. (p. 209)

Rather than feeling I have to "motivate" my students to respond to art, I believe young people are just waiting for authentic opportunities to make sense of their world at the level of both thought and action. I think they would welcome the chance, if convinced the teacher could really be trusted not to try to manipulate them into worshipping subject matter.

It is when art, or any way in which we know--any body of knowledge--becomes separated from lived experience, from relationship to the student's need to order his existence, that students must be "motivated." The opportunity to make connections offers them a chance to heal this split. Often in a classroom in which students are required to deal with knowledge only at an abstract level, the teacher

will hear a student say, "Let's get real." I believe they mean it and that we desperately need to listen. Rebellion on the part of students is usually aimed at organization, not order. In the sense that knowing is stopped for the sake of revering a static form of knowledge, it is the one who insists on interfering with the movement in relationship of students' lives that represents a disruptive force; it is the teacher who creates disorder by denying the active nature of ordering experience. Too often I have heard teachers despair of trying to motivate their students and resort to blaming them for being superficial and lazy when what those students are resisting is a superficial, lazy way of knowing and using knowledge.

"In a world like ours," Dewey (1934) writes, "every living creature that attains sensibility welcomes order with a response of harmonious feeling whenever it finds a congruous order about it" (p. 15). It is in our very nature, according to Beittel (1979), to choose the most beautiful way of knowing our world open to us. "We respond to that which is most radiant, full of presence, admirable, and desirable to us" (p. 51). This is Beittel's interpretation of the unavoidable connection between knowledge and human interests (see Habermas, 1971). What is needed, I believe, is a move in art education from mystification of this search for beauty--from canned statements and abstract formulas for encountering

the beautiful, to the mystical--the unfolding revelations of beauty that the very ordering of our lives makes possible. We need to make open to our students a way to know their lives as part of a cosmic adventure (Fox, 1986b).

To encourage students to interact fully with symbols and use them for making their own meanings requires the faith of a mystic, I believe. It requires openness to the mystery, trust in each person's part in finding and revealing connections to transcendent reality and manifesting them in time and space. The organization of knowledge at the expense of a growing order represents a lack of faith--the paranoia of which Fox (1986b) spoke when he described the kind of person who believes the universe conspires against him and thus believes that he must control it. "The mystic, too, believes there is a conspiracy," Fox (1986b) said, "but one in our favor." To allow art to be pattern making is to open ourselves to the wonder that "we are 'stardust'--loved from the beginning," and to let education be "educing"--the drawing out of this radiance in the universe (Fox, 1986b). I turn now to art as an appreciation and celebration of that conspiracy.

Art as Appreciation and Celebration

I have written of art as meditation as a way of relating to the creation of our lives through relating creatively to material substance. I have written, too, of art as pattern making as a way of knowing cultural substance dialectically

and communicating that knowledge symbolically that participates in ongoing transformation of the human story. I have said that we not only must create and co-create as part of our nature, but that we tend to choose the most harmonious ordering--the most beautiful way of interacting we perceive as open to us. This understanding from Beittel (1979) necessitates an appreciation of transcendent possibility--of being able to see beyond the limits of technological rationality--if we are to fully value and celebrate the truth of our ontology: that we in-dwell creating (p. 53). We must be able to perceive and feel free to receive what Mooney (1967) refers to as "creation's blessing":

> Through many strokes of brush, or pen, or bow on violin, or many stones, or bricks or movements, we shape a lovely thing. Opened out to "many," we integrate "a living one" by what we do between our forming selves and medium, creating both ourselves anew and a new objective structure, which, given life to us, may then give life, in turn, to those who, viewing it, receive creation's blessing. (p. 277)

Creation's blessing is the energy of life itself made conscious to the human mind: "life that knows it is living" (see Franck, 1973, p. 9).

In a discussion of Schutz, Greene (1978) speaks of this type of awareness as an achievement of full attention to life and its requirements characterized by a sense of "wide-awakeness" (p. 42) as opposed to the sleep of mechanical reaction to outside limitations that comes from the feeling of being dominated and powerless in modern society. In her belief that "wide-awakeness ought to accompany every effort

made to initiate persons into any form of life or academic discipline" (p. 47), Greene (1978) cites the importance for teachers to be clear about how they ground their own values. One of the simplest, most direct examples of moral curricular decision-making I have ever encountered is the last line of a poem Richards (1964) wrote to her students: "I owe you life" (p. 99). One of the ways in which she carries out this curriculum is "to keep wonder alive" in the process of teaching skills.

After writing so much about the dangers of technological rationality, it may seem odd for me to now suggest that focus on the technical aspects of using art materials can be a holy undertaking--can deepen students' appreciation for life and give them a sense of celebrating its value. Noting that skill can be developed in a wholistic way through art as meditation is one thing, but to zero in on technique may appear to be a return to fragmentation. I charge that this need not be the case. Remembering Dewey (1934), that interaction is the source of all experience and thus of all creation in both art and life (p. 147), how can we ignore man's fascination with the way things work? In advocating the healing possibilities of an aesthetic rationality (Macdonald, 1978b) the intent is to understand and make wiser use of technology (Habermas, 1971), not to throw it out altogether.

Winter (1985) writes of the absurdity of excluding technology for the sake of art:

> The work of art does not dispense with materials, tools and crafts. It merely rearranges our priorities and sets media, materials, tools and crafts in proper perspective. Art uses the linearity of mechanism without surrendering to it. (p. 128)

Richards (1964) points out that "craftsmen live with a special immediacy in the double realm of these concerns" (p. 10), they deal with both the questions of technique and those of meaning:

> Humanly speaking, there is no such thing as mere technique. . . . "Skill" means discernment: an ability to distinguish one thing from another. . . . It is also closely connected with wonder. When we teach skills--that is, whewn we teach the differences between things or stages in a process--it is our duty to keep wonder alive. (p. 89)

In developing my own skill, often for the wrong reasons--to hide behind techniques, to avoid revealing the content of my imagination--one aspect has held throughout and that is my fascination for process. It still amazes me to watch paint flow from a brush onto paper, to see and feel what the pressure of my fingers does to clay and how that differs from using a wooden tool--from the feel of the wood against my hand to the increased detail the tool makes possible. Even while writing with a pencil I take a certain satisfaction in thinking about what I have learned a pencil can do, the effects my use of it while drawing can create. There is a kind of respect involved here, a sense of intimacy in being "let in" on the mystery of how certain things work together

to make other things happen. This feeling of efficacy has nothing to do with how some end product might stand in competition with other ones; it has do with discovery and cooperation.

In his lecture to us last spring, Fox (1986b) urged us to understand the need for a trifold cosmology on which to base educational endeavor: the recovery of awe through science, the recovery of wisdom through mysticism and the recovery of art through doing art. Of these, it is science which gives us the information for wonder. "Wisdom," Fox (1986b) said, "is to taste the wonder; sin is to ignore it." I have had students render to scale tiny man-made objects such as safety pins, paper clips, thumb tacks, rubber bands and straight pins--at first because those things were readily available and relatively simple to draw, but I stayed with this assignment because of students' responses. They were fascinated with both the objects and the process of drawing them. They realized how easy it is to take both man and nature for granted and experienced the delight that comes from focusing long enough on one thing or one process to value it more fully than we generally do in everyday life. It was a celebration of life through becoming more conscious of a very small part of it, but that part reflects larger wholes in many ways. Some students spoke of the imagination it took for someone to have invented the safety pin; others,

of the complexity of drawing a relatively simple object--of the number of pencil techniques needed for portraying light and shadow, form and proportion, being comparable to those needed in more apparently complex drawing projects. Placing an emphasis on technique was not destructive of the meditative possibilities in drawing. The wonder of the objects and the skill it took to render them actually enhanced those possibilities.

Broudy (1972) uses the term "enlightened cherishing" (p. 6) to describe love of objects and actions and, while I would like to be able to use that phraseology for what it could mean to me regarding art as appreciation, I feel it necessary to distinguish my desire for students to celebrate life through finding value in focusing on objects and action (in the way I have just described) from Broudy's sense of "art appreciation" in general and "enlightened cherishing" in particular. According to Broudy, "enlightened cherishing" involves loving certain objects and actions judged worthy by high standards set for aesthetic education--the sense of aesthetic education I have previously discussed as elitist and idolatrous. "Art appreciation" in this sense is education to appreciate exemplars. Broudy (1985) has brought such aesthetic education into the disciplined-based art education format I have presented in this study as an example of a curricular approach that makes use of a reified concept of art to serve art.

The distinction between art appreciation in an idolatrous aesthetic model and art as appreciation in a moral aesthetic approach is even more important in the student's encounter with art objects others have made. I have mentioned earlier, in one of my letters, the heightened appreciation for life that I feel when I see a sensitively crafted work of art. I want to qualify that statement by repeating the understanding I meant to convey of a love for craftsmanship. The felt sense of another artist's process, the sense of there having been a living, choosing, creating human being behind the object, someone who related to the material in a meaningful way that also relates to me--this is what I hoped to communicate. My own interpretation and not some particular standard is involved in my perception of a work as "good." It is this right to make one's own meaning in viewing art that I would make explicit to students. Greene (1980b) gives an account of how it is the experience of having done art oneself that can be a means of art as appreciation:

> Conscious of some of the choices they themselves have made in the course of shaping, improvising, composing, or narrating, students cannot but confront aesthetic objects with a quality of attention different from what they would have been capable of if they had not themselves experimented and explored. (p. 319)

It is this quality of attention, in both doing and viewing art, that wakens us, leaves us more alive than we were before we encountered the object or the process involved.

Regarding Dewey, Greene (1980b) points out that he knew that "only through noticing, only through paying heed, can human beings make it possible for works to be" (p. 321). It is this sense of increasing the value of cultural substance by valuing it, of causing it to appreciate through our appropriation of its meaning that I wrote about in one of my letters--what Gablik (1984) has spoken of as "recurrent affirmation" with regard to traditions. I believe art as appreciation and celebration can extend the value we place on life with respect to the processes and products of man's appropriation of nature--both its technology and its art, but I believe it can also extend the value we place on people.

In figure drawing and portraiture I have had students spend a good deal of time drawing themselves and each other. It is surprising how little we may know of the details that make up our own bodies. Students have expressed wonder at the fact that there is a shelf-like rim along the edge of our eyelids. Thinking of the division between the eyeball and the lid as merely a line with eyelashes sprouting from it, they had not noticed any more to it than that. Surely, as high school students, they had looked in the mirror at their own eyes or looked into the eyes of other people, but in looking without "paying heed," as Greene (1980b, p. 321) puts it, some of them really had not seen--did not know this detail about themselves.

I think it would be difficult to enjoy drawing someone without coming to love them, or to love them more than before. One student told me that, for her, drawing the human face is an act of prayer. She feels a constant sense of goodwill toward the person she is drawing. She described to me how she might have felt angry or indifferent towards someone before, but drawing the person--even from a photograph--put her in touch with his innocence and his goodness. Cusick (1973) has found in an anthropological study he conducted in a high school near a medium size metropolitan area that some students are never noticed, never even spoken to throughout the entire school year. Students go through the day as a crowd of people, but rarely do they spend much of that time interacting with one another in ways that allow them to truly come to know each other. Under these circumstances, the opportunity to pay careful attention to one another, even honor each other through personal interpretation and expression in drawing--this is healing and holy.

Drawing, painting and sculpture of the human face and form are not unusual occurrences in high school art classes, but it <u>is</u> unusual for students to feel comfortable doing this kind of art. It is not, from what I have seen, because students lack interest, but because they would like so much to be able to render the human being realistically and are either not given a chance to do so (abstraction is often

the standard set) or are asked to do it within a context of criticism and mistrust. The fear of failure may not be caused directly by a demanding, prescriptive teacher--it may simply be the result of previous negative art experiences that have left the student critical of himself and doubtful of his ability. The opportunity to develop skill in this area in an atmosphere, not only of openness and trust, but active and constant encouragement, is needed--a show of appreciation for the student's ability and a celebration of his sense of efficacy. In such an atmosphere initiated by the teacher, students quickly begin to maintain that atmosphere themselves, to appreciate the process of each other's work and to celebrate each other's achievements--at least this has been my experience as a high school art teacher.

Giving students the opportunity to work on projects together is an obvious way to enhance cooperation. For a long time I took this for granted, but as I saw the sense of community develop among students when we spent time on common products--results of skill and expression that everyone shared, no one person owned--I began to respect the process. I started out resenting the expectation that my classes would be responsible for practically every form of visual communication required by the school. We did the publicity programs and sets for school plays, the posters and banners for sports events, and decorations for seasonal band and music

performances and school dances. I had been trained in college to refuse such duties because they take time and energy away from the individual's expression of original works, so at first I felt guilty for not standing up for my "program." Later I began to feel guilty, too, for enjoying these projects so much.

Students really gave themselves to group work. The sense of purpose in serving the school and the chance to socialize while accomplishing those tasks created a sense of family, made the art room a home base for many of my students--one to which they would return throughout the school day to "pitch in" at lunch or during study hall, as well as before and after school. We experienced an everyday appreciation for each other that turned our daily lives into a constant celebration. The energy and excitement, the passion for living my students shared with me was unforgettable.

Doing art together gave us the context for developing the kind of human relationships that make one believe that anything is possible. It is this kind of transcendent vision, not some esoteric fantasy world, that resulted from our doing art. We learned from sharing information and experiences what each of us could contribute to the ongoing project of being together; we learned to be good to one another. Is this not the essence of imagination and the core of justice? Greene (1978) writes about an aesthetic literacy vastly different from the idea prevailing in art education curriculum

theory that students should be able to break down visual information and use it as "language" to speak visually for a certain standard of artistic excellence; she asks of the aesthetic encounter that it make us more "capable of the excited and passionate absorption attentive perceiving makes possible" (p. 190). Greene (1978) asks that art be used to aid the conscious creation of our lives:

> What is important is the effort to define a vision and to work on giving it expression . . . to become personally engaged in looking, from an altered standpoint, on the materials of one's own lived life, and in imaginatively transmitting (from the fresh standpoint) the fragments of the presented world. (p. 187)

In art as meditation, as pattern making, as appreciation and celebration, art serves life--makes more life from life--brings us closer to harmonizing with the transcendent reality of which Macdonald and Purpel (1987) speak, Fox's (1986b) "conspiracy in our favor."

When through art, or any human project, a way is opened up for us to be more fully human, I believe something resonates within each of us which draws us toward our sacred identity. The desire to extend the meaning of life through the energy of love is who we are and what we seek to manifest in the world. Apple (1980) has located the promise of resisting oppresssive systems in "finding the spaces where limits dissolve" (p. 64). I believe life is too big, too full of energy and possibility to ever really be contained and, because of this, that a technocratic rationality can never

offer more than the illusion of control. However true it is that we can and have, out of our fear, imposed severe restrictions on the movement of life toward our sacred identity, even the smallest recognition of our power to choose otherwise opens our vision onto the vastness of transcendent reality. Limits do dissolve when we focus, instead, on that space. Our idols cannot withstand the withdrawal of our investment.

Epilogue

I began my career as an art teacher with high hopes and aspirations, with a vision that I could help students to become more fully realized human beings through art experiences. What actually happened when I became a teacher involved the usual frustrations and disillusionments of beginning teachers--the pressures, strains, contradictions of real school life--and later in graduate school I came to a deeper understanding of the cultural reasons for my inability to attain my hopes. I came to know about alienation, reification, oppression and hegemony, and with that awareness came rage and even deeper frustration.

I also, in the process of my studies, came to a deeper understanding of the human dimensions of our predicament--that with the very realization that our culture contained contradictions, if not hypocrisies, came the crucial insight that these phenomena were human in origin--that they had been created. More specifically, I came to see the dialectical nature of our created culture and with that the hope that comes from the possibility of de-construction and re-creation. I came to accept the notion and concomitant responsibilities of co-creation, that I was not really alone, nor was I free to disaffiliate from my culture. The concept of co-creation came to be, therefore, not only descriptive but prescriptive for my further professional growth.

Because I saw in my understanding of co-creation the need for becoming more conscious of my own meaning-making, I have utilized a hermeneutic approach, viewing my personal and professional life experience with art as text for interpretation. In the first chapter I came to accept the power of Ricoeur's (1978a) notion of a hermeneutic of suspicion and affirmation, recognizing the need for both a critical and imaginative consciousness of problems and possibilities in curricular decision-making (Macdonald & Purpel, 1987). In the second and third chapters I approached the issues of reification and idolatry in knowledge in general, and art and art education in particular, from a critical standpoint but with the hope that such a hermeneutic of suspicion would lead from an investigation of the problems to insight toward more creative and responsible possibilities. It did; it led to a hermeneutic of affirmaton reflected in the fourth and final chapter.

Now, looking back on this process, I have come to recognize my writing this dissertation as participation in the creative process--that the search for meaning has led to a manifestation of that meaning in the form of choosing and presenting a particular series of interpretations out of many possible ways of seeing our human project of co-creation. As such, let me end with Dewey's (1934) words on how such a work might serve to connect the point at which I find myself now to what lies yet ahead:

> Art celebrates with peculiar intensity the moments in which the past reenforces the present and in which the future is a quickening of what now is. . . .
>
> The past absorbed into the present carries on; it presses forward. (pp. 18, 19)

As I move on, I take these understandings with me as a work of art in the sense that what we make of our lives from moment to moment is art. I take this experience, not as a basis for applying definitive statements to future concerns, but as meaning created in one moment of my life that can only continue to live as it is transformed in the next moment, as I make meaning of new experiences.

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