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THE SOURCE OF CONTROL, THE ART OF LIBERATION AND  
PROBLEMATICS OF SCHOOL TRANSFORMATION IN THE  
POSTMODERN ERA: A QUEST FOR  
HOPE AND MEANING


by

Jane M. Pfefferkorn

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 Philosophy

Greensboro  
1995

Approved by

  
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Dissertation Advisor

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PFEFFERKORN, JANE M., Ph.D. The Source of Control, the Art of Liberation and Problematics of School Transformation in the Postmodern Era: A Quest for Hope and Meaning. (1995)  
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This dissertation is concerned with the dysfunctional relationship between education as it is practiced and experiences in the postmodern world. The current educational paradigm embodies Cartesian notions of the supremacy of disembodied mind and of objective, universally applicable truth. The outcome of the widespread application of these principles to education is a hierarchically organized, certainty-oriented system that is focused upon the acquisition of fragments of information. Through this lens the reasons for the failure of innovative arts-based programs is examined.

By analyzing nearly twenty years of personal experience as a professional public school educator and linking it to the work of significant postmodern thinkers such as Morris Berman, Paulo Freire, Dorothy Heathcote, Berthold Brecht and Tim Rollins, the writer builds a new conceptual framework for education and school reform. This framework focuses upon the following: the quality of lived experience; an understanding of the ever changing nature and social creation of reality; the importance of physical, sensual, emotion-laden, holistic experience; the necessity for expanding critical consciousness; the role

of open, unassuming communication; the need to connect life and learning; the importance of meaning making in contrast to understanding; and the significance of a reflexive relationship among all of the components. The framework is tested through self-examination, personal history, interviews, conceptual analysis and through infusion of the concepts into staff development experiences.

The work of Walter Brueggemann is the text for interpreting postmodernism and for providing recommendations for coping with the problematics. Recommendations for reform are made on the basis of Brueggemann's ideas of "pieces . . . stitched together into a sensible collage" in a patient and gradual manner while maintaining a deep commitment to fundamental change.

For my parents and Aunt Leta and Uncle Jim who  
are my strongest connection with the past

my husband, Bill, who stands  
with me in the present

and

my children, Katie, Karl and Paul who are  
my firmest links with the future that  
they are immersed in creating

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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Date of Final Oral Examination



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It is difficult for me to believe that this project has come to an end. It has been a year of intense reading, thinking and doing and, like all growth experiences, it has embodied the dimensions of pain and sacrifice as well as considerable satisfaction and joy. My son, Karl, told me one day when I was complaining to him about my frustrations and dark thoughts about never finishing, that he had just read the words of a famous author who likened writing to a dread disease that has total possession of a person until it runs its course. While I relate well to the metaphor, in contrast to the gifted writer my son was paraphrasing whose journeys, I suspect, are solitary, I could never have successfully competed this trek alone. I suppose I am the star. However, there is a large supporting cast that has given me all of the encouragement, assistance, love and ballast that I have needed along the way. Offered willingly and in great measure, it has seen me through. I only worry that as I roll the credits, I will fail to mention everyone whose help has been essential.

My dissertation advisor, Dr. David Purpel, has meted out wisdom, constructive criticism and a few slaps on the wrist at exactly the right times and in precise measure to what was required. He gave me the confidence I needed and guided me as I struggled to produce a narrative paper that transformed the events of my life into experience through the reflexive exercise of relating theory, practice and lived experience. I marvel at his unending patience; his willingness and ability to honor my thinking and the material of my life; and his unerring sense of when a dissonant voice would push me on to greater effort. I will always cherish my memories of working closely with him during this year.

Throughout my entire doctoral program, Dr. Fritz Mengert has been another important source of intellectual challenge and growth. He is truly a gifted teacher. His classes and writing assignments were never stress free, but they broadened and deepened my consciousness and my ability to analyze the circumstances of my professional and personal life. I continue to think through the conversations we had during the independent studies I completed with him. They are like mother lodes that have been mined in the completion of this paper as well as every aspect of my life.

I have also benefitted greatly from the classes I have taken with Dr. Svi Shapiro and Dr. Kathleen Casey. Dr. Shapiro's course in qualitative research provided the intellectual approach and technical skills that formed the basis for the case study portion of this dissertation. He also provided considerable guidance and encouragement for this project in dissertation seminar. Dr. Casey is a stimulating teacher. Her course in curriculum theory grounded my thinking about ideology and cultural valuing. Our informal conversations helped me discover a direction and clarify several of the ideas that appear in this paper. I also owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. Penny Smith for agreeing to be on my committee, for providing a challenging comprehensive question and for querying insightfully during the oral portion of my comprehensive examination and in my dissertation defense.

My family has been a wonderful support during my entire doctoral program and throughout this year in particular. My husband, Bill, has never complained about the unkept house, the often empty refrigerator or the very simple meals. He has also been a tough but outstanding sounding board and reality check for my ideas. My teacher son, Paul, has stood ready for discussions at any time even though I am sure it was often inconvenient. He has also been a wonderful proofreader, and his suggestions about style have been invaluable. My other son, Karl, has

encouraged me in his weekly phone calls, and he has also given considerable time and energy to the discussion of my latest take on situations and ideas. From time to time he has threatened to call the dissertation police if he sensed my energy was flagging. My daughter, Katie, has made me proud of myself as she has expressed sheer wonder that her mother was once again up to something.

An entire section of this dissertation was made possible by the willingness of five professional educators to talk openly about important issues in our profession. I am well aware that their honesty put them at some risk, and I extend my heart felt gratitude to them. Many of my colleagues and friends have also been helpful by stimulating my thinking, making suggestions and clarifying ideas. Most notable are Dr. Pat Schreiber, Bettianne Pettinati-Longinotti, Jan Adams, Bob Moyer, Robert Franz, James Houlik, Wilma Rush, Masy Kerr and Anne-Marley Willard.

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and the joy she injects into every day that we work together. And, just when I began to wonder if the formal, technical problems of producing a document according to specifications would doom the effort, I found Jan Poole who made a thing of beauty out of the poorly typed manuscript I gave her.

One final note--Jill Russell, my Jack Russell Terrier, and Pfuzz Buster, my pound puppy, spent endless hours sitting beside me as I read, thought, wrote and typed. Their devotion and companionship must be marked. Morris Berman suggests that pets are a kind of transitional object and that they represent a feeble attempt by those of us who live in highly technological societies to recover some sense of wilderness and wild. In either case, I consider Jill and Pfuzz to be trusted friends who have been at my side through many lonely hours.

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## CHAPTER I

## HOW I GOT HERE: THE MILEPOSTS

Early Years

From the time I was a little girl, I loved reading books, going places and exploring all kinds of topics all at once and all of the time. My insatiable passion for "new stuff" drove my parents crazy to the point that they sent me to my Aunt Leta for extended vacations that were three and four months long. Leta was my mother's sister and she was twenty years old when my mother was born. She had taught first grade for five years before she married. The couple had no children of their own and they doted on me as if I were their grandchild. Leta never cleaned her house. My father's family, with their strong German concern for cleanliness and order, whispered about her in tones just loud enough for me to hear. I was the only grandchild in that family and I suppose they honestly worried about the extended time I spent in a dirty house. They probably hoped that covert communication of their values would have some effect on me. But, while she was well aware and talked openly about the "gossipers," it had no effect on Leta. She knew for sure that "cleanliness was not next to Godliness." Furthermore, it was a point

of honor for Leta, the Scotswoman, to resist every German invasion. Leta's spirit, spunk, energy and undistractable concentration on what was important, gave her an aura and I was delighted to bask in it.

When I was there, Leta's days were entirely devoted to me. She and I talked about the strange happenings as World War II drew to a close. We read indiscriminately. She taught me to knit and crochet. We went to parks and zoos. We got up at dawn when the circus came to town to watch the parade from the train to the fairgrounds. We walked three miles once every summer to experience the circus under the "Big Top." Every other Saturday afternoon, we went to vaudeville shows. When I was six, my eighty-year old grandmother who required constant care came to live with Leta and her husband, Jim. So that I would not be caught at home, Leta taught me to use the city transportation system and by the time I was seven, I travelled all over a good sized city by myself.

Leta and Jim were part of a group that got together once a week to play music and sing. To get ready for these weekly events, Leta, Jim and I practiced our musical instruments every night after dinner. On Saturday nights, the music group often went to dances where their friend, Les Hartman, and his band were playing. It was the one occasion when a sitter was called in for Grandma. Leta, who was a fairly good musician, sometimes sat in with the



band. Everyone danced alone and with each other into the wee hours of the morning. Leta's life was like a huge quilt of differentiated "lively spaces" that she connected. As far as I was concerned, Leta knew how to live. I have included pictures of Aunt Leta, her school and one of her first-grade classes in Appendix A.

Because there was an acute shortage of children in both my mother's and my father's families, I was their only standard. Everyone talked about how smart I was which influenced MaMa to send me to first grade when I was five. Oh, my God! What a shock! What a blow! Who invented this thing called school anyway! Sit silently in straight rows all day? No way! Not me! What in the world was going on? Where was the dancing? Where was the singing? Where was the fun? Why was MaMa so disappointed by my lack of enthusiasm for Miss Nye and her classroom? I couldn't consult with Aunt Leta because she was miles away, but I was sure she wouldn't expect me to be a willing participant in this awful, boring stuff. School was a prison. I hated it! Miss Nye was the warden! I hated her! I wanted out!

I began by walking away when the class was on the playground for morning recess. I showed up back at home claiming earache or sore throat. My history of ear infections provided a short respite, but after a few trips to the doctor my mother caught onto my game and she began

to return me to school immediately after lunch. My next strategy was to leave school and spend the day in the park, dining on potato chips and "Orange Crush" at the local soda shop. It took about a week for Miss Nye and my mother to connect. I can still see MaMa rounding the corner of the soda shop. She spanked the "living tar" out of me in front of everyone and took me kicking and screaming back to Miss Nye. From that day my fate was sealed. I was locked up in a system that would not let me out, and except for the short, "lively space" when we were in music, I was perfectly miserable. Nine months was more time than I could imagine and I didn't think vacation and the joy of being with Aunt Leta would ever come again.

My entire elementary school experience can be accurately described as counterproductive. For three-quarters of every year I felt tortured daily. I can still relive the emotions that surrounded my extreme relief when I awoke the first morning of the summer holiday after third grade. Somehow I soldiered on for about six years. The most interesting thing I remember is that the school burned down mid-morning on a -7 degree December day. We didn't have school for awhile and when we went back, we had to go to Catholic school for the rest of the year with the nuns assisting in our education. I was intrigued by the sisters' dress and customs. One snowy morning school was cancelled during my mile-long,

cross-town trek. The nuns took me in and plied me with hot chocolate before I trudged home through the snowdrifts. I was the only one of my classmates that ever got a peek inside the convent which distinguished me for a day or two. Aunt Leta and I had serious conversations about Catholics the next summer as she unwittingly rekindled my deadened interest in the world.

Finally, around seventh grade the newfound independence of adolescence gave me the opportunity to begin to create my own "lively spaces." I found ways to sing and dance around the encrusted tasks that the teachers tried to pass off on us as serious learning. Sometimes our dancing spirits got my friend, Julie, and me into serious mischief.<sup>1</sup> We stole the urns from the altar of the Catholic Church on Halloween and took our trophies to school the next day. The principal called our mothers who returned them and begged for our forgiveness from Father Kempker. We disrupted a science class by flashing cartoons with scurrilous content along the glass panel at the top of the wall behind the teacher. When the principal decided that our class couldn't take a field trip, we went door to door gathering money for "poor Miss Sorden and her students." We were severely reprimanded, but we got to take the field trip.

Finally, about tenth grade our social lives channeled our energies. School provided a place for we

teenagers of the fifties to be together daily and to celebrate our culture. We all had become clever at interweaving "lively spaces" into the system and we felt in control. Being with my friends became so important that I shortened my visits to Aunt Leta to two or three weeks which she seemed to take in stride. Our teenage lives were dominated by dances, dating, drive-in movies, hanging out in the home economics room at lunch (no boys allowed), finding the codes to inject our private jokes into the school paper, and constant schemes to make teachers look foolish. There was never a dull moment as an army of poor dedicated souls struggled to contain our energy within established patterns. In hindsight, it all seems harmless enough. When my high school friends and I get together, we reminisce about the great time we had. But, as I reflect on all of those years, my sense is that we were hell-bent on subversion--on making "lively spaces"--and the teachers were just as determined to indoctrinate us into the existing consciousness. The indoctrination never quite took with my friend, Julie, or me which leads me to wonder about what might have been possible had the teachers had some notion of joining with us in a struggle to create things that had not yet come to be.

### College

My mother had a vision for me that included college. All of my friends were going and I never really questioned that I would go also. None of my teachers had whetted my appetite for joining their ranks, and I had no intention of going into education until my sophomore year when my father changed my plans. He informed me that it was fine if I didn't get a teaching certificate, but he would continue to pay for my education only if I had a definite way to support myself when I finished. As my opportunities for immediate gainful employment after graduation were limited to teaching and nursing, I unenthusiastically, but instantly, added education classes to my schedule. My parents' wedding pictures are also included in Appendix A.

The courses in the Education Department were as awful as I had expected, but the academic and arts parts of college tickled my intellect as well as my senses. My major professor and advisor helped me see history as the story of people's lives. The English department was staffed with teachers who were able to communicate the universal appeal of Shakespeare, Milton and Twain. A health course taught by the college doctor was required for graduation and he made everyone read all of Thomas Wolfe's novels. The college was in the midst of a study

on integration of content financed by the Ford Foundation and, as a result, even the music courses were placed in historical context.

It was as if Aunt Leta had planned my program of study. For the first time, the spirit of the "lively spaces" I had struggled to make during my tenure in public school dominated my classes and activities. Education was at last live and enlivening. I had a sense of many parts joining together. I experienced performance assessment for the first time in juried piano exams. I wandered through the pain of composing an original piece for piano and trumpet in music theory. I wrote a column on politics for the school newspaper which was my first try at offering my own thoughts in a public forum. In my junior year I went to Washington, DC on a special, one-semester program to study "American Government in Action."<sup>2</sup> During those six months I developed some notion of the relationships between concepts and implementation and perhaps a faint glimmer of the social construction of reality. At any rate, through my college experience, I developed some vision about the nature and purposes of education in relationship to thought, action and living in the world. I was conscious that there might be some connection to Aunt Leta's vibrant sense of what has meaning.

### First Teaching

My first assignment in a public school setting was as a high school social studies teacher. I think as a teacher I took on a Leta-like role. I liked making things happen, and I loved the drama of the classroom. The content of the classes was what interested me and I tried to make every session a "lively space." While there was a required textbook, it was long before enforced pedagogical practice, endless standardized tests and specified evaluation procedures so I was left more or less alone to develop my courses. I assigned projects that demanded considerable research and the students and I spent class time discussing issues rather than reciting information. I always hated to compile booklets of information and I assumed my distaste for such activity was universal, so the students had nothing pretty to take home. No one really was intensely critical, but a middle-aged teacher suggested that I was probably too idealistic, and that I failed to give sufficient attention to facts and skills. I can only conclude that either I didn't understand or I chose to ignore what he was trying to tell me. I knew little of Dewey, nothing of Hegel and I had certainly never heard of Freire, but I couldn't see the point of learning facts and skills if that didn't lead to serious consideration of their implications and the issues that

produced them. Furthermore, it seemed natural to me that "Thought has meaning only when generated by action in the world."<sup>3</sup> It made good sense that without action it is "life pretended and not enacted."<sup>4</sup> To top it all off, I had this quirky notion that at heart everyone was interested in unleashing students' "Creative Power," and that failure to create "lively spaces" was a pedagogical problem that could be remedied through developing effective methods.<sup>5</sup> Obviously I had no idea of the relationship between form and function because I really thought that if teachers knew how to address significant questions and connect them to students experience, they would. Perhaps I had been seriously infected with Aunt Leta's confidence and independence. I had the arrogance to think I might have some answers. But, I left that unfinished strand and embarked on another long and challenging course.

#### Home and Family

I interrupted my professional progress to marry and have a family. I was out of the work force for fifteen years. Having children of my own, however, deepened my commitment to life and the workings of the world. A picture of my husband, my children and me is also included in Appendix A. When my daughter entered first grade, I undertook some volunteer teaching in her elementary



school. Now, I smile at my shock when I discovered that very little had changed since my original school experience. It was still a prison. The teachers were guards. The children peeled off into cellblocks. Even the books were the same. Katie began to hate school when the teacher made her stop singing while she did her seat work. She despised it more with each passing month and by third grade she was labeled as lazy and difficult. Unfortunately, I lacked the courage to take her out, but I struggled to fill her after school hours and her summers with the same spirit and intensity that Aunt Leta had given mine.

During my years at home, I also completed a master's program in drama that had provided me with the opportunity to do some work with the English dramatist and educator, Dorothy Heathcote. Her concern with using the medium of drama to explore questions of social justice and the luminous, spiritual essence of significant things provided me with considerable insight into what education is and what it could become. I took a very part-time job teaching high school drama classes at the local community theatre to begin to experiment with Mrs. Heathcote's ideas and methods.<sup>6</sup> I was fascinated with the notion of using dramatic form to focus the energy that is a natural part of students thinking critically, reflecting and preparing to take action in the world. I thought of my early

teaching and the power that could have been generated if I had possessed the knowledge and skill to use drama to create situations with life "rate and intensity."<sup>7</sup> Mrs. Heathcote became a beacon for my future work.

### Return to the Professional World

When I returned to full-time employment, I thought the struggle to find the proper mix of the significant people and ideas that were influencing me required that I teach in as many settings as possible, so I continued with my late afternoon high school drama classes. My public school teaching assignment was to inject arts experiences into daily K-8 instruction under the auspices of a special program called "Arts in the Basic Curriculum."<sup>8</sup> Sponsored by the John D. Rockefeller III (JDR III) Fund, it was commonly known as "ABC," and operated under the slogan, "All of the Arts for All of the Children."<sup>9</sup> The twofold intent was to give all students arts experiences and to use the arts as vehicles of academic instruction.

JDR III created a "League of Cities" and a "League of States," that encompassed every area of the country and brought together cities as diverse as New York City; Seattle, Washington; New Haven, Connecticut; Little Rock, Arkansas; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Except for JDR III fellows who coordinated the projects, no money for salaries or supplies was forthcoming, but representatives

from every participating city and state were flown to quarterly meetings to mull over and share ideas about how infusion of the arts throughout the curriculum could result in new educational theory and subsequent practice. Many discussions ensued concerning what the curriculum of schools ought to be.

Each city and state had its own plan.

Winston-Salem hired a team of artist/teachers to model using the arts to teach the North Carolina K-8 Standard Course of Study for and with the assistance of regular classroom teachers.<sup>10</sup> My team members and I served 12 schools and worked with over 10,000 students a year. Hartford concentrated on transporting students to performances. Little Rock and Seattle provided training for classroom teachers to learn to include arts components in their lesson plans. Assessment of the program was accomplished through site visits by JDRIII administrators, visits from representatives from other participating sites which turned into rather grand affairs, and through collecting anecdotal information.

It was a heady environment, indeed, and a perfect opportunity for me to continue to develop my own ideas about education, to utilize everything I had gleaned from my master's program, and from my training with Mrs. Heathcote. The four of us who were hired as artist/teachers felt as if we were part of a tide that

would sweep away the worn out patterns of the past. People came from everywhere to observe us. We were asked to do demonstrations all over the country. I traveled as far as the National Volunteers Conference in Anaheim, California, and the American Theatre Association Convention in New Orleans. I thought an avenue had opened that would bring some joy and hope into education, altering the future for kids like my daughter who found school unbearable. I saw a chance for Aunt Leta's spirit to reenter classrooms, transforming them into "lively spaces." I did puzzle briefly, however, over the obvious difficulty of meshing a school system and a private foundation. Every now and then I wondered if a program that was sponsored by an outside entity could become a systemic part of the sanctioned instructional program.

While there were definite ups and downs, the teaching was truly the most exciting part. When my five year olds got so involved in questions of keeping animals in captivity that they dictated letters asking zoo officials for their opinions; when fifth graders wrote letters to legislators concerning destruction of coastal wetlands; and when my high school students asked a judge for an explanation of sentencing procedures, it was clear that something more profound than drill, practice and information gathering was involved.<sup>11</sup> I would like to

describe in some detail my final demonstration with a fifth grade group when the JDRIII Fund held its largest meeting of the year in Winston-Salem. It remains a peak experience of my professional career.<sup>12</sup>

I had been working with a number of classes for several weeks on the issues involved in the closing of the American frontier in the nineteenth century. Each of us who were employed as artist/teachers was asked to select one of our classes to showcase the Winston-Salem project for the JDRIII visit. My options ranged from a self-contained academically gifted group to one that was a "motley" assortment of kids that were classified mostly as average achievers.<sup>13</sup> It also included some students that were categorized as mentally handicapped who were mainstreamed during my sessions. While they were excellent thinkers, I had noticed a tendency for academically gifted children to be timid initiators and doers as compared to groups of run-of-the-mill students. Therefore, even though I had been warned that I was taking a chance, I chose a ragtag group of students to demonstrate the outer limits of our project.<sup>14</sup>

Prior to the demonstration day, the kids, the classroom teacher and I worked for a number of sessions to explore why "pioneers" are willing to leave everything familiar and journey into the dangerous unknown. Finding the connections between ourselves and the conceptual

framework that developed from those discussions was exciting and revealing of individual inclinations and motivations. We translated the connections we found into specific roles, functions and people that constituted participants in our wagon train. The next steps consisted of forming ourselves into congenial groups that could share wagons; of understanding how little our wagons could hold; of selecting the things we would pack; and of establishing the rules that would govern us all on our journey. After a great ceremonial signing of the covenant we had made, the first day's travel was represented by a journey around the school with each wagon group carrying paper cut to the size of a wagon bed which enabled us to determine the adjustments that needed to be made in the wagon groupings and in our selections of goods so that our chances of success would increase.

The last session before the JDRIII demonstration provided a marvelous opportunity for the students to understand "suspension of disbelief" that is at the core of all arts experiences.<sup>15</sup> We explained the situation in terms of two parallel stories. We told the students exactly where they as fifth graders were going and what they would be doing on the following day. Then, I recounted our history as "pioneers" and we discussed the "second truth" that would occur simultaneously which was an episode in the lives of a group of travelers who had

left Missouri; journeyed north through the Nebraska Territory and, who at the moment our drama would begin, had successfully forded the North Platte River.<sup>16</sup> We fixed the time that the curtain opened as just before sunset as we were making camp on the river's western bank. The wagons were already circled and the fires were lit to cook the food we would require for the challenges ahead. The students knew that just before the sun reached the horizon, strangers would enter the scene and the work would be underway.

I had enlisted two of my friends to play the roles of a Native American chief and the member of his tribe who could speak the language of the strangers. The translator was a person I had worked with over several years in the Teenage Act Workshop, and I trusted her judgment completely. The JDRIII observers were given feathers and told to display them and move close to the children at the moment the chief's chants were audible. My idea was to utilize dramatic elements to introduce a significant challenge; to focus the resulting energy; and to surround the students eliminating any thought of easy escape. The arrangement also enabled the classroom teacher and me to remain with the children in their battle against nearly insurmountable odds.

The chief told the students through his translator that he had seen their kind before and they had killed and

maimed his people and destroyed the earth. He and the tribal elders had decided that no more strangers would pass through their tribal land. At first the students responded predictably. They tried to trade, bribe and cajole their way out of the situation. When they realized that nothing they had ever read or been told was going to help them solve the situation, they struggled for nearly an hour offering plan after plan until they were exhausted. When it seemed that they could go no further, the chief shocked and reenergized the group by selecting one of the girls and the bundle she carried that represented a baby to become members of his tribe. The suspense was extraordinary and with this new challenge the last of the usual leaders in the class fell away. As I recall that moment, I really didn't know if the students had anything left in them. But, after a few very tense moments, the boy who had designated himself as a preacher of the Christian gospel stepped forward and held out the Bible he was carrying. Everyone in the room expected him to call on the "Lord" to save the group. However, he requested that the translator ask the chief if he wanted to learn the magic of the black lines. The room literally quivered as the observers realized the boy was offering to teach the chief to read. The translator knew the moment to strike a deal had come. She and the chief conferred and after weighty deliberation, the chief offered the



"pioneers" safe passage if two of their numbers would stay behind until the tribal elders possessed the power the preacher had offered. The students asked about the fate of the woman and child. The chief said they could select one to go with them, but they could not take both. After a full group consultation, the students asked for the woman. The chief asked why they would leave a child who represents the future. The students responded that the child would never remember and the woman could never forget. Everyone in the room was moved. Both the role and the man playing the role of the chief were so impressed that he returned the woman and child and promised that the two who were left behind to transmit the power would follow before the snow fell. The session ended as the students passed literally and symbolically out of the room through the opening among the observers who still displayed their feathers. In the debriefing session that followed one of the observers remarked that he had a whole new understanding of the basis for adoption. Fifteen years later I still meet students and teachers who recall experiences that we had together like the one with the fifth grade "pioneers." I was thrilled recently when the young girl at the checkout counter in a new supermarket in town recognized me and reminded me of her first grade class that had studied birds.<sup>17</sup> The young man who was bagging my groceries at the same counter

recalled his fourth grade class at another school that had danced the galliard as courtiers to Elizabeth I in the exploration of the relationship between The Lost Colony and the defeat of the Spanish Armada.<sup>18</sup> Recently, I encountered a teacher that had worked with me to bring some sense of the universal aspects of Magellan's voyage to her students.<sup>19</sup> She recalled details of those classes that I had either missed or forgotten and she asked me to always remember her face. Not long ago my husband and I attended a local church supper where we sat with the wife of a superior court judge who introduced us to her daughter who teaches a self-contained, academically gifted class in an elementary school. The young teacher looked at me and said, "You came to Mrs. Hanner's sixth grade class at Skyland School every week. I'll never forget the things we did. The classes were so exciting. I try to think of those sessions as I plan the program for my students."<sup>20</sup>

These incidents convince me that what went on in my classes had some significance for the participants as well as for me. While the system's intent for ABC never went beyond an arts for art's sake approach, and/or using the arts as a memory tool, important questions embedded in social studies, literature and science almost always emerged for discussion and deliberation. While a few teachers gained some sense of how education could be

transformed, many teachers and principals began to see the arts as a means to create interest, to increase retention of information and to improve the quality of life in schools and classrooms. Almost everyone who participated enjoyed the project and teachers still comment that it was the best program the school system ever initiated.

Without a doubt I had stumbled into a semblance of developing work organically and utilizing "generative themes."<sup>21</sup> As in the case of the fifth grade pioneers whose investigation of entering the unknown contained a multitude of possibilities, every finished work contained the sources of new energy and the beginning of other visions, "consciously activating subsequent development of experience."<sup>22</sup> I was confirmed in a certainty that echoed from my first teaching that there is a difference between infinite and finite questions and that only infinite questions matter. These years were wonderful, exciting and exhausting. I knew I was onto something that was very different from the operative paradigm. I truly thought that significant change was within our grasp and that I could be involved. However, events intervened to alter my plans and the strand once again became a loose end.

#### Administration

Two things that occurred within months of each other diminished the possibilities for change as I

envisioned it and my participation in it. First, John D. Rockefeller III was killed in a car crash and he left no provision for the JDRIII Fund in his will. The League of Cities and The League of States died with him. There were no more national meetings and networking to support the work. The program in Winston-Salem had expanded to nine teachers that served 20,000 students or over half of the system's total enrollment. The program was continued, but as teachers transferred out for one reason or another, they were not replaced. The load quickly became too great for the four teachers that remained. Rather than hiring additional staff or eliminating some schools from the program, ABC was reorganized into a staff development effort. Very quickly the "cookbook," formalistic mentality that is instilled in teachers in their training and reinforced by the structure that surrounds their practice, drained the program of its substance. It became one more technical teacher training course. When the Basic Education Plan was legislated, mandating that opportunities in visual art, drama, music and dance be available to all students, however, we saw an opportunity to reinfuse substance into the ABC concept.<sup>23</sup> To differentiate it from the staff development model, we changed the name to the Arts Connection Team (ACT) and for about two years, things looked promising. But, when the legislature failed to fully fund the BEP, and subsequently

initiated a system of decision making at the local school level, the program fell apart once again. The convergence of the funding failure and the new legislation resulted in a directive to each individual school in the system to cut a specific percentage of its budget, and the iterate ACT teachers were easy marks. Eight schools with very high poverty rates, however, saw the services as so valuable that they found other ways to meet the requirement to reduce expenditures, and we have been able to maintain a small vestige of a grand and glorious effort that once had national connections. There is a degree of irony in the fact that we have been allowed to provide the ABC experience for underprivileged and "at risk" children. In spite of the oft leveled criticism that the arts are elitist, it is only those who will probably never have the money or the opportunity to gain the technical competence that is valued in this society who are given the time to "fritter away" on the arts.

The second event changed my personal direction. I left the ABC program fifteen years ago because one of my sons suffered a near fatal injury. Caring for and supporting him through his rehabilitation required that I have some flexibility in my schedule. I could not continue teaching as many as twelve classes a day, but I knew that good work was essential to my equilibrium. Fortunately, a federal grant program that I had helped to

design and write was funded and I accepted an assignment to administer it.<sup>24</sup> The objective of that program was to improve the culture of the system's dozen junior high schools by infusing arts experiences on a regular basis. While I would be out of daily contact with students, it seemed like a natural progression. Working in the ABC program had strengthened my notions about making education "lively" and infusing it with joy and I thought that central administration was a possible avenue for making my ideas systemic. I also continued to hold onto the thought that most educators wanted to provide more opportunities for their students to develop as human beings, and I imagined that through the system-wide organization, I would have the opportunity to help more of them create appropriate experiences.

I had three wonderful years working with community artists and arts groups. Students and teachers sang, danced, and acted with professional artists. They observed professional classes and attended performances in their schools and in theatres. We produced school-based year-long studies of folk artists that culminated in huge folk festivals.<sup>25</sup> A year-long study of opera resulted in public performances of an adapted version of the opera, Don Pasquale that included nationally known professionals, the local opera company, all the teachers and the students in two junior high schools.<sup>26</sup> A professional mime trained

mime troupes that performed all over the county including a group of "Willie M" students whose behavior improved to the point that they gave two performances.<sup>27</sup> All junior high school students were bussed to fully mounted performances by the North Carolina Dance Theatre, saw productions of operas specially designed to be mounted in schools and had personal contact with a number of professional artists.

While I was responsible for working with artists and arts groups to create the opportunities and to plan the logistics, a challenging and exciting part of my job was translating between the arts community and the school community. Traditionally, the tension that develops between aesthetic concerns and school schedules causes considerable friction between the groups, but with a few notable exceptions, artists and educators emerged from the work with feelings of satisfaction. In addition, I persisted in my goal to give students and teachers the opportunity to see the world in a new way, and there is ample evidence that my "lively spaces" in junior high schools enabled them to think differently. "P. M. Magazine" produced a program on the Don Pasquale project in which students, parents, and teachers expressed their new found interest and appreciation for opera in interviews that were part of the program.<sup>28</sup> Students loved taking class with professional dancers and marveled

at the strength and agility that classical ballet requires. Time and time again teachers marveled at the concentrated focus of their students when they were participating in arts experiences. Principals, teachers, system-wide administrators, parents and students acknowledged that the Junior High Arts Project provided unique and valuable experiences that were generally unavailable to the majority and that the climate of the participating schools had improved through the project. There was even some statistical data indicating that the program had made a positive difference in students' attitudes toward school. Therefore, I was a bit puzzled by the lack of general concern when the federal grant program that funded Junior High Arts was folded into a larger grant program in the early years of the Reagan administration eliminating two-thirds of the program's budget. I was even more astonished when the school system decided that what was left should be applied to all schools in the system rather than restricted to the 12 junior high schools. The decisions not to supplement the funding and to spread the small budget that remained over fifty some schools ripped the heart out of the program. The Junior High Arts Project was dead, and everyone but me was willing to let it go. I had trouble internalizing the message, but the indifference the system displayed was a wake-up call.



Gradually, I began to wonder if people are in charge or if the system generates and sustains itself out of cold, calculating, impersonal, standardized policies and procedures. Was Aunt Leta the Junior High Arts Project? Was the system Miss Nye? Like the little five year old girl, I could have walked away from the deadened environment. But, through my volunteer years, I had learned the value of an official position. Having experienced powerlessness, I decided to consolidate my advantages, keep working, and open up the system wherever and whenever I could.

It was before the days of educational downsizing. No one thought of eliminating me, but no one knew what to do with me either. I was eventually placed in the Department of Exceptional Children, given the \$17,000 that was still earmarked for the arts in federal funds, and left alone to develop whatever pleased me. Perhaps some of Aunt Leta's and my mother's Scottish souls were alive within me for I found ways to take a little and make a lot. Through partnering with local arts agencies and through successful grant applications, I catapulted that \$17,000 into \$75,000. One of my proudest achievements was the "African-American Traditional Music Project," which was jointly funded by the school system and the local and state arts councils.<sup>29</sup> Members of the Mighty Wonders Gospel Quartet worked in all high school chorus classes

each day over a six week period. At first the chorus teachers resisted, but they gradually came to appreciate the wonderful ear training their students were receiving. The project culminated in each school with a performance by the school chorus, the "Wonders," and the Budget Sisters Gospel Trio. The entire project was brought to a glorious conclusion with all of the choruses combined in a community-wide concert with the "Wonders" and the "Badgets." To everyone's surprise, a white girl sang the lead in one call and response number. A very staid principal said the project was the best thing that had ever happened for the relationship between the races in his school.

The next year the local arts council and I began to discuss the possibility of a school system/arts council collaboration. Together we created the "Arts-in-Education" program that is jointly funded and administered by the two agencies.<sup>30</sup> Artists and arts groups apply to a panel of community people and educators for grants to work in the schools which has enabled us to produce projects such as a dance workshop in concert with the North Carolina Dance Theatre.<sup>31</sup> The dance workshop featured Mel Tomlinson in residence in a middle school working with the highest risk students to create choreography. The students gave the first performance of their work for the entire student body of their school. Their teachers were

amazed at their focused energy. The students then set their pieces on the professional company. The work was performed again by the professionals, giving students and teachers a full aesthetic experience. Subsequently, the pieces were featured in a formal public Dance Theatre program. The students were listed as choreographers. The students and their families were honored guests at the opening night performance and asked to stand for applause. The review in the paper cited the students' work as the brightest part of the program. The teachers, students, parents, the professional dancers, and even some portion of the public gained new awareness of students' capabilities through this project. For a brief time, the school space became very "lively." I continue to wonder if there is any way to keep the spirit going for students like those in the dance project who are subjected to the educational philosophy that more is better and thereby do little except paper and pencil drill and practice every day of their school lives. Unfortunately, the spotlights are on Miss Nye. I keep hoping there are many Aunt Letas waiting in the wings.

All of the efforts to bring professional artists, teachers and students into meaningful relationship are generally recognized as enhancing the school program. In that light it is so curious that no consideration has been given to developing a philosophical underpinning that

would make these kinds of experiences an essential and systemic part of the instructional program. Furthermore, while principals and teachers clamor for the opportunities that are available through Arts-in-Education, the funding is always in jeopardy. The program is considered to be expendable, and it would die instantly if the Arts Council fund drive fell seriously short one year or if the school system decided that something like purchasing computers was a more acute need. Therefore, continuation of Arts-in-Education is decided on a year-to-year basis. It truly hangs by a thread.

In fact, through the years, there have been several attempts by administrators higher up in the bureaucracy to garner the tiny budget that supports the program. One suggestion was to wipe out the line item for cultural arts to equip a science lab. Auxiliary textbooks also came up for discussion. So far, through the dumb luck of building community support as well as relationships within the bureaucracy that has been part-and-parcel of my projects, all of the efforts to redirect the money have failed. The skirmishes demonstrated another dimension of the power of relationships and, as a result, I became more careful than ever about maintaining them. I am also aware that to have some freedom to develop what I think is important, I must also stay very organized and never overspend my budget. I am also meticulous about disrupting the school day as

little as possible. Because I never forget these lessons, we have been able to work with elementary children to write and produce operas with the assistance of professional composers, dancers, and stage directors.<sup>32</sup> We have established chamber orchestra residencies in high schools.<sup>33</sup> We worked with the Hmong community in Morganton to saturate two elementary schools with first-hand experiences of that Far Eastern culture.<sup>34</sup>

Dramatic cuts in the school system's administrative staff posed another serious threat to my efforts to insert "lively spaces" into the school program. While I was grateful for the opportunity to keep opening up the system, as the only arts person in the central administration, the workload became crushing. Along with the assignment to continue to work with community groups, I was given full responsibility for the visual art, music, and dance programs that serve all of the students in the system, for summer enrichment programs that serve approximately 1500 students, as well as for reinitiating the ABC project. My budget jumped from \$17,000 to over half a million dollars that is sorted into over a dozen specified categories. During the traditional school year, we currently plan and schedule approximately 1000 visits by artists to schools each year and manage programs for nearly 200 teachers. When registration for summer enrichment is in full swing, my full-time secretary, my

half-time secretary and I answer as many as 100 phone calls a day. The upshot is that most of my assigned tasks are technical which makes me feel like a mechanic charged with keeping the existing machinery in order. I am well aware that in the scheme of things, my ability to fulfill the maintenance functions is why I am allowed to continue to develop the "lively spaces." The irony, of course, is that I have so little time and so little energy to devote to the development projects that have successfully brought life into school for a goodly number of students and some teachers and is what I consider to be my real work. Organization and maintenance are simply a job. The frustration, therefore, is enormous. The pressure is intense. It is a real "Catch 22" situation that I continue to struggle through in my belief in the importance of providing some surcease in the school program from systemic regimentation and standardization. To keep going, I have to pull on my strong belief in the value of the kinds of experiences that kept the liveliness in me when I was growing up on the supposition that I, like Aunt Leta, am creating opportunities that will have an enlivening effect on others.

In the 1990-91 school year, two opportunities developed that renewed some of my hope that there continue to be possibilities for change. The superintendent asked me to develop a proposal for the RJR/Nabisco Foundation's

"Next Century's Schools" program.<sup>35</sup> The request for proposal indicated that the most outstanding plans to change educational theory and practice would be funded. I saw it as an opportunity to turn an entire school into a "lively space." As the result of the successful proposal the school system received a \$750,000 grant to establish an elementary school based on a different concept of community. The current prevailing notion is site-specific and operates out of the idea that primary community and neighborhood are synonymous. In contrast, the Downtown School is based on the notion that work is the primary focus of most parents' lives, and, therefore, is a suitable basis for structuring a learning environment, including locating the school in close proximity to parents' workplaces to provide them with improved possibilities to participate in their children's education. In fact, parental participation is a mandatory requirement at the Downtown School. A local major corporation accepted the obligation of lending its tangible support to the concept through financial contributions, donation of materials and supplies and through release time for employees to work at the school. In return, sixty-percent of the students are children of that corporation's employees. The parents of the remainder of the students live or work within a specific radius surrounding the school which comprises a Downtown

School attendance zone. No child, however, is required to enroll. Located in the middle of the old business district, the school is ensconced in the lower floor of a one-hundred-year-old building of considerable historic significance, demonstrating the possibilities for reclaiming spaces for schools rather than building huge, expensive, impersonal emporiums.

The staff, like the principal, is handpicked. The student body ranges in age from three years old to students ready for middle school. The student/teacher ratio is fifteen to one. There are no letter grades, but regular conferences with students and their parents as well as narrative accounts of each child's current and anticipated accomplishments summarize student achievements. The school utilizes the services available in the city for the art, music, media and physical education programs. No transportation is provided which places teachers and parents in daily contact. The students travel throughout the city on public transportation during the day. The school community crosses all ethnic and socioeconomic lines. The parents, administration, teachers, the corporate partner and the downtown community work together for the educational benefit of the children. The program is so popular that parents, with the assistance of teachers who say they are willing to put their jobs on the line, fought hard to



extend the school year by year to include grades 6, 7, and 8. Unfortunately, the school board was unwilling to consider a plan that cut into the current organizational pattern of separating students by assigning them to buildings designated for elementary, middle and high school grades.

Alas, the \$750,000 grant has run its course. Predictably, and in spite of the acknowledgment that the school's unusual characteristics have made it a success, the visionary parts of the program are in great jeopardy. Quantification requirements are being imposed that extend far beyond program and include such issues as efficient use of space. The school board is interpreting distinctive as synonymous with inequity and there is serious talk of making classes bigger; of increasing the elementary enrollment; of reducing the percentage of children whose parents are employed by the corporate partner; and of eliminating the parental participation requirement and even moving the program out of the downtown area. If these measures are imposed, and, I predict a good many of them will be, they constitute the beginning of the dismantlement of the supportive community that has made the Downtown School a "lively space" that provides the things that children require to develop as full human beings. The prospects that the school will

shortly be a carbon copy of every other elementary school once again dashes my hope.

The second opportunity occurred in the spring of 1991 when, in addition to everything else, I was required to get additional certification. Remembering my undergraduate education courses, I reluctantly enrolled in classes in the School of Education at UNCG. To my surprise and delight, this work turned out to be an unexpected pleasure. I had to take two courses of a pedagogical nature and only one of them was reminiscent of my past experiences with education courses. The other classes were in the Department of Cultural Foundations where, for the first time, I encountered people in education who were in a continuous process of defining and redefining issues; who thought more imaginatively and critically than I had ever experienced in education before and who were bent on continuous examination of the relationship between theory and practice.<sup>36</sup> The program was so exciting to me that when I finished the certification requirements, I applied and was accepted into the doctoral program. Thinking with others about the philosophical basis and historical origins of the education system has diminished my sense of isolation and provided me with some theoretical understanding of my own experience and current situation. The Department of Cultural Foundations has given me some ballast as I face

the daily challenges of my professional life and additional determination to continue to make schools as "lively" as possible in the face of considerable disappointment and discouragement.

### Reflection

I truly feel as if I am a one person band. I keep tooting away in spite of the fact that, in contrast to effusive acknowledgement of success, nothing I have done that constitutes a true "lively space" has become a systemic, secure part of the school system's program. All of my efforts are either dead or hanging by a slim thread. My projects are popular, but each one is treated as a self-contained, complete entity. Even though each of them is pregnant with possibilities for additional experiences, development is totally at the discretion of individual teachers who are constantly pressured by an accountability philosophy that focuses their attention on the plethora of standardized tests. For all intents and purposes, therefore, each project is isolated, over, done and finished.

It is difficult to understand, to say nothing of accept, how things that are heralded, build support for the school system, and obviously connect students to their school tasks and environment can be disregarded and in many cases, snuffed out so easily. Granted, "lively

spaces" fall outside the normal paradigm and, therefore, require considerable administrative and teacher time and patience. But, as a nation and as educators who act as its agents, do we not say that we honor the kind of creativity and human development that these programs foster? Furthermore, we pride ourselves on our pragmatic approach to the world, and here we are with programs that successfully address through lively, holistic experiences, some of the major, identified, contemporary educational challenges like high dropout rates, violence, and connection, and we are willing to let them slip quietly away. A general criticism is that an entire school program cannot operate without clear direction, prescriptions and formulas. But, the summer program that I am responsible for operates beautifully without any of them, and teachers and parents consistently comment that regular school should function in a similar manner.

It has been my experience that there are breathtaking attempts to wipe "lively" opportunities off the face of the earth. The Standardized Transcript is a perfect example.<sup>37</sup> In 1991, administrators of the North Carolina University System complained that they were unable to equitably determine who should be admitted to state supported colleges and universities because school systems were free to develop their own course weighing systems which resulted in inflated grade point averages.

It seems that it had become technically possible for students to graduate from high school with averages in excess of 4.0. Far be it from anyone to suggest that by reading the written recommendations that accompany grade reports, it might be possible to determine what lies behind the numbers. But, of course, reading words is a much less efficient way to come to a decision, and, frankly, of sorting the applicants as quickly as possible, so the North Carolina Legislature empowered the University System to develop a standard system for recording and reporting students' high school records that would prevent any student from exceeding a 4.0 high school grade point. The ultimate objective was to be able to transmit the information electronically, thereby eliminating the cumbersome, but more personal, paper method. After two years of study by a specially appointed and anointed commission comprised primarily of college and university admissions officers, the University System found that it would be impossible to execute electronic transmission, but it decreed that there would be regular courses and honors courses in all content areas except four which the commission members found to be nonpredictive of college success. The four areas that the commission relegated to lesser importance in the curriculum of all high schools of the State of North Carolina were remedial education, ROTC, vocational education and cultural arts. Several aspects

of the determination are worthy of note. From the point of view of this paper, it is most interesting that thinking and doing are inherent, as they are in "lively spaces," in three of the four downgraded areas. Second, it is interesting that college success should be the final arbiter of the relevance of courses in a high school program. Third, no one questioned the appropriateness of empowering the University System to make decisions about the public school curriculum. It must also be noted that neither the State Board of Education nor the Legislature bothered to check the commission's research which stated falsely that, in contrast to other content areas, there is no North Carolina Standard Course of Study for the arts, and, therefore, they concluded, there are no standards.<sup>38</sup> The commission also stated that standards that differentiated honors courses from regular courses are clearly laid out for academic content areas when no such differentiation exists. Finally, the research concerning college success was done informally and was confined to a small random sampling of students enrolled at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Astonishingly, the State School Board and the Legislature mindlessly accepted the recommendations and it was sent to every school system in the state as a fully considered and legislated matter. I still marvel at the idiocy. I

marvel even more at the public outcry that brought it to a halt. I find it very interesting and instructive.

After a year long war that involved mobilizing parents, students, legislators, and bringing the full force of the arts community to bear, cultural arts courses were not only reinstated as eligible for honors credit, but their renewed status was applied retroactively to the 1994-95 school year. But, with that ruling the battle was not yet over. For a time it seemed that the state electronic student information management system (SIMS) would not be able to handle the complexity of the problem, and in 1995, of course, it is out of the question to do anything by hand. Just recently a mother called to say that her daughter had been named valedictorian of her class which would not have occurred if retroactive credit had been denied for her outstanding achievements in arts classes, so it seems that the situation has been satisfactorily resolved. However, it is amazing to think that the destiny of the next generation could be determined by the limitations of a machine!

All that I have experienced with the Standardized Transcript battle as the latest episode, leads me to wonder about the contrast in the current scheme of things between what is acknowledged as successful and important and yet slips away and what is supported by those with power and, therefore, endures. I also puzzle over the

continuing, unsatisfied hunger in the culture for meaningful "lively spaces" as exemplified by the outcry over the Standardized Transcript as well as the calls I continue to receive from parents, students, principals and teachers to keep the "lively spaces" coming. I am almost preoccupied by trying to understand what is going on. My peaked curiosity about why accomplishments that integrate thinking and doing are downgraded; about why the heart would be cut out of a successful school program to conform it to some standard of efficiency; about why the substance would be drained from an acclaimed program to keep from adding staff; and about why programs that provide students with experiences that they will never have in any other way and that are important in the continuation of notions we tout as our credo are allowed to quietly disappear has led me to formulate a number of questions. The following are among the most poignant:

- Why do we separate mind from body in the learning process and anoint it as the exclusive means for coming to know as demonstrated by my experience of the Standardized Transcript?

- Why is objectivity split from subjectivity and regarded as the only acceptable standard for knowledge as I learned in the contrast between the teaching my colleagues and I did in the ABC program and usual practices?



- Why do we strive to eliminate emotion from the educational process as demonstrated by usual practices and the examples and standards we set for students?

- Does systemization and institutionalization have to result in stultification and reification as I have experienced in the case of The Downtown School?

- Is it possible to enable people to take precedence over policies and procedures in educational practice in contrast to what I have experienced as an administrator buried in the bureaucracy?

- Can individual lives be connected to current educational philosophy and practice in contrast to the disconnection fostered and enforced by the current system as exemplified by the current boredom that permeates classrooms, the current dropout rate and the escalating violence?

- Are other practitioners as bothered as I by the current system and if so, how do they sustain hope and energy?

- What are the sources of the resistance to developing a new vision that would incorporate the elements that I have found to be important and powerful?

- Why is there a tendency as I have experienced over and over again, for promising programs to move outside the education system?

In spite of ample, qualitative and a little quantified evidence that I am often on the right track, my experiences seems to consistently place me in a context of uncertainty as to whether or not what I am thinking and doing has any relevance. I, therefore, began my search for answers to my questions with an investigation of whether my thought and practice is anomalous or whether there are others who think and act in a similar manner. Of course, I have long been familiar with the work of the English dramatist and educator, Dorothy Heathcote, who was important in my first crystallized interpretation of my past experience that set me on my current path. Through my master's program I became very interested in the philosophy and practice of the dramatist, Bertolt Brecht, and the correspondences between his work and Mrs. Heathcote's philosophy and teaching. In my doctoral studies I discovered the American writer, Morris Berman and the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. Recently, I have worked with the American artist and educator, Tim Rollins. All five of these people resonate with me. All of them appear to be part of an international tradition that is focused on establishing a new educational vision. Finding the correspondences among them and their relationships to my own position at this specific moment in time is the next task that I have set out for myself.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Julie graduated Phi Beta Kappa from college; entered an Episcopal religious order and was a nun for ten years. She subsequently completed a Ph.D. in history at the University of Wisconsin and married a history professor. She has since authored three books; was named Wisconsin teacher of the year which included a year long sabbatical; and in 1994, she received an award from the NEH to live and do research on an isolated Greek island.

<sup>2</sup>"Washington Semester Program," American University, January-June, 1957. I met my husband of thirty-seven years during those five months.

<sup>3</sup>Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. Myra Bergman Ramas (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), p. 64.

<sup>4</sup>John Dewey, Art as Experience, The Later Works, Vol. 10: 1934; Jo Ann Boydston, ed.; Harriet Furst Dimon, textual ed. (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), p. 178.

<sup>5</sup>Hughes Mearns, Creative Power, The Education of Youth in the Creative Arts, Intro. by Winifred Ward, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), Throughout.

<sup>6</sup>Teenage Act Workshop, Little Theatre of Winston-Salem, Classes taught by the writer, Fall 1972-Spring 1978.

<sup>7</sup>Dorothy Heathcote, lectures given at Mount Tabor High School, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, under the auspices of Wake Forest University and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, June 23-July 11, 1975. Dorothy Heathcote will be referred to as Mrs. Heathcote throughout this paper because she states unequivocally that is her preference.

<sup>8</sup>The John D. Rockefeller III Fund was based in New York City. It was commonly known as JDRIII as it will be referenced hereafter in this paper.

<sup>9</sup>The slogan "All the Arts for All of the Children," was developed as an attempt to overcome the general perception that the arts are elitist.

<sup>10</sup>Instructional Services, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, State Board of Education, North Carolina Standard Course of Study, North Carolina Competency Based Curriculum, Subject-by-Subject (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1985).

<sup>11</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Kindergarten (Mabe), Brunson School, Spring, 1980, Fifth Grade (Stifler), Brunson School, Fall, 1980, Teenage Act Workshop, Little Theatre of Winston-Salem, Fall, 1978.

<sup>12</sup>The dates of the JDRII visit to Winston-Salem were May 2, 3, and 4, 1978. The referenced demonstration was at 10:00 a.m. on May 4, in the media center at Brunson School.

<sup>13</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Fifth and Sixth Grades, Brunson and Skyland Schools, Spring, 1978.

<sup>14</sup>Classes taught by the writer. Fifth Grade (Hayes), Skyland School, Winter and Spring, 1978.

<sup>15</sup>In Mrs. Heathcote's lexicon, "Suspension of Disbelief," is a foundational concept. It refers to the power of students to work within the imaginary context of the drama with earnestness and concentration. It is the basis for all participation in and appreciation and enjoyment of the arts.

<sup>16</sup>"Second Truth" is another of Mrs. Heathcote's terms. It refers to the imaginary context of drama and all of the arts as well as their power to reveal.

<sup>17</sup>Classes taught by the writer, First Grade, Bolton School, Spring, 1979. Unfortunately, I do not recall the name of the teacher. She was filling in for a teacher on medical leave and neither the system nor the school has retained records of her employment.

<sup>18</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Fourth Grade (Sayers), Old Richmond School, Spring, 1980.

<sup>19</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Fifth Grade (Maness), Skyland School, Fall, 1979.

<sup>20</sup>Sarah Patten, Conversation, Ardmore Methodist Church, Fall, 1993.

<sup>21</sup>Paulo Freire, Pedogogy of the Oppressed, 1970, Chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>23</sup>North Carolina State Board of Education, Basic Education Plan for North Carolina's Public Schools, (Raleigh: North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction), Originally proposed to the North Carolina General Assembly, October 15, 1984; Revised, November, 1985.

<sup>24</sup>"The Junior High Arts Project," Funds Appropriated by Congress in Spring, 1980. Grant Awarded to the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, Fall, 1980. Funding Continued through 1982-83 School Year.

<sup>25</sup>"Junior High Folk Arts Project" designed and produced by the writer; Sharon King, Folklorist; funded through the federal "Junior High Arts Project," the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, The Winston-Salem Arts Council's "Projects Assistance Grants Program," The North Carolina Arts Council and The National Endowment for the Arts; Griffith and Northwest Junior High Schools; Spring, 1984.

<sup>26</sup>"Opera in the Making;" designed and produced by the writer in conjunction with Piedmont Opera Theatre; John Stevens, dir.; funded through the federal "Junior High Arts Project," the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, The Winston-Salem Arts Council and the North Carolina Arts Council; Spring, 1984.

<sup>27</sup>"Glenn Junior High School Mime Troupes;" Michael Quigley, dir.; Funded through the federal "Junior high Arts Project," the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, and the Winston-Salem Arts Council, 1980-81 school year.

<sup>28</sup>"Junior High Opera Stars," P.M. Magazine, Dan Rossi, Producer and Director (Greensboro: WFMY TV), June 1984.

<sup>29</sup>"Traditional African-American Music Project," designed and produced by the writer, Dennis Williams, dir., Funded by the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, the Winston-Salem Arts Council's "Projects Assistance Grants Program," and the North Carolina Arts Council's "Grassroots Funds," 1986-87 school year.

<sup>30</sup>The "Arts-In-Education" grant program is currently in its seventh year. Funding varies from year to year because of fluctuating budgets, but it hovers around \$50,000 that is granted to artists and arts groups to provide opportunities for students in schools. All work by artists in schools is directly correlated with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, 1985.

<sup>31</sup>The "Hanes Middle School Dance Project," designed and produced by the writer in conjunction with the North Carolina Dance Theatre, Mel Tomlinson and Noel Grady-Smith, dirs., Hanes Middle School, Spring, 1990.

<sup>32</sup>"Write an Opera;" designed and produced by the writer in conjunction with Piedmont Opera Theatre; Anne-Marley Willard, dir.; Ken Frazelle, musical dir.; Jacque Chance, choreographer and dance dir.; Kernersville (Snow White) and Whitaker (Rumpelstiltskin) Elementary schools; Spring, 1984.

<sup>33</sup>"Piedmont Chamber Orchestra Residencies;" Robert Franz, prod. and dir.; Reynolds High School, Spring 1993; Mount Tabor High School, Spring 1994; Parkland High School, Spring 1995.

<sup>34</sup>"Hmong Folklife Project;" Funded by the "Arts-In-Education" of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County School and the Winston-Salem Arts Council, the Folklife Division of the North Carolina Arts Council and the Folklife Division of the National Endowment of the Arts; Designed and produced by the writer in cooperation with Glenn Hinson; Sally Peterson, folklorist; Clemmons Elementary School, Clemmons, North Carolina, and Southwest Elementary Schools, Lewisville, North Carolina, Spring, 1988.

<sup>35</sup>The "Next Century's Schools" program was developed in 1989 under the leadership of Lou Gerstner who was the CEO of RJR/Nabisco at the time. He established the RJR/Nabisco Foundation to handle the technical aspects of the program such as applications, awards, funds distribution and evaluation. During the three years the program was in existence, the foundation received approximately 15,000 applications each year. Between 15 and 20 grants of up to \$750,000 were awarded every year. When Mr. Gerstner became CEO of IBM, the "Next Century's Schools" program was discontinued.

<sup>36</sup>The Department of Cultural Foundations has undergone reorganization and is now named the Department of Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations. So far, the focus and intensity of the program have not changed.

<sup>37</sup>The Standardized Transcript was originally called the Electronic Transcript. The vision was that all paper transcripts would be eliminated. Of course, computer capability as well as efficiency dictated both the form and content of what could be transmitted. Soon after the process began, the committee learned that it would be impossible in the foreseeable future to transmit transcripts electronically, so the name was changed. The idea of determining college admission by the numbers, however, continues.

<sup>38</sup>Instructional Services, North Carolina Department of Public Instruction; State Board of Education; North Carolina Standard Course of Study, North Carolina Competency Based Curriculum, Subject-by-Subject, Arts Education (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 1985).

## CHAPTER II

## ACTION, REFLECTION, AND ILLUMINATING THEORY

Introduction: The Foundation  
of Wondering

I have always loved the arts. As a tiny child I adored movies. The small Iowa town where we lived provided a safe enough environment for my mother to give me fifteen cents for admission and popcorn to go to the "show" alone on Saturday night from the time I was four. My happiest childhood memories are participating in music classes, dance classes, church and school plays and as an enthusiastic audience member. During my elementary and junior high school years, the arts provided surcease from the endless tedium of the school day. In high school, the arts were a major part of the social scene. When I was enamored of history in college, I saw it as a collection of fascinating stories. Even though I may not have been conscious of it, for me history was an art form. Almost all of my "lively spaces" have arts at the core. My most serious educational concerns have been generated by my involvement in the arts and by perceiving how the arts affect others.



My formal participation in the arts began when I was five with piano and dancing lessons. By third grade I was experimenting with brass and woodwind instruments. In high school I played and sang in six or seven different music groups and I acted in every play that was produced in our little town. My task-oriented, practical, German father thought it was all a waste of time and money, but my mother, encouraged by Aunt Leta, made it possible for me to persist in my "frivolous" ways. In college I majored in history and in education but the arts were like the ostinato of my undergraduate years. I continued piano lessons, played in the band and orchestra, took several music theory and composition courses, travelled to Cedar Rapids, Des Moines, and on rare occasions to Chicago to concerts, museums and to see road shows. The highlight of every year at my college was the annual weekend visit by the Chicago Symphony for the three-day May Music Festival. While I was a student, the Festival was over 50 years old and people came from all over western Illinois and eastern Iowa. Students arrived at dawn to get good seats on the day the tickets went on sale. The musicians always made the five-hour trip from Chicago by train that was parked on a siding just two blocks from campus. It was a grand sight when the orchestra members made their way up one of the highest hills in Iowa with their precious instruments. It was like watching the circus parade with Aunt Leta all

over again. Both musicians and their instruments came in all sizes and shapes. While the college trucks went for the tympanies, even the bass fiddle and tuba players schlepped their cargo to King Chapel, a beautiful example of steamboat gothic architecture, at the apex of the steep incline. Usually an assistant conductor was in charge, but one year George Szell came as guest conductor. It was during the tenure of Fritz Reiner and I have always wondered about the politics, but it was the only time I heard a live concert conducted by Szell and I will always remember it. For three entire days every year the musicians lived with us on campus. One night I sat in the union watching with fascination as four of them got increasingly angry with each other over a poker game. I remember wondering how they could come together the next day to make beautiful music. In retrospect I can see how the arts continued to energize me and fill my life with "lively spaces," in spite of my flirtation with a "more acceptable, solid major."

After I married and had my children I carried on Aunt Leta's and my mother's tradition of providing my offspring with as many arts experiences as possible. All three had music lessons and took visual art in school and at local arts agencies. The older two went to dance class. The youngest, Paul, supplemented his career as a distance runner that began when he was seven with soccer.

In spite of his athletic bent, he loved his saxophone and he joined his brother and sister in the Little Theatre's ACT program where I taught. All of them had considerable stage experience by the time they finished high school. Interestingly, their father provided the same counterpoint as my father. He continually asked if all of the cost and the to do of hauling kids all over town, going to performances, art shows and plays was really necessary. I could never successfully construct an argument that would resonate in his logical lawyer's mind, but I never faltered in insisting that the experiences were essential to their full development. Like my mother, I found ways for the three to continue their "frivolity" including sending my daughter to the National Music Camp and the Interlochen Arts Academy. To this day the arts continue to hold sway in all of their lives and, in fact, are my daughter's driving force.

While my daughter is compelled to be an artist, there was never any question about my sons or me taking up any kind of art as a career. It was simply not in the cards. But, professional artist or not is not the question. The real issues that run so strongly through my life and the lives of all of my children (although they may not be fully conscious of it) are why are the arts so important to us; what is the nature of their power; and

can the arts have the same magnitude of significance for everyone that they have for us?

I am convinced that I found the answer to the last question in my teaching. My public school classes included all exceptionalities ranging from the academically gifted to the trainable mentally handicapped students whose measurable IQ scores are 50 and below. I discovered early on in my arts teaching that if I read the group properly, hit the right level and created quality drama for my students' participation, the unresponsive student was an anomaly. If I did my job properly, it was the rare child who did not invest heart and mind in the "lively spaces" that I invited them to enter. For instance, the sixth grade class of blue collar and housing project children struggled to figure out what gives money value.<sup>1</sup> Members of an academically gifted sixth grade class worked in drama to discover the origins of the Russian Revolution including the events leading up to "Bloody Sunday" which they recreated without prior knowledge of the actual facts.<sup>2</sup> The carefully constructed drama produced a response that was identical to that of the guards on the ramparts of the Winter Palace on that January morning in 1905. Members of three seventh grade classes transformed themselves into African tribes by choosing coordinates on the African continent, by becoming residents of the area, by finding significance in

their imagined surroundings, and by creating corresponding rituals and traditions.<sup>3</sup> An eighth grade accepted the burden of establishing principles of justice when one of the members of their culture that was devoted to the betterment of mankind and to technology broke the law.<sup>4</sup>

Lamont and William are my favorite examples.

Lamont wandered in and out of my fifth grade class that was studying the Pilgrims.<sup>5</sup> Another teacher and I were working together and her class was studying the Native American tribes that inhabited the area around Plymouth when the first settlers appeared. Our plan was to have our two groups encounter each other in role. When the day arrived the students were told that they would meet strangers and that the two groups could not speak to each other because they did not know each other's language. Sixty children struggled for over thirty minutes to try to figure out what to do. Finally Lamont stepped forward and began the process of learning to communicate without words. The other children watched in amazement and after they caught on to what he was doing, they began to model their behavior after his. The class ended with all of the students trying to find ways to communicate and cooperate. Lamont went back to the classroom a hero. I learned later that he was categorized as Educable Mentally Retarded and that my classes were some of his prescribed mainstreaming activities.

Ten year old William lived in a foster home and had the most malformed mouth I have ever seen. Not one tooth was where it ought to be. We were investigating the concepts of entering the unknown, the mystery of courage and the nature of endurance in the face of extreme adversity by exploring Magellan's experiences when he made the first voyage around the world.<sup>6</sup> We drew plans of sailing ships and used desks and chairs to convert our blueprint to almost exact size specifications. We sailed through class after class with each session offering new challenges that in some way echoed Magellan's adventures. One day a woman burst into the room and dragged William out. I didn't stop the class, but later I learned that the woman was William's foster mother and she thought he was sick and should stay home that day. He had run away from her to come to school to do Magellan. Several years later I was in the bus loading area of the vocational high school when this very large figure came running across the parking lot in my direction. When he was literally upon me he opened his mouth and smiled. There were the teeth! It was William! He threw his arms around me and said, "Mrs. Pfefferkorn, I'll never forget when we circumnavigated the globe." I mourn for William because a few years ago I read in the paper that he had been convicted of burglary. I wonder if continuous "lively spaces" could have helped him. I am convinced, at least,

that school could have been a "lively space" in his dreary life.

While my professional experiences provided the answer to my question if the arts can have significance for everyone, I was still at a loss to explain, as I had been when I was at odds with my father and husband, the importance of the arts and their power in achieving full human development. Any coherent explanation of why and how the power of the arts can move people and change their consciousness continued to elude me. Like Paulo Freire I realized that ". . . men's activity consists of action and reflection: it is praxis; it is transformation of the world. And as praxis it requires theory to illuminate it."<sup>7</sup> I knew that until I crystallized into theory what I had been doing in practice and captured it in language, there was little hope of clarifying my differences with the current educational establishment, let alone penetrating its bastions. Fortunately my graduate studies came along about the time I thought there really was no language for talking about what the arts do, how they do it and why it is important. Through my work at UNCG I was led me to Morris Berman and Paulo Freire. By working with professors and other students whose concerns about education resonated with my own, my awe of Dorothy Heathcote and my feeble attempts to imitate her practices were replaced with an ability to think about her work in

a theoretical way. I had known for a long time that there was a relationship between Mrs. Heathcote and Berthold Brecht. My studies helped me clarify that connection. By enlarging and sharpening my frame of reference, I was able to recognize the promise of the young visual artist/teacher, Tim Rollins. In the process of ferreting the correspondences and differences among Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins I have been able to tease out some answers and explanations to my niggling concerns. In this chapter I will draw on the salient, relevant aspects of the work the five visionaries that have helped me clarify my own position, and I will explicitly connect the relationships among them and to me.

### The Theory

#### Berman

Morris Berman's book, Coming to our Senses, clearly sets out the bifurcations, boundaries, and disconnections, as well as the exclusive focus on objectivity and rationality and the mind over matter mythology that are so ingrained in our culture that they totally dominate the educational system.<sup>8</sup> Berman provides a powerful, mind-expanding point of view that leaves me exhilarated by my new understanding and at the same time depressed about whether anything can really be done about education as we know it in America today. Berman traces the way reality



has changed according to the consciousness of people and he strongly believes that it is mandatory that we quickly go about altering ours. He posits that the drug addiction, alcohol abuse, violence, sexual promiscuity, and the rise of addictive "isms" are the result of the extreme fragmentation and rationalization of our culture that began around 1550 when the secular, scientific revolution initiated the destruction of the sacred, magical world view that had preceded it. He maintains that our unhealthy proclivities represent our attempts to restore undivided consciousness, to address our longings for the primary satisfaction of wholeness, and to satisfy our craving for spiritual redemption. Describing the central feature of Western culture as "everything operates on the model of the machine," and stating that, "it is in technological societies that we find the greatest terror of the organic," Berman predicts doom if Western consciousness and practices do not change immediately.<sup>9</sup>

Berman maintains that we really have it all wrong. In contrast to the Western disregard for the body and the notion of the superiority of mind, he believes that the physical experience--"the somatic experience"--is the unifying enlivening force.<sup>10</sup> In his way of thinking, the senses are the means for apprehending, comprehending and interpreting experience. Therefore, it is his notion that the physical being is the human being. To his mind, the

physical is the basis for the self and the spirit. In medieval terms, it is the soul--a word we shrink from and find outmoded and embarrassing in our modern conceptualization of the world.

The self is a body self; it has no other root than a visceral one . . . it gets elaborated in such a way as to take a view-point on the body, have a conception of it. It is here that our problems begin . . . this moment, which marks our identity in the world also marks the birth of our alienation from the world . . . the full understanding of a distinction between self and other sets up a tension in the psyche requiring you to make a decision in favor of one or the other in terms of this identity.<sup>11</sup>

Berman believes that the challenge is to overcome our fragmented, mechanical, exclusively rational view and to move as fast as possible to a holistic vision of life and the universe that places somatic experience at the center. While "our basic relationship with the world is connection," he recognizes that the difficulties of reorienting ourselves are enormous because the first and fundamental split between mind and body occurs before birth.<sup>12</sup> Unlike many tribal societies, however, whose practices diminish the split, Western culture vigorously reinforces it by emphasizing the unending, lifelong process of differentiation as soon as children are born. Berman argues that the consequent alienation increases as the shifts from "self to other, kinesthetic to visual, authentic (inward) to social (exterior), true self to

false self" are accomplished.<sup>13</sup> "In the leap from self-recognition to self-awareness . . . the psyche is torn in two."<sup>14</sup> Maintaining that our unconscious compulsion to heal this break constitutes our search for meaning, Berman believes that, as a result, we have no sense that life is its own meaning. Our basic approach, therefore, is future oriented. ". . . modern Western culture in particular is a conspiracy not to talk about the world of primary satisfaction, or even about the body at all. Since that is excluded from discussion we are required to take the world of secondary satisfaction seriously," which Berman identifies as the goals we consistently set out for individuals and for the culture, namely, productivity, ambition, achievement and the hope of future and continuing success.<sup>15</sup> Berman believes that the lack of conscious awareness of the importance of our bodies as the sole source of primary experience results in aggression, excesses of every kind, mental illness and despair. "Our disturbed relationship with organic life . . . shows where the sources of fragmentation are firmly taking us. Hatred and destruction of life is the inevitable outcome."<sup>16</sup>

Berman traces the roots of contemporary, binary, mechanical, Western culture back into antiquity, but he pinpoints the most immediate source as the Newtonian concept of the world as "clock like" with distinct parts

that can be sorted into rigid categories. The antagonisms and dialectical relationships that are consequently set up create tensions such as those that exist between body and mind; self and other; emotional and rational; black and white; good and evil; male and female; young and old; conscious and unconscious; sacred and secular. Berman terms this Western penchant for categorization a "splitting mechanism" and states that it has "colonized our consciousness."<sup>17</sup> He believes it constitutes our ideology.

While the chasms are many and deep, Berman believes that they are all rooted in the Western belief in the supremacy and perfectibility of mind separated from physical sensations, feeling and emotion. Dominating all that we think and do, he maintains that this notion disconnects what we value from how individuals, through the senses, encounter and the way they interpret the world. He cites the reality that very little, if any, importance is attached to tasting, feeling, hearing and smelling as means for coming to know. Because we preach this gospel of distance, objectivity and rationality, sight is valued because it enables us, like perspective in art, to view things from afar in a cool and detached manner that maintains the rigid barrier between observer and observed. Berman believes that as a result of the separation of mental from physical experience, we have

become unidimensional beings. We are trapped within a disembodied conception of ourselves and we are caught in abstract, doctrinaire interpretations of life. We, therefore, concentrate on what is outside ourselves that can be quantified rather than on the rich, spiritual, interior of our beings that make us human. Because we are terrified by uncertainty we are, therefore, frightened by the essential qualities of our humanity that emanates from our continuously unfolding and inexhaustible somatic experience of the world. So, we ignore what is really important. "The things that really matter in life . . . they can never really be known."<sup>18</sup> Berman posits that even self is interpreted visually based on the disconnected and disconnecting viewpoint of others. He points out the irony of the Western belief that objectivity has no physical or value content, stating that our pathological devotion to detachment is evidence of the triumph of a single emotional need--the need for psychological and existential security which leads away from movement that may be life's only constant and inevitably toward death. "Detachment is an emotion."<sup>19</sup>

Berman's argument continues that we are driven by our craving to fix things which is a manifestation of our need for psychological and existential security. His farthest reaching example of how we fear what we cannot control is that even music is governed by mathematics and

harmonics, "cutting it off from its psychic roots."<sup>20</sup> Berman believes that to achieve conceptual clarity, we treat everyone and everything that seriously transgresses the established categories like traitors, strengthening the system when it is feasible by co-opting heretical powers and plowing them back into existing forms. "Cybernetic holism" is a recent example in which the "scientific-corporate establishment is attempting to 'buy up' the holistic world view and energy."<sup>21</sup> "If you eat your enemy, you absorb his power."<sup>22</sup> Berman goes on to argue convincingly that when it is impossible to expropriate traitors' power, they are expunged as demonstrated by our fascination with statistical evidence which eliminates all anomalous outliers before any analysis is undertaken. "The deepest hatred and fear of life that the planet has ever known . . . . The degree of preoccupation with . . . (categories), the sharpness of boundaries is so severe in the modern period as to catapult it into a different category of existence."<sup>23</sup>

It is Berman's belief that the subordination of interior life to the mechanism of nature has created a cerebral or formalistic way of life that is our orthodoxy rendering us helpless in the face of strong emotional content. He avers that because of our spiritual ignorance we are easily led astray, and because we have no experience we are unable to distinguish between the

sacred, the demonic and the obscene. He cites Nazi Germany as the apotheosis. Founded in an awakening to interiority and a search for meaning and emotional security, Berman maintains it was an attempt to unite the sacred and the secular, to reenchant the world and to make man divine. If man was the embodiment of divinity, it followed that evil also had human form. "Secularism demanded human devils," and the Jews because of their close-knit community and their undeniable successes in every phase of German life, were the scapegoats.<sup>24</sup> Berman posits that the German people were so spiritually naive that they embraced a kind of "public shaminism"<sup>25</sup> that constituted a "form of emotional rape."<sup>26</sup> I am struck by the horror that contemporary culture is so rife with examples of the modern world's inability to distinguish between different kinds of energy as evidenced by demigods like Jim Jones, David Koresh and even the comparatively innocuous, Jim Bakker. It is difficult for even a moderately perceptive person to deny that a Hitler-like figure may very likely rise again.

So, what is Berman's solution? What is his vision of a new consciousness that will bring human beings to greater comfort with their condition? First of all, in the world that he proposes, somatic experience will be central because "the energy of the universe originates in the body."<sup>27</sup> Second, subjectivity and objectivity;

thinking and feeling will be integrated. "Psychic distance must be abandoned as a criteria for truth."<sup>28</sup> Third, emotion will be a recognized, honored and explored facet of coming to know. "We must develop a methodology that relates the visible to the invisible."<sup>29</sup> We require "methodologies of feeling."<sup>30</sup> Fourth, the emphasis will be on lived experience. "Formulas are easy and lived experience frequently painful."<sup>31</sup> Fifth, people will be connected to their experience and to each other. "It is to be able to live in life as it presents itself, not to search for a world beyond."<sup>32</sup> "Self and other will be seen as interrelated aspects of something larger rather than as opponents."<sup>33</sup> Sixth, everyone will have so much and so many rich emotional experiences that they will be very secure and it will be impossible for individuals or cultures to be deceived by comforting ideologies. Furthermore, the difference between ideas and ideologies will be clear. "Ideas are something you have. Ideology is something that has you. All of these beliefs, techniques, and ideologies are useful; but they are not 'true.' What is true is our need to stuff the gap, our longing, our drive to create world views out of tools so we can be 'safe.'"<sup>34</sup> Seventh, rather than drowning in the sea of fixed knowledge, life will become "a shifting pleasure . . . characterized by so much somatic security, so much incarnation, that the need for 'truth' is far less



important than the need for love; and finally not in conflict with it."<sup>35</sup> Eighth, it will be a world with "ontological integrity" where "more and more of us are opting for exploration, 'enterprise,' and some form of reflexivity rather than for the safety of rote or revealed knowledge and familiar formulas."<sup>36</sup> Finally, it will be a world where the basic faults of the human condition will be used creatively and the "mysteries of the soul" are constantly explored.<sup>37</sup> In Berman's phrase, "our ultimate goal . . . is to transform the world into an art form . . . ."<sup>38</sup>

Of course, in Berman's vision education will undergo a complete transformation. He calls current education a charade and says that the real thing must:

Resonate with what is most familiar to you . . . . In a word your emotions, or more broadly, your "spiritual" and psychic life. These are the things your real life is about. They reflect the things that matter most to you, for they are experienced in the body . . . .<sup>39</sup>

. . . to leave your body and believe you can still know anything at all is quite literally a form of madness. The boredom of our schools testifies to the fact that none of us are fooled by this charade.<sup>40</sup>

What now passes for written history is really a history of the head--the ego.<sup>41</sup>

History . . . moves along the lines of external description . . . proceeds along the lines that only the visible is real . . . . It all amounts to the same book written over and over again, but in different guises. Academic discourses generally lack the power to shock, to move the reader; which

is to say, they lack the power to teach. They fail to address the felt, visceral level of our being and so possess an air of unreality.<sup>42</sup>

The major obstacle to understanding the past in the way I am suggesting is living in the modern period itself . . . history became a professional discipline, modeled along the lines of the natural sciences. Previous to this time, history was by and large a mode of storytelling . . . It had a different sense of what the facts were. In this mode, "the facts" were first and foremost what happened on a psychic and emotional level . . . if this got left out, it was fair to say, nothing happened--there was no story to tell . . . In the transition to modernity, the emphasis on interior knowing was severely attenuated.<sup>43</sup>

Before 1600 . . . knowledge was directly experiential.<sup>44</sup>

It is astonishing to contrast Berman's vision for the world as it is translated into education with our current paradigm where students sit still all day, in desks, isolated from the sensual world and from each other. Disembodied mind is at the top of the ideological structure. There is no tasting, touching, feeling, smelling, perceiving or acting. Thinking is far superior to doing and the two seldom meet. We dismiss irrelevant arguments as academic, but schools emphasize academic accomplishment. We talk endlessly about the correlation between cultural deprivation and the lack of achievement in school and we fail abysmally to incorporate significant experiential learning into the school program. We expect students to think abstractly and we give them nothing to abstract from. In my assessment of what is wrong with our

current education theories and practices and in fact in the world, Berman's analysis makes enormous sense. The real questions that his lucid arguments raise are how has the world survived to this point and why aren't students in open revolt?

### Freire

The Brazilian educator and political activist, Paulo Freire is less theoretically comprehensive than Berman, but he is important to my study because his ideas correspond and reinforce Berman's and because he introduces the concept of praxis into his work. Praxis is a hermeneutic idea that holds "thought has meaning only when generated by action on the world," and action without reflection is mindless activism.<sup>45</sup> Freire's notion is that through reflection, thought and action reflexively inform each other. The result is "life enacted and not pretended."<sup>46</sup> Believing like Berman that "transforming reality is an historical task," Freire's goal is to educate men and women to humanize the world and bring justice into it through their creative, dignifying work.<sup>47</sup> In the new, nonexploitive society that will evolve, work will empower everyone as a subject. All people will reflect on past, individual and collective actions and they will accept responsibility for them.

Freire believes that praxis is possible because all people are able to transcend their world and examine it. They are capable of the "unveiling of reality."<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, they can become conscious of their own perceptions and gradually they will develop a transcending, critical mind that understands personal and collective realities with the intention of changing them. People will come to know that they can create the future.

Like Berman, Freire is concerned with the devastating effects of the scientific/technical organization of Western culture. The notion that by splitting things into the smallest components, we can with certainty know and fix everything has produced a concept of a motionless, compartmentalized, unchangeable, machinelike world in which objectivity is the highest good, control is essential and hierarchy is regarded as the most efficient and effective organization. Berman terms this top-down organization of the world, "ascent theory" and, like Freire, believes that mankind is doomed unless another conceptualization is developed quickly.<sup>49</sup> Both men maintain that this object focused universe that has been drained of the animating force of human feeling and emotion has produced a heart and mind controlling ideology of extreme specialization that makes communication almost impossible. Because there is no common experience, words are without grounding which seals

people off from each other and isolates them in a sterile, inanimate world.

Within this framework, being is equated with having and, in a consistent fashion, people are also drained of life, fixed, treated like possessions, and assessed by "growth in a structured functional manner" that "is driven by the desire to transform the organic into the inorganic, and to approach life mechanically."<sup>50</sup> Treating living persons as if they are things "is necrophilic; it is nourished by a love of death, not life."<sup>51</sup> Submerged within this "oppression (that) is domesticating," people fall into habits of silence that Freire avers is maintained by the education system.<sup>52</sup>

Freire describes what passes for education currently as a "banking system," that suffers from "narration sickness."<sup>53</sup> In this system there is "no room for education; only training."<sup>54</sup>

The teacher's "task is to 'fill' the students with contents of his narration--contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality that engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become a hollow, alienated and alienating verbosity."<sup>55</sup>

"Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor . . . . This is the 'banking' concept of education in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits . . . . But in the last analysis, it is men themselves who are filed away through the lack of

creativity, transformation, and knowledge in this (at best) misguided system."<sup>56</sup>

Freire characterizes the "banking system" of education as follows:

- (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 chooses and enforces his choice, and the students comply;
- (f) the teacher acts and the students have the illusion of acting through the teacher;
- (g) the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it;
- (h) the teacher confuses the authority of knowledge with his own professional authority, which he sets in opposition to the freedom of the students;
- (i) the teacher is the Subject of the learning process, while the pupils are mere objects.<sup>57</sup>

In contrast, Freire defines true education which he equates with authentic work as the fundamental determinant of human development. He believes that education is everyone's lifelong vocation that must be directed toward justice, love and being more fully human. Its proper basis is the "concept of men as conscious beings" who act on their thoughts and reflect on their actions in authentic communication with each other.<sup>58</sup> The content of the dialogue will vary with particular historical and sociological conditions and with the level at which the

participants perceive reality. Both alienation and impairment are dialogic challenges rather than dead ends. This kind of authentic communication, which is very close to the religious concept of communion, requires humility in that the acceptance that no one knows everything and that everyone knows something is essential. The keystone is a deep faith in the ability of human beings to create and reason.

The word is the basic building block of communication and hence of dialogic encounters. To be true and authentic, words require thought that presupposes action. "Thought has meaning only when generated by action upon the world."<sup>59</sup> Words must always reference things in concrete reality and people must find their own and use them to name their world. Each thing named is the source of a new problem that requires reflection, additional dialogue and new naming. As they continuously, authentically and reflectively name things around them and as they take action upon their namings, people discover themselves and their potential. Every true word, therefore, is a praxis in that it constitutes "the action and reflection of men upon the world in order to transform it."<sup>60</sup> "When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well, and the word is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism , into an alienated and alienating blah. . . .if action is

emphasized exclusively to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into activism."<sup>61</sup> If words and actions do not match, trust is broken and communication is destroyed. Each true word embodies the reflexive interaction of critical, reflective consciousness and transforming action.

Freire's new education will eliminate all false dichotomies and hierarchies between mind and body; intellectual and manual; and objectivity and subjectivity. In fact, mind and body; thought and action; people and things will mesh. Because the pursuit of full humanity can not be carried out individually or in isolation, students and teachers will join together in a learning communities where people communicate their yearnings, their namings, and the contents of their awakening minds so that similar responses to reality are aroused in others. "Everyone is a teacher and everyone is taught."<sup>62</sup> All people will be empowered as conscious subjects who are in constant interaction with each other and the objective world; an interaction that produces true knowledge. "Validation is in the actually lived."<sup>63</sup> Echoing the philosophy of John Dewey, Freire advocates an organic curriculum that develops out of the needs of the learning community rather than a fixed course of study. "The knowledge of experience had in order to get beyond it is not staying in that knowledge."<sup>64</sup> Every problem solved,



project completed, situation defined, named and discussed will contain the seeds of future problems, projects, communication and action, "consciously activating the further development of experience," where "educands learn to learn in learning the reason for, the 'why' of the object of content."<sup>65</sup> Acknowledging, however, that "education is always directive," Freire makes the distinction that "the moment educator's directivity interferes with the creative formulative capacity of the educand the necessary directivity is transformed into manipulation; into authoritarianism."<sup>66</sup>

The characteristics of the Freire's system are:

- Education will become an instrument of critical consciousness that enables people to transcend and examine their reality leading to intervention, invention and transformation of the world through reflexive thought and action toward the end of solving problems in a manner that humanizes reality.
- Thought will be meaningful only when "generated by action in the world."<sup>67</sup>
- Education will be with the students rather than for them as students and teachers join together in a learning community where all grow and where all are teachers and all are taught eliminating the authority of the teacher to regulate the way the world is presented.
- Education will become a means of communication and of authentic thinking about the here and now where words and actions match promoting trust and further communication rather than an instrument of adaptation, adjustment, domination and ideological indoctrination.

- No theoretical questions will exist as education is transformed into a process of forming, posing, communicating and acting on the problems of people in their relations with the world.
- Knowledge will emerge through invention and reinvention and the continuing inquiry into the operative forces in reality.
- Education will reveal the transformation of reality as "an historical task" through the totality of thought and action enabling all people to discover their ability to enter reality as responsible, critically aware participants who are able to reason and who consciously activate the subsequent development of experience.<sup>68</sup>

In my own sense of what I am about, Paulo Freire is like a bridge. My goal is to get reflectively about my business in the world. Both Berman and Freire give me rich, wonderful insights to contemplate that expand my thoughts that I have developed in my practice. Freire, however, seamlessly melds theory into practice. He does the very important work of demonstrating how the two must be meshed. In hermeneutic fashion, he suggests that actions must be examined for results and implications which point to a subsequent, connected cycle of thought, dialogue, action and reflection. Education would change dramatically if it were reformed around Freire's practices. Based on the creation of learning communities, on the notion of the social construction of reality, on organic development of curriculum and directed toward analysis of situations, communication of perceptions and

intervention in circumstances with the objective of changing them, the current fixation on certitude would disappear. If everyone were empowered as a subject who communicates through words that imply action and the understanding of the social construction of reality, education would be infused with the life force that I now struggle to capture in my feeble "lively spaces."

### Heathcote

Berman provides an integrated conceptual discussion of what is amiss in Western thought and culture and Freire introduces the notion of a reflexive relationship between theory and practice which have been wonderful for me to contemplate in terms of why my "lively spaces" work. But, in spite of Berman's contention that the "The life of the body is . . . the only life we have," Freire's belief that the real issue is action in the world and despite the fact that they were just what I needed, both Berman and Freire can easily result in just one more mind game.<sup>69</sup> I can imagine teachers spending a week in a high-powered staff-development session, studying Berman and/or Freire and never getting a clue as to how one or both of them relate to professional educational practice. Unfortunately, examples abound, indicating how ubiquitous the disconnection between mind and body and theory and practice that concern Berman and Freire are. Fortunately

for me two examples of people who have worked out the theory to practice relationship have passed my way and with Berman and Freire integrated into my psychic, I was eager to delve deeper into the theoretical basis for their work.

One morning in the early 70's, my friend, Mary Kerr, called and asked if I would like to go the administrative offices of the school system to see a film from England about a woman who had some different ideas about how to work with students in drama.<sup>70</sup> I had been part of a volunteer group for several years that Mary had formed under the auspices of the Junior League to bring creative dramatics into the elementary schools of Forsyth County. Mary had been schooled in creative dramatics at Northwestern University under the tutelage of Winifred Ward who was the national creative dramatics guru. Mary brought Miss Ward's tradition of training students in the dramatic elements and the unscripted techniques of dramatizing stories, poems and original material to Winston-Salem. Our little creative dramatics group had enjoyed some success in the schools. We were popular with principals, teachers and students and we were justifiably proud of some of the programs we had produced. But, our vision was confined in an "art for art's sake" mode coupled with some ideas about individual human

development. Our work was aimed at adding another content area to the elementary curriculum.

That morning at the administrative center spun my world on its axis. The English woman was Dorothy Heathcote and the film concerned some work she had done with some English reform school boys.<sup>71</sup> Mrs. Heathcote began with a series of questions including what the boys would like to make a play about. She posed each question carefully and she explained the range of options associated with each one. As the group made decisions, she meticulously laid out the implications of their choices which led to still other questions. When enough information was established for the drama to begin, Mrs. Heathcote and the boys took up the work together, stopping regularly to reflect on what they were doing and to make decisions about where they wanted to go. At the end of the forty-five minute film, Mrs. Heathcote and the group were deeply involved in exploring every facet of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. It was obvious that the work would be unending as each moment contained the seeds of a vast number of other projects. I didn't know the words, but it was true organic development in the best tradition of John Dewey. When we left the administrative center, I wasn't at all sure of what I had seen and heard, but I knew that I had experienced something different than anything I had imagined anyone would think to do with

drama. Mrs. Heathcote made our efforts look like fun and games. It struck me that in her lexicon no subject is taboo, and I was intrigued with the way she and the students joined together to use body and mind to plumb the depths of whatever was under consideration at any given moment. Mrs. Heathcote's drama was obviously a means to an end rather than an end in itself. I was immediately taken with the implications for education in general and I knew I would never again be satisfied with only teaching drama as a subject.

Within a few weeks we secured the Time-Life film, Three Looms Waiting, that concerned Mrs. Heathcote and her work.<sup>72</sup> Within a couple of months Mary had obtained Mrs. Heathcote's address, written to her and received a commitment from her to come to Winston-Salem for a week in a year and a half. During those eighteen months I read several books on the English drama tradition in schools. The creative dramatics group looked at several other films about Mrs. Heathcote and we read the few articles that had been written about her and her work. By the time she arrived in Winston-Salem we were almost breathless with anticipation. And, we were not disappointed! Watching Mrs. Heathcote work for five days and meeting with her in seminars was more than I had imagined. My life has never been the same. She validated my abiding concerns about education and she pointed my practice toward exploration

of those issues that in Morris Berman's mind are the really important questions "that can never really be known."<sup>73</sup> Since those initial encounters, Mrs. Heathcote has returned to Winston-Salem on several occasions including a five week residency in the summer of 1975. In January of 1977, I stayed with her and her family in Newcastle, England for a week. Every experience has been consciousness raising in ways that profoundly affected my theories as well as my day to day practice of education. In profound ways that I had only a glimmer of understanding, I was launched on the journey to my current time and place where I struggle to understand and make a conceptual framework for the "lively spaces" I seem to be compelled to continue creating.

Dorothy Heathcote is an English educator, dramatist and master teacher who demonstrates how to take Berman-like visions of holism and connection; Freire-like notions of truth, justice, knowledge and authentic dialogue; and make them keystones of an educational program. She does not train actors or produce plays. Her stated goal is to "improve people" by drawing them into a common experience.<sup>74</sup> She does this skillfully by employing the drama in their behalf as a means to focus their energy, to expand their awareness, to examine reality and to see below the surface of events to their meanings and implications.

In the introduction to a collection of Mrs. Heathcote's writings, Liz Johnson and Cecily O'Neill equate Mrs. Heathcote's teaching with intervention and her methods with negotiation.<sup>75</sup> They also outline the range of the responses she receives to her work which conformed to her reception in Winston-Salem. "Her view of herself as an 'intervening' teacher, struggling to set up shared experiences with her pupils through the subtlety, power and challenge of her negotiations can provide adulatory, bewildered and, at times, hostile reaction from onlookers."<sup>76</sup> The point is that in contrast to "academic discourses which" Berman maintains "generally lack the power to shock . . . the power to teach," Dorothy Heathcote's work address "the felt visceral level of our being," which constitutes intervention, infuses the issues with vitality, injects them into consciousness, making negotiation possible.<sup>77</sup> The intense energy thus generated is often frightening to those who have never operated outside the predominating Western paradigm which explains the hostile reactions. Because she is convinced of the importance of her work, but cognizant of the subversive qualities, Mrs. Heathcote is able to keep all reactions to her work in perspective, which allows her to continue to explore more and more forms of intervention and negotiation that she directs toward empowering people in a manner that will humanize the world. Her negotiations are



comparable to Freire's notion of dialogue. They comprise authentic, connecting communication that expands awareness and mind that Mrs. Heathcote maintains "is the center of the educative system."<sup>78</sup> Reminiscent of Freire, she believes "that teaching is an act of benign interference in the lives of children" and that "learning is the product of intervention."<sup>79</sup>

Mrs. Heathcote finds drama a particularly effective means to her ends because "Drama is human beings confronted by situations which change them because of what they must face in dealing with those challenges."<sup>80</sup> Through the physical and emotional involvement of the drama, the "somatic substrate" of the students' beings are touched and integrated with their intellects.<sup>81</sup> Johnson and O'Neill say, "The work operates at the level of subjective meaning, but serves the development of intellect as well as emotion and enables her to raise ordinary experience to significance."<sup>82</sup> The students are thereby provided with experience lived at life's rate and intensity affording them the opportunity to live "in advance of themselves, facing challenges and crises before they encounter them in real life giving them the sense that they are equal to the future."<sup>83</sup> Through pressure to share what they individually know and feel students are removed from the comfort of simple conformance to external standards. Furthermore, they have the opportunity to

reflect on and find language for what they experience, which expands their consciousness and enables them to fare forward. Mrs. Heathcote says, "Experience alone without reflection will not lead to learning."<sup>84</sup> She states further that, "The dropping of the particular into the universal is the digestive process of the arts, which creates the opportunity for reflection which is what education is all about."<sup>85</sup>

Mrs. Heathcote evokes drama through expert questioning techniques that reveal the students' interest and concerns. In addition and once again in accord with Freire, ". . .she recognizes the validity of the knowledge and experience which her pupils already possess." She is dedicated to helping her pupils discover what they already know--to bring this knowledge into consciousness in order to build a path for change."<sup>86</sup> Her immediate goal is to "seek excellence in the quality of the response drawn from the children" through her skillfully plied questions.<sup>87</sup> Through transposing the students' answers into facets of the universal human condition and making them the content of the dramatic experience, she strives to elicit the students' commitment to explore the infinite, ultimate questions that are the text of humankind's timeless search. However, and once again in accord with Berman, Freire and Brecht, she does not believe in ultimate answers. Her truth, like that of the others is that

creating reality is "an historical task," and that the reason for educating people is so that they can critically evaluate what is going on and intervene in reality in order to change it.<sup>88</sup> She states, "Groups must forge their own truths. The teacher must be skilled in helping to reveal the presently emergent truth to the group creating it."<sup>89</sup>

As each experience is complete, Mrs. Heathcote cultivates a new one from the seeds that have been sown in the old, forcing the students to harness and realign the relevant information from their past experience and bring it to bear on the next one. Time and time again students are forced to use what they know as they face new challenges. In this process they reform their thinking, expand their consciousness and enlarge their minds. The expectation is that their beings in the world will undergo continuous improvement by "'being involved in knowing' rather than just knowing by memory alone;" by "taking and testing decisions rather than accepting decisions of others;" by "being research oriented rather than learners about research of others;" by "using their own 'expertise' however limited so that they can test their thinking and then consult others' research to compare their thinking," by behaving "with the responsibility of experts rather than hearing about experts;" by reaching "answers because of the work they do rather than the listening they have

done;" and by engaging in "real problem solving rather than theory problem solving."<sup>90</sup>

Mrs. Heathcote's concern is always with humanistically expanding and enriching the consciousness and inclinations of her students. She captures this concern rather than concern for the art form by saying, "I don't give a damn for the drama."<sup>91</sup> But, she "is always looking for the precise dramatic pressure that will lead to a breakthrough, to a point where the students have come at a problem in a new way, to fight for language adequate to the tension they feel . . . . She burnishes children through the play."<sup>92</sup>

Many people have tried to use words to capture Mrs. Heathcote's work. Because its rich, deep, broad and complex qualities almost defy description, few attempts have been more than moderately successful. However, Gavin Bolton, her friend and colleague, has identified at least four distinctive characteristics. They are:

- "She brought to her drama teaching . . . a high degree of respect for knowledge . . . . Dorothy Heathcote brought back drama to the track of pursuing knowledge," which stands in contrast to the craft, play and life skills approaches.<sup>93</sup>
- "Dorothy intuitively knew that the very essence of drama is its commonality . . . . drama is a means of uniting . . . differences in communal expression," in contrast to the notion that all of the arts are about individuality.<sup>94</sup>

- ". . . her risk-taking methodology with its special use of the teacher-in-role is the technique for which she is most well known . . . . The idea of a teacher actually joining in was more than my traditional teacher training and attitude to professionalism could stomach," and stands out against the usual notion of the teacher as giver of information and the student as the receiver.<sup>95</sup>
- "Dorothy Heathcote has challenged what a teacher is . . . . She demands that teachers are bigger than any system," in contrast to the prevailing model that casts the system as all-powerful and all-knowing.<sup>96</sup>

While Mrs. Heathcote acknowledges that sometimes it is important to cover material, her work is always about quality rather than quantity and about drama as entry into the ultimate concerns of life. Within those confines she makes the following impressive "guarantees."<sup>97</sup> Mrs. Heathcote "agrees" that through drama she will:

- Give children an opportunity to examine their own living problems with a new perspective.
- Tell the children the truth to the greatest extent possible.
- Show it is important to listen.
- Accept, support, and then challenge decisions the class makes.
- Show any student the direction in which he or she is going.
- Make an abstract concept or experience very concrete, simplifying it so the students can understand and have control over it.
- Teach a narrow fact so that it is really learned and understood.

- Introduce artifacts in such a way that the class is curious about them and experiences them at a significant level.
- Press students to reflect on experience and see what they hold in common with all people.
- Crack the code to curriculum areas students might fear to venture into, such as science, math, history, literature, anthropology.
- Give students freedom coupled with responsibility.
- Clarify values.
- Develop a tolerance for a variety of personalities and ideas.
- Show students how they can stay with something they don't like and work through it to a point of accomplishment.
- Increase students' vocabulary and help them develop a finer control of rhetoric through interaction with others and through tapping subjective experience.
- Bring classes into situations that will improve their social health.
- Help students discover that they know more than they thought they knew.
- Lead students to see the real world more clearly in light of what is revealed by the imagined one.
- Help students capture more and more of what is implicit in any experience.<sup>98</sup>

Like Freire, Heathcote never imposes her opinions, knowledge or expertise on her students. Through authentic dialogue they are continuously thrown back on their own resources within the context of individual and collective

responsibility. They, thereby, learn who they are and gain confidence in what they might become. The following quote from Betty Jane Wagner points up the correspondences between Mrs. Heathcote's and Freire's notions of work and the similarities between Mrs. Heathcote's and Berman's holistic visions of what the world must become:

Hannah Arendt points out, this assumption (that the production and consumption of ever more trivial goods and services is what gives life meaning) reduces all work to relentlessly repetitive labor in which human effort, past and present, is debased. Heathcote, by picking up in her imagination the past that lies all about us, by showing the continuity of human experience, and by valuing man's work and its products, brings us the joy of a sense of being part of a vast, complex, and ultimately meaningful whole. To use Linda Pastan's phrase, she brings us 'the sheer sanity of vision.'<sup>99</sup>

Ms. Wagner describes Mrs. Heathcote and her method of teaching through drama as mediums. Wagner means that all of human history and the human condition are brought into the present through Heathcote's work. She translates and interprets them so that they have meaning for her students. Hence, through those students, they pass into the future. Always loath to categorizing and codifying, Mrs. Heathcote says of her work, "I don't have a name for what I do. As a person it seems to me I simply stand midway between all that has happened before I arrived and what is now. What I do at this moment obviously shapes up some part of what is to come. Everything that has

happened before me I have something in common with and this is my secret for finding material for drama."<sup>100</sup> In contrast to Wagner's medium metaphor for Mrs. Heathcote's work, Johnson and O'Neill find a midwife metaphor more apt. "Her approach has all the appearance and characteristics of a midwife . . . the patient--teacher, student or child--struggles to produce the child--creative knowing."<sup>101</sup> My own metaphor is that her work is like a prism. The light from all of history and from her students passes through her and radiates out in a vast array of beautiful shapes and colors that includes her students in its arc in a continuing, unending, hermeneutic circle.

If teachers were trained in Mrs. Heathcote's methods, a real revolution would ensue. Education would be about real problems in the real world. It would focus on feelings and emotion as well as intellect in the manner that Berman says is essential to the continuation of the human race. The unanswerable concerns of the human condition would be at the core. All fixity and certitude would vanish. Standards and accountability measures would cease. Carnegie units and textbooks would become relics and the objects of derision. Subjects would be changed and blended in the true pursuit of knowledge. Teachers would be in charge of their own curricula. Students might actually become literate, eager, lifelong learners in the



interest of humanizing and bringing justice into the world.

### Brecht

Bertholt Brecht provided me with a second example of someone whose theories stand in some relationship to Berman and Freire and who, like Mrs. Heathcote, successfully developed a practice based on them. I first became interested in Brecht when Mrs. Heathcote often referred to him as someone whose work also centered on using drama to teach. She also made the interesting point that she was not aware of the correspondences between her work and Brecht until her friend and colleague, Oliver Fiala, who taught drama at the University of New South Wales in Australia, pointed them out to her.<sup>102</sup> While I had probably read a Brecht play or two in college and I had seen productions of his collaborative work with Weill, I had no sense of what I was reading or seeing until Mrs. Heathcote provided the clue that Brecht, in a fashion similar to her own, was about changing consciousness. In 1975, armed with my new awareness, I was eager to see a production of The Caucasian Chalk Circle at the North Carolina School of the Arts.<sup>103</sup> It turned out to be an overproduced, fairy tale kind of rendition, and I instinctively knew this was not the Brecht that had interested Mrs. Heathcote. Unfortunately, I have

concluded from seeing other productions in various locations throughout the United States that reduction of issues that Brecht explicitly presents in his work through the means of production is standard treatment of his work in the American theatre. In the dark, cold of January, 1978, however, I was in fog, pollution shrouded East Berlin at a time when The Chalk Circle was in production at the Berliner Ensemble.<sup>104</sup> Out of the thick, coal-tar infested smog of the city, Brecht emerged crystal clear. Seeing the play in Brecht's own theatre, produced in a manner that was in some way imitative of his style, was a crude, brutal, provocative and overwhelming experience. I realized that not only did Brecht want to change consciousness, he had set out to change the world!

Berman states that our ultimate goal is to "transform the world into an art form," where human personality and life are integrated into a higher, more discriminating consciousness.<sup>105</sup> Freire uses poetic language and metaphor to describe proper work that essentially conforms to the characteristics of Berman's sense of art. To be acceptable to Freire, the somatic experience of work must possess integrative, creative, transformational characteristics and be designed to develop critically conscious, socially aware people. Mrs. Heathcote applies her theories that are in significant relationship to those of Berman and Freire through using

drama to focus attention and energy so that people become more critically aware and become more responsible for their actions. Brecht was theoretically in accord with Berman, Freire and Heathcote. He utilized drama to instruct the world in a manner resonate with Mrs. Heathcote's use of drama to teach, and he was as consumed with political activism as Freire. His hope was that he could develop a new form of drama that would change the world's consciousness, and that he could develop critical awareness in people toward the end of creating a more humane and just society. He designed that drama to force both actors and audience to consciousness and social awareness through reflective consideration and subsequent action on the circumstances presented in his plays. Though preceding them by a considerable number of years and perhaps demonstrating Leonard Shlain's tenet that "Revolutionary art in all times has served this function of preparing the future," Brecht's work successfully captures, amalgamates and commingles the principles of Berman and Freire, Freire's concept of praxis, and Heathcote's notions of teaching through drama.<sup>106</sup>

Brecht was born in the area of Europe that had been the site of world shaping struggles including the Reformation and the bloody Peasants' War that followed. He was well aware of the sentimentality and explosiveness, as well as the tendency to consider self with extreme

gravity and a mystical belief in a life force that hovered below the surface of well-ordered, regimented, pre-World War I, militaristic, industrial Germany. Brecht grew up knowing that, "The German soul has passages and galleries in it; there are caves, hiding places and dungeons in it; its disorder has much of the charm of the mysterious, the German is well acquainted with the by-paths of chaos."<sup>107</sup>

The collapse of the German state following The Great War demonstrated the shortcomings of a society rigidly devoted to reason, efficiency and technology and that had reduced value to function and depersonalized the working class. The implosion of the culture loosed unmitigated emotionalism, irrationality and subjectivity which paved the way for the rise of Hitler and the "emotional rape," described by Berman.<sup>108</sup> Brecht developed a new drama that made his reputation as a response to the wave of irrationality that swept the country into the Third Reich and the Second World War. His first attack was on the German Expressionists whom he regarded as manifestations of the lack of reflection and reason in the society as a whole. For the most part, the Expressionists were poets "who turned to the theatre as the most convenient means for dissemination of their ideas," through lyrical language that struck responsive feelings in audiences and that took precedence over plot and character.<sup>109</sup> Their work has been described as "the

ecstatic theatre" and as "drama of the soul," as well as "the most completely self-centered art form ever evolved."<sup>110</sup> The notion was that the only reality that has meaning emerges from within individuals. All Expressionists attempted to impose their deepest beings on the outside world. The defining characteristics of the movement were intense subjectivism, an atmosphere of violence, and an all encompassing excoriation of the family and society which they perceived as preventing the development of individuality. The resulting plays were largely displays "of emotion rather than vehicles of meaning."<sup>111</sup> John Gassner and Edward Quinn say, "The expressionist does not make a statement, he lets loose what we have come to recognize as the expressionist schrei (scream)."<sup>112</sup>

Brecht criticized the Expressionist works as having "no relation to the living of life," and as "incapable of shedding light on the world as an object of human activity."<sup>113</sup> His response was to create plays with socially conscious themes so that the "spectator can understand the social environment and both rationally and emotionally master it."<sup>114</sup> In his quest for means to bring all humanity to emotional and intellectual maturity, he developed the didactic techniques aimed at causing an audience to form opinions and to act upon them that became his hallmark. "Why shouldn't art try, by its own means of

course, to further the great social task of mastering life"?<sup>115</sup> Before the end of his career, he gathered his theories on the instructive function of theatre into a form that he named Epic Realism.

Brecht hoped to wake people up so that they could act on the forces that were shaping their lives. Like Samuel Johnson, he believed that "It is always the writer's duty to make the world better."<sup>116</sup>

For him the stage is concerned with what men do to men and nothing else. And, unlike Jesus Christ, he believed that they do know what they do. They have chosen to do what they have done--and could choose otherwise . . . . It is likely that, to Brecht, the most important statement in all history was this: "The philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point, however, is to change it."<sup>117</sup>

Recognizing, however, that human beings are emotional as well as rational, Brecht attempted to tap the wellspring of people's emotional natures also and place it equally in the service of humankind.

There can be no greater error than to imagine that the purpose of Brecht is to exclude emotion. He sweeps aside facile tears because his concern is with deep passion, and he shares with religious thinkers the assumption that deep passion is seldom neutral but tends to be tied to convictions, to belong, as it were, either to God or the devil. The Brechtian drama taps those deeper springs of feeling, that, like the sentiment of faith as described by St. Paul (an allusion found in Mother Courage, scene 4), can move mountains.<sup>118</sup>

He combined his understanding of the duality of human nature into a "dialectics of living," which included positive and negative emotion as well as reason.<sup>119</sup> Brecht defined positive emotion as "the joy and planning of builders," and negative emotion as "whatever impedes the planning and building, anger at what opposes or wrecks it."<sup>120</sup> To Brecht's mind, the trick was to make people cognizant of the sources of their joy and anger so that it would be possible to sustain and expand or actively oppose them.

Brecht thought of his plays as self-contained episodes, knotted together with distancing devices aimed at giving the spectators the opportunity to reflect and the capacity for acting upon the conditions of society and the circumstances of their lives. To approach problems and demonstrate them in all of their combinations and diversity, these episodes take any conceivable form and employ every conceivable device as long as the unity of thought is maintained. He named his chief technique for creating distance and inserting reason into unbridled emotionalism, as alienation. Its purpose was to demonstrate art's ability and responsibility to teach through instilling a critical attitude in both actors and spectators. Brecht's goal was to give what was natural the force of the startling, making actors and audience capable of coming to grips with things and making

critical, rational comment. He depicted the situation as follows:

New alienations are only designed to free socially conditioned phenomena from that stamp of familiarity which protects them against our grasp . . . I'm not writing for the scum who want the cockles of their heart warmed . . . . In my plays I don't just give my private mood, but also the whole world's. In other words an objective view of the business, the opposite of mood in the usual poetic sense.<sup>121</sup>

Brecht utilized actors and theatrical elements as alienation devices. The goal of Epic actors, for instance, was to demonstrate roles rather than to transform themselves into characters. True Epic realism (as opposed to what generally passes for it in the United States) requires actors who are worldly wise, have a keen eye for what is socially important, who understand the alienation principle and who are able to develop the distance between the audience and the play. In contrast to dramatic actors who give creative performances and go "into a trance and take the audience with them," epic actors are constantly aware of their responsibility for "conducting a case . . . of selling an elephant."<sup>122</sup> In contrast to the dramatic actor who gradually reveals the facets of unchangeable character, the epic actor presents how characters grow and change. In order to give the necessary strangeness to everyday situations and events, epic actors memorize and preserve their first impressions



of what astonishes them and of what they didn't do so that they and the audience are always aware of alternatives. Recognizing the need for the creative process in actors, however, Brecht's goal was to raise creative impulses to what he called the higher or conscious level so that "nobody gets raped . . . ." <sup>123</sup>

Because Brecht also employed lighting to create distance, he only used white light. Lighting instruments were always in full view and they were never gelled. Brecht also rejected the notion of costumes, establishing the concept in his plays of clothes that had been worn before. In addition, sets and props were used to undercut mood rather than as mood enhancers. He also often incorporated music that was in contrast to the moment as an additional distancing measure. The entire intent was that the world be "'made alien' in order that it may be 'made known.'" <sup>124</sup>

As part of his plan to move spectators to political action, Brecht formalized the role of the audience into a theatrical dimension that he termed productive participation. Through this device, Brecht attempted to fulfill what he considered to be the playwright's duty and obligation which he believed was to appeal to spectators' reason so that they would understand that what was seen inside the theatre should be applied in society at large. Through the participative process and by incorporating

reason into the artistic experience, Brecht hoped to create a new kind of spectator for whom "The theatre became an affair for philosophers, but only for such philosophers as wished not just to explain the world but also to change it."<sup>125</sup>

To further emphasize the social construction of reality Brecht developed the concept of historicification. His notion was that if audience members understood how much things had already changed, they would perceive that current conditions could also be altered. They would see their roles. And, they would become actively involved in shaping the future.

In the 1930's, Brecht drew up the following chart of contrasts between Epic Realism and dramatic theatre:

Dramatic Theatre	Epic Theatre
Plot	Narrative
Implicates the Spectator	Turns the spectator into an observer
Wears down capacity for action	Arouses capacity for action
Provides sensation	Forces spectator to take decisions
Experience	Picture of the world
Spectator is involved in something	Spectator is made to face something
Suggestion	Argument
Instinctive feelings are preserved	Brought to the point of recognition
Spectator is in the thick of it	Spectator stands outside, studies
Human being is taken for granted	Human being is the object of inquiry
Human is unalterable	Human is alterable and able to alter
Eyes on the finish	Eyes on the course

One scene makes another  
 Growth  
 Linear Development  
 Evolutional determinism  
 Man as a fixed point  
 Thought determines being  
 Feeling

Each scene for itself  
 Montage  
 In curves  
 Jumps  
 Man as a process  
 Social being determines  
 thought  
 Reason<sup>126</sup>

Brecht was devoted to Marxism because he believed it contained the possibility of reconciliation of the duality of man's intuitive and rational nature. In Berman's terms, he saw it as a means to "stuff the gap."<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, like Freire, he considered that relationships among people were his primary subject, and he devoted his life and career to investigating, expressing, and influencing them. In the nature of the collective, he saw the possibility for people to assume value for their humanness as opposed to their function and to relate to each other in meaningful human ways. In his plays, he set out to create new representations of people's lives together which he felt the modern age demanded. Fully aware of the pleasure principle, Brecht expected that the ensuing moral lessons would become enjoyable through the presentation of his plays.

It is essential to understand and interpret Brecht in terms of his irrepressible idealism and his goal to improve the world. The basis for his hope on which he founded Epic Realism was the social construction of reality, the alterability of people and their ability to

bring about change. Epic Realism can be characterized by its didactic style, its underlying unity of thought, its pattern of changeover from representation to commentary and its unrelenting toughness that was designed to move people to political action. By making people look at life as it is while constantly holding out the possibility for betterment, Brecht hoped to give the world the chance to prevent the repetition of past evils and to correct those of the present. He saw the theatre as a kind of collective in which a work of art should appear as a bundle of differentiated elements within unity of thought. He was a forerunner in his recognition of theatre's ability, like that of all of the arts, to entertain and to teach at the same time. His personal contribution to improving the quality of human life on the planet was Epic Realism which stands as a model for the practical application of Berman's notions of the necessity for human beings to integrate and connect and of Freire's principle of praxis translated explicitly into artistic form and of Mrs. Heathcote's idea that through using drama to tap into the visceral level of human existence, it is possible to intervene in people's consciousness and bring them to new awareness.

Rollins

My husband says that I am full of insecurities, but I like to think I am full of questions. Somewhere in this journey, two more things began to niggle me. First of all, it occurred to me that Brecht is dead; Freire and Heathcote are around seventy; and Berman has been a successful writer for awhile so he is probably a bit long in the tooth also. As I pondered the progress of these people toward a moribund state, I began to wonder if their concerns about humanizing education and directing it toward the ultimate, unanswerable questions could be a generational phenomenon or if there are people out there to carry on the tradition. Secondly, it struck me that both Brecht and Heathcote are dramatists and I began to wonder if other art forms can initiate and sustain intense exploration of social, political and philosophical issues at a comparable level. In the spring of 1994, these two questions were answered.

In the fall of 1993, Terri Dowell-Dennis, the Curator of Education and Performance at the Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), called and asked if the school system would be interested in participating in their "Artists in the Community" series.<sup>128</sup> SECCA agreed to finance the project if we would make it possible for some of our least advantaged, artistically interested students to work with Tim Rollins, a New York artist in

his thirties, to create a major painting based on Stephen Crane's novel, A Red Badge of Courage.<sup>129</sup> While I had never heard of Rollins, I have never been disappointed in a project that I had worked on with SECCA, and giving kids who have gotten a bad shake the opportunity to work with a professional artist is exactly my kind of "lively space." It was reminiscent of the dance project with Mel Tomlinson several years before, and the suggested material also had possibilities for kids who are having trouble taking hold of life in an sensible and meaningful way. I immediately knew where to place the project because our most difficult middle and high school students are concentrated at Petree Middle and Independence High School. Their infractions range from truancy and pregnancy to felonies and few people think anything can be done to help them or change their behavior. Even the art instructor who is a gifted teacher, and who loves her Petree students many of whom have won top awards under her tutelage, likes to quip, "You've heard of EMH, TMH, BEH, and EH? Well all of my students are BAH--Bad As Hell."<sup>130</sup> Fortunately for the students, there are other supportive teachers in addition to the art teachers at both schools and an important part of the project was the staff development component as well as the parent meetings that Rollins provides toward the end of getting the teachers and parents to become his "allies on the battlefield."<sup>131</sup> I knew I would have the

support of the teachers who still see possibilities for the Petree and Independence kids and because these students have basically been thrown away, I knew that there would be few objections from traditional gatekeepers to taking a group of twenty out of academic classes for about two weeks. Each of the art teachers agreed to recommend students who could sustain the project and to assemble a portfolio for each of them.

Our first introduction to Tim was the day he flew in to look at the students' work. My first impression was of a tough, cocky, rooster-like little fellow. He jumped into the portfolio review with interest and enthusiasm, virtually reading "the students by looking at their art work."<sup>132</sup> To some extent he was looking for talent. More importantly, he was interested in students who were at a point in their lives to be able to grasp the significance of Henry Fleming's wound in his passage to adulthood and who would profit from the experience of transforming their individual understandings into a collaborative work of art. After I watched how sensitively he handled and viewed the students' work and as I listened to the power of his comments, I became convinced that visual art has the same power to transform as drama and, that I had met a member of the next generation of educators with concerns similar to Berman, Freire, Brecht, Heathcote and my own. That day I left SECCA exhilarated.

As I got to know Tim better I learned that Paulo Freire is a chief source of inspiration for the Maine native. He began his career teaching art in a South Bronx intermediate school to learning-disabled and emotionally handicapped adolescents. For six years he and the students painted collaboratively, using themes from the books they had read together--"literature previously considered too difficult or sophisticated for such seemingly impoverished students."<sup>133</sup> Rollins's entire notion of art that is created as a collaboration between him and his students inspired by works of classical literature grew from this humble beginning. The beautiful, powerful paintings are the result of Rollins dynamic relationship with his students that grows out of the texts they study and the art they make together that he hit on at the outset of his career and that is the basis for his international reputation.

As soon as he could survive financially, Tim resigned his teaching job to devote his full energy to "Kids of Survival" (K.O.S.), a project he founded in 1982 from a core of his intermediate school students. Sharing the sentiments of Berman, Freire, Brecht and Heathcote, Rollins explains his motivation as: "I was angry at how the institutions of education provided educational services to the community, but so many talented kids' abilities were being unrecognized, undeveloped and



ultimately wasted."<sup>134</sup> Utilizing the time honored apprenticeship model, Rollins "create(s) a structure in which there is no failure; where all can participate fully and freely in a model for a democratic ideal."<sup>135</sup> His method embodies "a democratic collaboration that combines art and education" in such a way that they inform each other and so that each individual can contribute to a group effort to advance themselves and the group artistically, creatively and in knowledge and wisdom.<sup>136</sup> By making his students thoroughly familiar with the text; by requiring them to memorize and recite passages; by posing questions like, "What does a wound mean?"; through discussion and dialogue among all participants reminiscent of Freire; by combining thought and action to create and recreate images that merge, separate and reemerge; by demanding the very best the students have within them; and by exercising extreme patience, eventually universal themes come forth. Rollins' explanation is "We reinterpret it and, in a way we rewrite it through a language we have control of--images."<sup>137</sup> "Rollins compares his workshop to a gospel choir or orchestra with Rollins in the role of maestro."<sup>138</sup> But,

nothing worked right away. We painted our first wounds on small sheets of vellum, cut them out and collaged them to the grid of book pages . . . . we immediately reverted to what we were all too familiar with--the knife and gunshot grotesqueries that we knew from the streets, bad action movies,

and the evening news. Invariably rendered in dripping reds, pinks, blues, blacks, and browns, our crude picture were caricatures of wounds.

Soon, though, the forms changed. What were once wounds became surprising little circles resembling strange precious stones, planets, stars and suns . . . They were no longer wounds, but newborn bodies floating across the heavens of the text. The journey from gunshot to cosmos was exhilarating.<sup>139</sup>

Describing the finished painting, the SECCA curator of the Rollins show said, "The pulsating forms play off one another, creating an actual, all over composition measuring 7 1/2 feet by 9 1/2 feet that shows unity in multiplicity."<sup>140</sup>

In the model of Freire and Heathcote, Rollins is dedicated to intervening in consciousness to expand people's critical awareness and, like Freire, Heathcote and Brecht, he is intent on giving them the sense it is within their power to change their reality. As an observer of the entire SECCA project said, "In the process, they not only produced painting, but they also forged new attitudes and expectations."<sup>141</sup> A chronicler of the work said: "Tim Rollins is a student of life and human nature and a teacher/mentor to an increasing number of young people across the country and around the world."<sup>142</sup> Rollins characterizes each of his student's situation as a "civil war raging within every individual who chooses to fight life as it is."<sup>143</sup> Speaking of his

method in his own words Tim says, ". . . I am quite direct and honest and frank, but it's done out of a genuine concern for the development of the students . . . ."144

Rollins' reliance on art as the means for reaching his goals stems from his belief that art destroys the artificial separations imposed by our culture that Berman describes, thereby enabling human beings to become whole. Maintaining that art requires all of the creative intelligence and problem solving skills that are demanded by the modern world, he says art "is intelligence in action," because "artists have to know everything" which makes art a "teaching machine."<sup>145</sup> Furthermore, echoing Freire and Heathcote, Rollins believes in and honors the talent and knowledge that every person possesses averring that art opens the door on the power that his students already have. Like Heathcote, Rollins establishes a rigorous discipline that he believes is essential in the release of his students' innate knowledge and power and that enables him to incorporate academics into the art field. His aim is to force examination of the entire spectrum of knowledge. He says, "Making art is the curriculum. It is glorious."<sup>146</sup> At the same time, he, like Freire, knows that he is in dangerous territory. Speaking of the risks he incurs, Rollins says: "Art's probing, questioning, qualitative character, threatens the consumer culture."<sup>147</sup>

Rollins' methods are undeniably effective. Many of the paintings created in the K.O.S. studio now hang in major museums throughout the world. The number of young people from K.O.S. who have escaped their circumstances and gone on to college and successful careers is impressive. But success notwithstanding, the realities of his students' lives are with Rollins everyday. Many of his students fall back into the drug culture. One was assassinated in a gang killing in 1994. Of those who do make their way through the jungle of the South Bronx Rollins says, ". . . survivors on the battlefield of life, they now lay claim to art as a signifier of the future."<sup>148</sup>

At some variance with Mrs. Heathcote who states repeatedly that her only concern is using drama to focus people's energy so that they become more critically aware, and Paulo Freire, whose only interest in art would be for reasons similar to Mrs. Heathcote, but most likely in accord with Berman and Brecht, Rollins also testifies to the importance of art for its own sake. He says:

But the glory of art is that, in the end, it always speaks for itself. Instead of wounds, this new Red Badge painting uses the imagery of badge, medals, signs of honor and mandalas, like circular flags representing nations of the heart. These ideograms coexist on the surface of the painting with an order, grace and music experienced only in the utopia of art.<sup>149</sup>

Believing with Aristophanes that poets (artists) can save society, Rollins says: "If we don't sing, we die. Art is a matter of life and death for our own humanity. It is between imagination and prayer. Art is hope made material. It is the noble, glorious, pathetic imitation of the energy of God."<sup>150</sup>

#### Conclusion: The Crystal

Here I am trying to figure out what the five people before me have in common; why their theories and work resonate in me; and what their relationship is to the "lively spaces" that are the driving force of my personal and professional life. On the surface, they are a disparate group. Four are alive and one is dead. Four are men and one is a woman. One is a writer. One is a political activist. One is a dramatist. Two are teachers, each with an excellent command of a different art form. Berman presents an all encompassing theory and traces it historically from Plato to the present. Freire talks about educating people to wage a battle against the establishment. Mrs. Heathcote is concerned with drama as a means of enabling people to become critically aware and to act in terms of their awareness. Brecht, like Freire, is interested in transformation of the world; and like Mrs. Heathcote, he uses drama as a means of fostering the changes he believes are in the best interest of humanity.

Unlike Freire, however, Brecht thinks he knows what is best for humankind and what the final story should be. Freire believes that history is an ever evolving creation of the participants. Rollins is interested in making good art and in improving people's lot in life. Berman does not take a political stand. Freire is a revolutionary. Brecht is a Marxist who supported the East German government in 1953 when the workers rose in revolt against it and who retained his Austrian passport in case he should ever feel compelled to leave the country. Mrs. Heathcote strikes me as a social democrat who probably votes labor although I have heard her speak out against trade unionism. Rollins presents himself like a Democrat with clear anti-establishment leanings. The five even come from quite different areas of the world. Two are American. One is English. One is German and one is Brazilian. The answers to the nature of their connections to each other will not come easily. A cursory examination will not yield the mysteries. Because my body and my mind tell me they are there, however, it is incumbent on me to bring them forth into my consciousness.

The first important characteristic that I am able to identify is that all five have either an explicit or implicit belief in the unifying, enlivening force of physical experience which probably goes a long way to explain why they and I and my "lively spaces" are either

misinterpreted or ostracized from the mainstream. That position stands in stark contrast to the controlling idea of Western culture that extols the superiority of mind, its disconnection from body, and that has resulted in "the subordination of interior life to the mechanisms of nature," and a guiding ideology that is exceedingly formalistic.<sup>151</sup> All of the five believe as I do that the senses, the emotions and the physical act of doing are central in coming to know. In a word, all five believe in the body.

Berman believes that somatic experience is at the core of apprehending, comprehending, interpreting, and, therefore, of acting upon the world. Furthermore, he predicts disaster unless a shift in Western consciousness from a mind-centered to a body-centered focus occurs quickly. While Freire is much less explicit about the importance of the sensual and emotional components of coming to know, it is implicit in all that he writes and does. He is adamant about the importance of emotionally and sensually as well as intellectually satisfying work. He states unequivocally that words must be grounded in lived physical experience to have meaning, and that thought is meaningless without physical action.

The artistic activity that is at the core of Mrs. Heathcote's, Brecht's, and Rollins's work is bound up with the motivating and fueling functions of emotion and the

senses. In fact, Brecht began work on his plays and poems by gathering his favorite artists in movement experiences, to which they added sound as it seemed appropriate that gradually evolved into intelligible language. In fact, it occurs to me that Mrs. Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins exemplify one of my pet notions. From the first moment I became thoughtful about making and participating in art, it struck me that art does not grow out of thought. Thought, in art making, is secondary. It is the physical experience which leads to a particular perception of the world. While it is required to clarify the information that is provided by the emotions and the senses, thought disconnected from somatic experience is insufficient to the challenges of art making because art making requires initial and sustained sensual and emotional infusions to stoke the fires of the creative process. Furthermore, it seems to me that Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins would agree with Berman that "the world must be transformed into an art form" where an understanding of the centrality of somatic experience is clear.<sup>152</sup>

A second characteristic that I have put my finger on that all five of my people hold in common is a belief that a reflexive relationship between thinking and doing is essential. Freire describes the hermeneutic connection very well when he characterizes thinking without doing as "chatter" and doing without thinking as "activism,"



indicating that each must be in a unending, informative marriage with the other.<sup>153</sup> Brecht was in total revolt against thoughtless emotionalism, and at the same time, he recognized the duality of human nature and that the source of the creative process is in the emotions and senses. Mrs. Heathcote speaks repeatedly about the organic relationship between thought and action in that one feeds, grows out of and informs the other. She also talks of the need to develop language for experience so that it can be easily recalled and reused. Rollins fervently believes that the unending, thought-provoking questions he poses deepens and enriches his students' art as surely as the work they are creating helps them to clarify their thinking. In spite of a difference in emphasis, I suspect that Berman would agree with the others. He is, however, much more concerned with the education and refinement of the senses and the emotions because he believes they are currently so underdeveloped as to be out of the reach of clarifying thought.

A third feature that pervades the work of the five is the importance of ever-expanding, reflective, critical consciousness. Each of them speaks explicitly about the importance of developing a reflective, critical capacity that is applied equally to related thought and action. Berman believes that if education of the emotions and senses is incorporated into the culture and if critical

appreciation and evaluation is individually and collectively applied, future atrocities akin to those of Nazi Germany can be avoided. The heart of Freire's plan for transforming the world is individual and collective, critical, reflective consciousness. While Mrs. Heathcote's primary interest is in changing the world by intervening in the consciousness of individual people through collective experience, her position that critical reflection on thought and action in informative relationship is the true point of education is almost identical to Freire's. Brecht's mature work was about making people aware and reflective so that they are ready to act upon the personal and social circumstances of their lives. Not only did he recognize that critical consciousness was almost totally absent among the 'volk' in Nazi Germany, but he also was aware of the irony that it was essential to develop analytic abilities in a culture to preserve its humanity in the post World War II, science-dominated world. Like Freire and Mrs. Heathcote, Rollins wants to help people expand their critical faculties. Like Freire, who is one of his idols, he spends untold hours in dialogue with his students as a means of bringing them to conscious awareness of the characteristics of the culture that surrounds them.

The importance of critical awareness is closely tied to the concept of the social construction of reality.

My five have provided me with some hope by pointing out that it is important to realize how much things have changed since the beginning of time. It, therefore, becomes easier to believe that it is possible to move things off dead center. Berman and Freire hold, and Berman documents it very well, that truth is created by people in relation to each other in a certain time and place and that truth can change radically and quickly due to the changes in the consciousness of any group. Mrs. Heathcote avers also that truth is constructed by the group creating it, but her conception of change is somewhat evolutionary compared to Freire's more revolutionary approach. Brecht, while revolutionary, appears to have a preconception that truth in a transformed world would come in a Marxist package. Freire is also a serious advocate of Marxism, but he would object to any preconceived notion as another imposition rather than a creation of the group who will live within its confines. In a sense, Brecht adheres to a notion of a priori truth and Mrs. Heathcote and Freire are more closely aligned with an a posteriori view. Rollins holds that his collective works of art are, indeed, social representations of reality and that students, through creating them, become critically aware of the world and the possibilities for changing it.

I have repeatedly recounted my railings in this paper against the fragmentation of our culture and specifically as it is reflected in our schools. Curriculum is cemented in specific disconnected subject. Subjects are segmented into discrete facts and skills. The search is continuously on to disaggregate things to the 'nth' degree in the belief that the entire world, including education, can be stabilized, controlled and managed by identifying the smallest components. It is one more manifestation of an ideology with a machine-like conceptualization of the world that holds to the two-fold truth that reality can be known through objectification and quantification and that truth is really out there somewhere if only we can capture it. Because certainty continues to escape us we become more and more insecure which leads to greater and greater tension and an almost frantic compulsion to develop rules that will fix things. For instance, reading has been reduced to a group of technical skills that are designed, and I might add, quite unsuccessfully, for associating words with their symbolizations. Meaning is usually secondary and incidental to recognizing and pronouncing the words. I became fully aware of this deplorable situation when I asked a first grade class if they had any thoughts about why we use the same word for a play and when we are playing after school.<sup>154</sup> The response to my poorly posed

question was that they are different because you add an "ing" to one. Furthermore, our formalizations and standardizations deny all individuality and quickly lead to categorizations if differences are acute or persist. I remember an example from a class of nine and ten year olds who were classified as Educable Mentally Handicapped.<sup>155</sup> The perceptive responses of an attractive little boy named Jerry made me wonder about his placement in the class. He appeared to be very bright, but his spoken English was dramatically substandard. Our drama necessitated that we write a letter for some reason or another. Jerry asked me how to spell with and I stupidly suggested that he sound it out. He wrote "wif." To compensate for the Jerrys, we create more and more categories, more and more formulas and more and more separations and we become increasingly frustrated.

Integrated holism is a quality that I strive for in my life and in the "lively spaces" I create for students. It is a fourth common characteristic of the theories and practices of Berman, Freire, Heathcote Brecht and Rollins. Berman, Freire and Rollins all explicitly deplore the disconnections, the specializations and the rigid categories that permeate Western culture, and Berman maintains that the separations are the source of our endless search for meaning. Brecht is often misunderstood on this point, because of the episodic structure of his

work and because he appears to flaunt rather than camouflage the means of production. But, like Berman, he believes deeply in the need for a unified and integrated approach. His writings emphasize diversity within unity of thought and thoughtful, reflective analysis of his work will reveal that his play structure and treatment of theatrical elements demonstrates the concept. Everything is a demonstration of the central idea and it is impossible to fathom Brecht's work unless the underlying thought is ferreted out. For instance, projection of clips from Keystone Kops films as a counterpoint to the action in a production of The Rise and Fall of the City Mahagonny demonstrated the idea that current methods of controlling crime and of administering justice are a sham in the face of organized corruption that extends to the heart of the power structure of the culture.<sup>156</sup> While Mrs. Heathcote is interested in helping students "crack the codes" of the seemingly disconnected categories of the canon, she is devoted, like Brecht, to the notion that it is the underlying thought and the connections among things that are important.<sup>157</sup>

Another characteristic that my folks share is that they have enormous faith in people. Each of the five believe that all people have the capacity to perceive the world; to make sense of what they experience in it; to develop critical evolving consciousness through continuous

reflection; and consequently, to develop a moral vision that will guide their actions. Berman describes his new concept of the world that is full of critically conscious, moral people in terms of horizontal connections in contrast to our over-arching principle that he terms "ascent theory."<sup>158</sup> He convincingly documents the enormous extent to which our culture is inculcated with hierarchical perceptions of reality. To his mind, the linchpin is our belief in an all-knowing God that is separate from and above us which is the organizational model that is emulated in our ubiquitous top-down management style. Within Berman's conceptualization all people will be respected for their abilities that have been fully developed through rich somatic experiences in conjunction with outstanding critical, cognitive opportunities. The energy that is generated will be directed toward an evolving vision that is focused on increasing the wisdom in the world. The title of Freire's book, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, indicates his faith that all people can learn to think critically and, on the basis of their conclusions, to act responsibly in the world.<sup>159</sup> The key is his belief that all people have innate knowledge that they acquire from their cultural context through lived experience. Furthermore, he believes that everyone can acquire additional knowledge by means of authentic dialogue that enables them to become critically

aware and to name circumstances and things. Connection, respect, and authentic communication among people form the basis for his instructional methods. Freire's life and work are testimony to his devotion to the possibility of fully developing everyone's humanity. Mrs. Heathcote's work exemplifies her faith in the ability of people to become increasingly aware, critically conscious, moral, and meaningfully connected to each other. Profoundly mentally and physically limited children and adults, reform school inmates, teachers of every sort from all over the world, and London Bobbies whose duties require increasing sensitivity to the nuances of foreign cultures than ever before are among her students. Like Freire, Mrs. Heathcote emphasizes respect and she strives for an authentic level of communication with everyone as demonstrated by her techniques of entering into the drama as a full participant. Her work demonstrates the kind of horizontal connections that Berman advocates and juxtaposes with the current patterns that he labels "ascent theory."<sup>160</sup> Her decision to become an educator and to use drama as the mediator among individual perceptions rather than a drama teacher who strives to develop individual talent is evidence of her devotion to every person as capable of growing in humanistic, connected and moral ways.



Brecht stated unequivocally that his work was founded on and perpetuated by his belief that reality and people are alterable and that people can change the world. Like Mrs. Heathcote, Brecht espoused the power of drama to change consciousness which, according to Berman's conceptualization, most certainly is related to its essential integrative character. At its heart, drama is a meld of physical and mental components that are inextricably woven into a presentational form with considerable appeal. While Brecht maintains the distance between the performers and the audience and Mrs. Heathcote eliminates all distance between herself and her students, their goal of taking advantage of drama's innate power that emanates from its holistic character, to infuse the world with active, critically aware people are the same. Their boundless hope grows from their first-hand, informing experiences that have convinced them that all people can develop the capacity to assess and change the circumstances of their reality. Similarly, the talent that Tim Rollins found in his supposedly handicapped students cemented his faith in the capabilities of all people. He became so angry about the education system's rejection of his students that he embarked on a new career devoted to providing the system's outcasts with opportunities to demonstrate their worth. He currently works primarily with young people from some of the

roughest areas of New York City and, like Freire, his belief in them is so strong that he repeatedly puts his life and career on the line for their benefit.

Closely related to the faith that all five of my folks have in people is the desire to empower everybody so that each person can become a fulfilled human being. Berman reflects his interest in empowerment in his horizontal organizational concept that would equalize voices and distribute power across the entire spectrum of the culture. Freire's single-minded focus is on the powerless of the world and on methods for giving them their rightful place in the culture. Mrs. Heathcote repeatedly demonstrates her interest in empowerment through her insistence that her students struggle for the necessary language and confidence so that they can clearly present a position that captures their feelings, their best thinking and their sense of justice. The films about Mrs. Heathcote's work record moments that are nearly miraculous examples of her students confidently speaking their hearts and minds with strength and clarity. Rollins' tireless efforts in his students behalf that have launched many of them into successful college careers is testimony to his determination to empower some of the most downtrodden of the earth. Brecht is also interested in empowerment but with the twist that he had determined their direction and destination. He was set on moving

folks along to a his conclusions in contrast to Berman, Freire, Heathcote and Rollins who hold firmly to the conviction that when people are fully developed in body and mind, the most important part of empowerment is to leave them alone to arrive at their own truth. Conclusions should neither be predetermined nor set out before them.

In the case of each of my five representatives of a new vision, the determination to empower people to achieve their human destiny is set within a larger moral vision. It includes the right of all people to dignity, self-expression and to explore constantly as well as the responsibility of all people to devote mind and body to thinking and acting responsibly in service of humankind and the creation of a just world. Paul Gaugin said, "There are only two kinds of artists--revolutionaries and plagiarists," which may apply in large measure to Berman, Mrs. Heathcote, and Rollins as well as to avowed revolutionaries like Freire and Brecht.<sup>161</sup> To the extent that their vision of how reality should be reconstituted in terms of dignity, decency, self-expression, exploration and connectedness, is culturally destabilizing, Berman, Heathcote, and Rollins also embody a revolutionary spirit. This spirit is evident in Berman's theory that human salvation lies in extensive exploration of the soma, the development of acute critical awareness based on somatic

experience, and in an encompassing horizontal social, spiritual and psychic connectedness in which everyone would be valued and treated with dignity. This spirit is in dramatic contrast to our current vertical organizational pattern. It is evident in Mrs. Heathcote in the way she confines her work with students within dramatic form which enables her to labor with participants to gain the experience that is required for thoughts, visions, language and action to develop; for perceptions and their implications to emerge; for relationships of people to each other and of people to the world to form; and for everyone to gain knowledge of consequences that their thoughts and actions have fostered. Mrs. Heathcote's authority grows out of her knowledge and experience which she struggles to make available rather than from the status that is afforded to teachers within traditional hierarchical patterns. The spirit of altering reality to reflect the values of dignity, self-expression, exploration and decency are also apparent in Rollins. He always works out of an apprenticeship model. His studio is organized horizontally and he often talks about how the artistic community that forms around the creation of every painting feeds him as well as the other participants. The location of his studio in the South Bronx, his endless efforts to dignify his students and elevate them to new levels of intellectual, social and artistic awareness and

ability, reflects his vision of what reality should become. Most notably and echoing Berman, Freire, Heathcote and Brecht, each painting that Rollins and his students create is an example of individual expressions within a unifying concept that is a connecting linchpin among all five.

The final correspondence I would like to note among Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins is that while the emphasis varies among them, each one believes in the arts as central to the experience of being fully human. Berman says that the entire world should be transformed into an art form. I take him to mean that within this concept, physical and mental capacities, objectivity and subjectivity, thinking and doing would be reunited and given equal treatment in the education system and in society at large; that developing critical consciousness would be a very high priority throughout the culture; that an understanding of the benefits of a reflexive relationship between thought and action would be fostered everywhere; that horizontal connections among people would be developed and prized; that reflection on thought and action would be continuous; and probably most importantly, it would be universally understood that reality is continuously being created--that for better or worse, life is a work of art and our responsibility is to make it a good one. In a sense, Berman espouses the

notion that life should be formed in support of the vital functions that will empower people so that they can make this world more just and so that they can fulfill their human destiny. Freire is equally devoted to equipoise, symmetry, and authenticity in a world that is being created each day by its inhabitants. With his natural language of poetry and metaphor and his emphasis on authentic work, he echoes a notion closely related to the concept of an artisan who is constantly in the process of aesthetically conceiving and carefully crafting what is in this case a life. Training actors is the furthest thing from Mrs. Heathcote's mind. In contrast, she carries the total aesthetic burden of capturing the issues within the dramatic form. She brings her students into the form where they create, change and move the work along under her expert guidance. When the form no longer functions, Mrs. Heathcote creates a new one or as she like to say, "I find a new press."<sup>162</sup> Within the confines of the drama, the students, like those who work with Freire, become artisans who are immersed in the creative struggle to make meaning and bring their own sense to life. To quote David Purpel "It is the difference between introducing people into the world of art and introducing the world of art into people," that drives Berman, Freire, and Mrs. Heathcote.<sup>163</sup> They are passionate about the first and have no interest in the latter.

While Rollins is very interested in the tangible products his students make, he is fascinated with the reflexive relationship between creation and creator--in the effect that making art has on his students' lives. He is convinced that by making art in the disciplined, careful, thoughtful, dedicated manner that he requires, the young people in his care live more fully within the artisan tradition that Paulo Freire and Mrs. Heathcote exemplify. Lacking the clarity of Berman, Freire and Heathcote, the passage from creating art to creating life is far from obvious in Rollins's work, but his success with his students indicates that transfer occurs. Brecht is at greatest variance from the notion of a correspondence between making art and making life. He has more interest in the artistic product than in the process of creation that so fully consumes Berman, Freire and Heathcote and that is of great interest to Rollins. Ironically, Brecht, the revolutionary, had a fairly conventional notion of actor and acted upon. While he believed strongly in art as a means of forming critical awareness and a reflective capacity, he brought the audience to the drama experience as spectators. His hope was that they would understand his message so thoroughly and take it to heart so completely that they would be transformed into revolutionaries ready to take to the streets as participants in his unifying idea. In contrast

to the other four, I have found no indication that he had more than passing interest in all people making works of art out of their lives, but he was passionate about creating art that would transform the world and bring justice into it.

What I have discovered is that the arts have power for my children and me because somewhere way back when, Aunt Leta and my mother--two independent and stubborn Scotswomen--were sure that life is about much more than facts and formulas. I suspect that they planted the idea in me on the day of my birth that life is about wonder and joy; about doing things and making things; it is about dreaming dreams; and experiencing the full range of emotion; it is about letting the world come to you through your senses; it is forming perceptions out of what you receive; it is about thinking thoroughly, carefully and critically about your sense of things; it is about connecting with other peoples' reality; and, finally, it is about finding the form through concentration and effort to express in the best way you can what it is that has meaning for you and gives sense to your world. And, these are the same things that Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins agree give the arts their power and connect them to the important issues of being human. The arts will always be with us in significant and influential ways because they are a holistic means for individuals to make



meaning, to express their sense of things, to invest in life, and to find hope for themselves and to foster it in others. As Tim Rollins said, "Not even the horrible violence--the pathetic handiwork of the loveless--or the necrophilic nature of our culture can destroy art. It is the only thing that makes whole human beings. It is hope made material."<sup>164</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Sixth Grade (Evans) Diggs Elementary School, 1976-77 School year.

<sup>2</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Sixth Grade (Womble) Brunson Elementary School, Spring, 1980.

<sup>3</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Seventh Grade (Sugg, Lead Teacher) Wiley Junior High School, Fall, 1979.

<sup>4</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Eighth Grade (Corpening, Lead Teacher) Winter, 1980.

<sup>5</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Fifth Grade (Brower) Cash Elementary School, Fall, 1979.

<sup>6</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Fifth Grade (Maness) Skyland School, Fall, 1979.

<sup>7</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 119.

<sup>8</sup>Berman, 1989.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., Throughout.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 54-55.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 40

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 113.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 82.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 282.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 289.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 308.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 122

<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., p. 306.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 316-317.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 312.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 317.

<sup>37</sup>Lanie Robertson, Steiglitz Loves O'Keeffe, The Great American Romance, In Preview, Winston-Salem: North Carolina School of the Arts Broadway Preview Series, A Theatre Guild Production, March 14-26, 1995.

<sup>38</sup>Berman, 1989. p. 315.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 108.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid., p. 112

<sup>45</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 64.

<sup>46</sup>Dewey, 1989, p. 178.

<sup>47</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 36.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>49</sup>Berman, 1989, Throughout.

<sup>50</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 64.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-74.

<sup>54</sup>Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of Hope, Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed, with notes by Ana Maria Araujo Freire, Robert R. Barr, Trans., (New York: Continuum, 1994), p. 91.

<sup>55</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 57.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., p. 58.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 64.

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>63</sup>Maxine Greene, "The Art of Being Present: Educating for Aesthetic Encounters," Journal of Education, Vol. 165, November 2, 1984 (Boston: Boston University), p. 127.

<sup>64</sup>Freire, 1994, p. 70.

<sup>65</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 38; 1994, p. 80.

<sup>66</sup>Freire, 1994, p. 79.

<sup>67</sup>Freire, 1970. p. 64.

<sup>68</sup>Freire, 1994, Throughout.

<sup>69</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 109.

<sup>70</sup>Mary Kerr introduced creative drama to Winston-Salem. Shortly after she moved into the area the Junior League hired her to train volunteers to teach drama in elementary schools. In 1979, she received the Volunteer of the Year Award from the American Theatre Association for this work.

<sup>71</sup>Improvised Drama, Part I, Paramus: Time-Life Multimedia, 1966.

<sup>72</sup>Three Looms Waiting, Paramus: Time-Life Multimedia, 1971.

<sup>73</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 40.

<sup>74</sup>"Improve people" is a term Mrs. Heathcote uses which appears to mean to fully educate all dimensions of their beings.

<sup>75</sup> Liz Johnson, and Cecily O'Neill, eds., Dorothy Heathcote, Collected Writings on Education and Drama (London, Melbourne, Sydney, Auckland, Johannesburg: Hutchinson, 1984).

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>77</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 110.

<sup>78</sup>Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p. 62.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

<sup>81</sup>Berman, 1989, Throughout.

<sup>82</sup>Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p. 12.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

<sup>86</sup>Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>88</sup>Freire, 1970, Throughout.

<sup>89</sup>Johnson and O'Neill, 1984, p. 70.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., pp. 29-30.

<sup>91</sup>Dorothy Heathcote, "Lectures at Mount Tabor High School," Under the auspices of Wake Forest University and the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools, June 24-July 11, 1975.

<sup>92</sup>Betty Jane Wagner, Dorothy Heathcote, Drama as a Medium for Learning, (Washington: National Education Association, 1976), p. 15.

<sup>93</sup>Heathcote, 1984, p. 7.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid.

<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Wagner, 1976, pp. 226-227.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid., p. 231.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>On Mrs. Heathcote's recommendation, Dr. Fiala visited Winston-Salem to observe the work we were doing. The analogies I drew at that time between classical Greek drama and Mrs. Heathcote's work resonated in him and he based some of his subsequent teaching of Mrs. Heathcote's philosophy and methods on that notion.

<sup>103</sup>Bertolt Brecht, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Produced by the School of Drama and the School of Design and Production, North Carolina School of the Arts, De Mille Theatre, Winston-Salem, Fall, 1975.

<sup>104</sup>Bertolt Brecht, Caucasian Chalk Circle, Produced by the Berliner Ensemble, Berlin, January 1977.

<sup>105</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 315.

<sup>106</sup>Leonard Shlain, Art and Physics, Parallel Visions in Space, Time and Light, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1991) p. 19.

<sup>107</sup>Fredrich Neitzche, quoted by Frederic Owen in Bertolt Brecht, His Life, His Art and His Times, (New York: Citadel Press, 1967), p. 29.

<sup>108</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 289.

<sup>109</sup>John Gasener and Edward Quinn, eds., The Readers' Encyclopedia of World Drama (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1969) p. 257.

<sup>110</sup>Ibid., pp. 256-257.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 258.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>113</sup>John Willett, ed. and trans., Brecht on Theatre, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), p. 132.

<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," p. 96.

<sup>116</sup>Gassner and Quinn, 1969, p. 84.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., quoting Karl Marx, p. 84.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid.

<sup>121</sup>Willett, "Conversation with Bert Brecht," 1964, p. 14.

<sup>122</sup>Ibid., "A Dialogue About Acting," p. 26; and "The Question of the Criteria for Judging Acting," p. 56.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., "Alienation Effects in Chinese Acting," p. 192.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., "Conversation with Bert Brecht," p. 14.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., "The Modern Theatre is the Epic Theatre," p. 37.

<sup>127</sup>Berman, 1989, Throughout.

<sup>128</sup>Over the years, the perception has developed in the community that SECCA is a regional institution and disinterested in Winston-Salem and Forsyth County artists. The "Artists in the Community" series was initiated as an effort to connect with all dimensions of the local culture. It is funded by The National Endowment for the Arts, Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation, The Winston-Salem Arts Council United Arts Fund Campaign.

<sup>129</sup>Stephen Crane, The Red Badge of Courage: An Episode of the American Civil War, (New York: D. Appleton, 1896).

<sup>130</sup>Bettianne Pettinati-Longinotti, Conversations, 1992-95 school years.

<sup>131</sup>SECCA, Terri-Dowell-Dennis, Curator of Education/Performance, "On the Battlefield of Art," Tim Rollins and K. O. S., The Red Badge of Courage, (Winston-Salem: Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art, 1994) n. p.

<sup>132</sup>Ibid.

<sup>133</sup>Ibid., Susan Lubowsky, Executive Director, "Introduction," n.p.

<sup>134</sup>Tim Rollins, "Interview," Winston-Salem: Winston-Salem Journal, April 20, 1994.

<sup>135</sup>SECCA, Lubowsky, 1994, n.p.

<sup>136</sup>Ibid., Bruce Lineker, Curator, n.p.

<sup>137</sup>Rollins, "Interview," 1994.

<sup>138</sup>SECCA, Lineker, 1994, n.p.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., Dowell-Dennis, quoting Time Rollins, n.p.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., Lineker, n.p.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., Dowell-Dennis, n.p.



<sup>143</sup>Ibid., quoting Rollins, n.p.

<sup>144</sup>Rollins, "Interview," 1994.

<sup>145</sup>Tim Rollins, Keynote Address, North Carolina Art Education Association State Conference, (Winston-Salem: Benton Convention Center, November 2, 1994).

<sup>146</sup>Ibid.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid.

<sup>148</sup>SECCA, Dowell-Dennis, quoting Rollins, 1994, n.p.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid.

<sup>150</sup>Rollins, Keynote Address, 1994.

<sup>151</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 246.

<sup>152</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>153</sup>Freire, 1970, p. 75-76.

<sup>154</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Vienna School (Hash) First Grade, Spring 1979.

<sup>155</sup>Classes taught by the writer, South Fork School, Core I EMH, Fall, 1979.

<sup>156</sup>Bertolt Brecht, The Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny, Produced by the Opera Department of the School of Music of the North Carolina School of the Arts, (Winston-Salem: Stevens Center, January 1994).

<sup>157</sup>Wagner, 1976, Chapters 16 and 17, pp. 186-209.

<sup>158</sup>Berman, 1989, Throughout.

<sup>159</sup>Freire, 1970.

<sup>160</sup>Berman, 1989, Throughout.

<sup>161</sup>Shlain, quoting Paul Gaugan, 1991, p. 16.

<sup>162</sup>Heathcote, "Lectures," June 24-July 11, 1975.

<sup>163</sup>David Purpel, "Conversation," (Greensboro: Curry Building, UNC-G, April 5, 1995).

<sup>164</sup>Rollins, "Keynote Address," November 1994.

CHAPTER III  
LIVED EXPERIENCE: INTERPRETATION  
AND MEANING

Introduction: The Soma Speaks -  
Meaning Created

I grew up an only child which, like being fat, is defining. I remember the moment I realized that I had spent my childhood comparing myself to adult standards of behavior and accomplishment that siblings would surely have mediated. I have a visual image of a wall of adults surrounding me that I had no chance of breaking through. It occurs to me that a version of Berman's concepts that he names "ascent theory" and "transitional objects" were very real factors in the way my personality developed.<sup>1</sup> I had friends, but that is different from having brothers and sisters. Siblings are on the same horizontal plane with each other. In contrast, I was in a continuous struggle to reach higher, behave better and achieve more in an effort to bridge the enormous gulf and, of course, I could never achieve my goal. It is almost a classic case of what Berman believes is a root cause of the sickness of Western society.

Judeo-Christian mythology that has shaped us is based on the notion of an unapproachable higher power that we must aspire to emulate. This hierarchical model with its focus on unachievable aspirations has become a controlling idea of our culture and Berman maintains has a good bit to do with the enormous frustrations we experience in our daily as well as in our community, national, and international lives. We look up for guidance. We want to be upwardly mobile. We talk about high flyers. We want to achieve the pinnacle of success. Our organizational structures, including the family, are shot through with "ascent theory."<sup>2</sup> As a result, we don't get what we want. We discount the present and orient ourselves toward the future. Ascent is our truth that perhaps is lived out very clearly and at the most basic level by only children.

But, I have always had dogs. I continue to love my pets dearly. According to Berman's theories Spot and Mitzie Toodles, the boon companions and confidants of my childhood, were (and, perhaps, Jill Russell and Pfuzz Buster continue to be) my "transitional objects."<sup>3</sup> According to Berman, children need objects like teddy bears to "stuff the gap" between their somatic selves and the view they have of themselves that the outside world based on "ascent theory" provides.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, he identifies drugs, alcohol and sex as adult "transitional

objects."<sup>5</sup> In Berman's scheme, pets represent a particularly interesting sort of "gap stuffer."<sup>6</sup> Berman maintains that wild animals are essential to our understanding of our humanness and that our disconnection from wild and wilderness has increased our confusion about who we are. Pets are our attempt to recover the connection, but they are poor substitutes because we have imposed humanness on them. However, Berman believes that "pets are essential to reduce the alienation of urban, technological society," as well as a means to "stuff the gap" that exists between ourselves and our aspirations.<sup>7</sup> While we have reduced the range of possibilities for animals to help us know ourselves and to generally understand our species, we continue to use them to ease the anxiety that the reality we have created has thrust upon us. As a child, I certainly relied on my dogs to help fill the chasm that existed between me and my parents, four grandparents, three aunts and two uncles. I am sure that the unconditional love of Jill and Pfuzz continues to be a redeeming presence in my life. The difference between Jane, the child and Jane, the adult, is that I no longer think that I should unquestioningly emulate the model that is presented.

A particularly dramatic example of the general inability of people to think outside an "ascent" model occurred recently in a group that was formed for the

ostensible purpose of thinking futuristically about the Piedmont Triad of North Carolina in the 2020. I was asked to attend regular meetings for a year as a representative of the educational establishment. After a speech each month by a high-priced "futurist," the group is broken into small segments for the stated purpose of thinking about how the speech applies to the Triad. The first small-group session was devoted to technical training on how to write single ideas on separate cards for future thought and elaboration. Completely ignoring the word future, all the cards from the training were placed on a board and the group agreed on a priority order arrangement that was then taken without further discussion or reflection as a consensus of the group's thinking. One speaker presented the notion that no amount of legislation, money or education will remedy the situation the United States is in until people begin to talk to each other in informal as well as formal ways on a basic, caring, human level. He outlined how the way we live in developments that are not neighborhoods, the way we isolate ourselves in automobiles, and the way we orient activity to the back of houses that no longer have front porches are symptoms of the sickness that has resulted in the meanness and fear that surrounds us. Following his speech, the small group I was in would admit people to the room only if they presented at least one card with ideas

written on it. The leaders then divided us into two groups and gave us fifteen minutes to sort the cards into those with fully formed ideas as compared to those with analyses, concerns, or notes from the speech. I suggested that it might be worthwhile to talk about the sources of the concerns, the implications of the analyses or why someone wrote down particular notes rather than others. The answer was that it was not according to the plan and there was no time to talk or we wouldn't finish the task. An example of a fully formed idea was to rename the Piedmont Triad. And this, after just hearing a two-hour speech about the necessity for unassuming, naming, authentic dialogue in the spirit of Paulo Freire! Because I came to the experience in good faith and with open heart and mind (and that is my continuing error), the episode left me appalled and angry.

This experience was reminiscent of growing up as the only child among so many adults. Everyone in that room except me believed in a process that seemed to have a lot of form and little, if any, substance. It was that surrounding wall again that it seemed impossible to break through. I was at a loss to explain the relevance of why we were doing what we were doing except to satisfy the technical rules of the game. Here again was Jane, the loner, the rebel, the isolate. Everyone seemed to be looking down on me from a superior position that I

couldn't attain. Fortunately as the adult, I have insight into the fact that it is the specious "ascent theory" that is supporting them, and if Berman is to be believed, the road to hell is paved with it.<sup>8</sup> I suppose on a personal level, the problem is that, like Brecht, I am always hopeful and, therefore, I am set-up for disappointment. It is the same old story of the "lively spaces." Why are they continually dismissed as diversions rather than the real substance of education? Why am I surprised? Why do I keep going? If I keep reminding myself that the culture is bent on certitude and squeezing out life and that off-beat Jane is consumed with the messy, lively, childlike stuff that invigorates rather than enervates, I am better able to cope. Knowing what I know, however, I am still shocked when I recall that this meeting took place the day after the bomb blast in Oklahoma City and that there was not one mention of it during the entire morning!

Because I experienced alienation dramatically and, in my basic relationships from the time I was born, I am often tentative about expressing opinions. Experiences like the one at the Council reinforce that propensity. Unlike my husband who says that he never knows what he thinks until he says it, I don't venture unthinkingly. I am always guarded. I monitor every situation carefully. And, at a very early age I learned to watch people for their responses to each other and to me and to listen and

watch for a meaning underneath their words. As a result, I generally know the subtext of situations long before they become clear. Despite my seeming innocence and surprise when the thoughts I think are important are rejected, I, therefore, usually have a jump on agendas. And, like Freire, I believe that the things that can make a difference in contrast to agendas, calculations, and meetings structured like the Futures Council are open hearts and open minds; careful looking, listening and sensing; dignity and respect; and authentic communication. I have found that the extent that I am able to hold on to those things is in direct proportion to my success as a teacher and as a group leader. Boy, would I have liked to have been in charge of that group following the "futurist" who advocated intelligent and caring human connections that lead to increased empathy and understanding! These qualities are akin, I believe, to the kind of thing that Mrs. Heathcote does when she mediates among her students; between her students and herself; and between her students and the wisdom of the ages. They have to do with creating an evolving reality based on authentic relationships among people in full knowledge of what has gone before.

Recently, I was part of a process that demonstrated how authentic communication without constraints of technological efficiency can put things on proper footing. As part of an all encompassing magnet school plan, I was



asked to chair a committee to develop the program for a school that had been arbitrarily assigned a performing arts theme in a building that had been closed for ten years. The site is at the end of a street that overlooks a major four-lane highway. The primary way in or out passes directly through a crime- and drug-plagued public housing project. The charge that was given to us was to plan a performing arts magnet on a shoestring budget that would attract white families to the site. As I hope I have already made clear in this paper, in my mind training children in the technicalities of art forms has no more credibility than our current practice of reducing education to skill training in reading, writing and math. But, because I was given the responsibility of selecting the committee, and some of the most thoughtful people I know agreed to participate, I was willing to see what would develop. The first thing the group decided to do was to look at the facility, and what a journey we made! The building had been chopped up badly in response to the "open classroom" concepts of the sixties and seventies. But, the physical plant itself was not the real issue. A pre-school program had opened in the building in January and as we began to talk to the staff, we realized that a community had begun to build up around it. We went on to talk to people who had attended the school when it was in full operation, and we found that there was considerable

sentiment attached to the site and to the fact that the first program for academically gifted African Americans had been located there. We also talked to people who have a political interest in a school in the area that responds to the hopes and desires of the surrounding neighborhood as well as to people who have insight into the desire for an inner city Afro-centric elementary school. Finally, we talked to members of the school system's administration, and we discovered that they had little knowledge of what a performing arts magnet might be. Our challenge suddenly took on multidimensional qualities. We had to balance the needs of the children the school will serve over and against a larger political agenda that includes the desire by a segment of the population to have an inner city elementary school with an Afro-centric emphasis, budget constraints, and the desire of the school system to develop a program at the site that will attract white families. The components of the program we created have little importance to the fact that through days of patient exchange of authentic ideas among people of good will in a nonthreatening situation, we developed ideas for the school that have some possibility of answering many of the concerns that we heard. While we have no way of knowing the final outcome, and we know that the entire plan can be destroyed by any number of things, every committee member was pleased with the work. On the final day, in fact, the

consensus was that we all wanted to go to the school and work next year if the program is instituted in a manner at least in the spirit of what we have envisioned. The issue here is not whether or not the school program finally is properly implemented. For the purposes of this paper it is that through intense, authentic listening and naming, a group of people developed a plan that each member is proud of and that has a chance of introducing integrity into a school and restoring faith in a community where it has not existed for a long time.

Having said and experienced all of this, what occurs to me is that a good part of what Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins are talking about, and a source of most of my joy and satisfaction is related to an ability to come to experiences with the innocence and good will of the amateur. It is the knowledge that the essence is in and for the thing itself rather than projecting a cause or a thing into the intangible and unknowable future. Implicit within coming to situations in this manner is an emphasis on quality rather than the generally accepted quantification practices of cramming students with information and skills so they score well on tests and what masquerades as futurist thinking like workforce preparedness talk that can be characterized mainly by an emphasis on technical skills. The understanding of the authentic and unassuming nature of amateurism is central

in Berman's conceptualization. It is an implicit characteristic of Freire's dialogue, Mrs. Heathcote's negotiations, Brecht's insistence on making things strange, and in Rollins apprenticeship model. The contrast between the Futures Council and the magnet school committee points up the differences. One is about ascent, hierarchy and control. The other is about horizontal, connecting relationships among people who dialogue together in authentic, caring ways.

### Praxis

Connecting my thinking and what I try to do as an educator in a large urban school system with the thinking and practice of giants like Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and soon-to-be great, Rollins, removed me to a degree from the isolation that has always been part of my life. Even though I know only two of these people personally, I have a sense of community with them that is a resource, a comfort and a support. I am at ease with them. I am meaningfully connected to them emotionally, psychologically, spiritually, and intellectually. I quote them, and, to the extent that I paraphrase and elaborate on them, we are in conversation. Certainly they are an influence on what I do as well as the way I make sense of things. I have taken them for my own.

Studying Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins has also provided me with a clearer sense of the difference between my work and my job. My work is about creating as many horizontal, connecting and authentic relationships as possible and enlivening each of them to the fullest extent possible. My job is about fulfilling the responsibilities that are assigned to me by the school system which often run counter to my interests, concerns and the experiences that have been meaningful and that seem to resonate in others. Due to the influence of my "giants," I am now much clearer about how the restrictions and requirements I rail against fit into a full, dominant conceptualization of the world. That knowledge reduces the anger I sometimes feel toward individuals and enables me to search for the sources of their behavior in the taken-for-granted reality. While there is a certain relief in understanding that it is the system rather than people who are in charge, there is another side to the coin. People are more tractable than systems, and, therefore, the situation could be regarded as virtually hopeless. My propensity for accepting isolation and the attending discomfort with systems and authority as inescapable parts of the human condition tempts me to give way to that rather desperate position. Beyond the unhappiness that adopting that cynical stance creates, it would also leave me in what to my mind is the untenable

position of either accepting the role of a loyal, unquestioning bureaucrat or living with the agony of wondering what I am doing in a position that makes me feel rebellious.

Fortunately, my intense associations with Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins push me in another, healthier direction that I believe will give greater integrity to my theories and my practice. While it is absolutely mandatory that everyone remain critically aware it may be time to quit drawing the battle lines. Given what I have learned, I think that my challenge is to actively make connections; to find any fits between my work of the "lively spaces" as clarified by my "giant" friends of Chapter II and any other like energy in the school system that I have been a part of for eighteen years. To move into this new area, I thought a valuable and positive step would be to connect with colleagues. As is characteristic of school people, discussion always is concerned with what and how and rarely with why. Consequently, I know a great deal about the characteristics of things other practitioners do, and I am quite aware of whether their practices facilitate or obstruct change. But I have been quite ignorant about the personal ideas that drive their conformance to standard practices or their innovations. Therefore, I thought it would be valuable to engage some of my colleagues who are

in positions to aid or block the implementation of new ideas in the kind of authentic, unassuming, naming dialogue that Freire suggests. Through the effort I hope to gain some sense of whether others have thoughts similar to my own and how they act upon them, and I anticipate considerable energy and optimism from any shared vision I discover. To temper my tendency to expect too much and to get a better grasp on what is truly possible, I hoped to gain some knowledge of the limitations and compromises others make as they attempt to bring about positive differences in the lives of students. Finally, I expect meaningful conversations with my colleagues to give me some idea if compromised vision is a matter of co-option as Berman suggests or whether it ever leads to systemic change.

Two of the people I interviewed are principals that I have worked closely with on several projects over a considerable period of time. Both of them fight through practices, procedures and the people who administer them in efforts to continue to develop innovative programs that they think better serve the needs of the children who attend their schools. The other conversation was among three people who are in positions requiring that they enforce local policies and procedures as well as state and federal mandates. I have contact with each of them regularly, and in these working relationships I have

noticed at least passing interest in my "lively" projects. The talks with the principals took place during the school day in their offices. The discussion with my three central office colleagues occurred in the evening over dinner. All of the conversations were taped. I later transcribed them and asked the participants to read them as well as my narrations and interpretations. Everyone gave me permission to use the material as I had recorded, transcribed and interpreted it.

### Rachel

Rachel is the principal of a school that includes an early childhood program as well as an elementary program for students until they are eligible for sixth grade. She is in her middle forties, happily married and the mother of two children. Rachel is very poised, friendly and she strikes a good balance between warmth and appropriate reserve. Her past experience includes years of teaching in a variety of places including Asia, directing a daycare center and private school, coordinating curriculum in an elementary school and working in a central office role. For several years she has been working to complete a doctoral degree while fulfilling her full-time responsibilities in the school system. Four years ago she became principal of her current school that is focused somewhat differently from



the norm. It is designed to create an informing learning community that extends beyond the students to the entire staff, parents and members of the business community who help support it with resources and money. Other foundational ideas of the school include the notion that family life revolves around where parents work rather than where the family lives; that an alternative site near parents' work will improve students' educational opportunities; that a low student teacher ratio of no more than 15 to 1 is very important; that ungraded groupings have advantages in at least some situations; that narrative assessments and parent conferences are better methods of communicating student achievement than letter grades and report cards; that full utilization of the community's resources for library, physical education, and the arts makes economic and programmatic sense; and that the requirement that parents volunteer a minimum of one hour per week will enhance the necessary involvement of parents in their children's education. Even though she had never been a public school principal, Rachel was selected from six candidates because of her obvious intelligence, poise, charm and the correspondences between her stated vision and the founding tenets of the school.

Because Rachel applied to be principal of a school that does not fit the standard pattern, and because we had had previous conversations, I knew her thinking does not

conform to standard practices. Therefore, I framed our conversation by asking her to spend some time talking with me about the difficulties she has experienced in implementing her vision for her school. The first thing I asked was how she deals with all of the rules, regulations, policies and procedures that are applied to her school even though they aren't germane. She began her reply by saying that the school was founded on a different basis which provided a built-in advantage. She felt that there is some expectation that things will be somewhat different at her school. However, she spoke of the barriers of forms, procedures, policies and turf protection that accompanies them and that mindlessly destroy synergy. Rhetorically, she asked if the procedures are necessary for the result and answered, "Of course not," adding, "They keep everyone in a submissive role." Rachel talked of the resistance to any consideration of the total picture, the general absence of reflective action that has produced inertia, how the fragmented requirements keep everyone in a submissive role, and how people are employed specifically to make barriers.

Rachel talked about the basic dishonesty of bureaucratic jargon that is carefully designed to convey messages of confidence and support and that is in actuality words that join with policies and procedures to

act as gatekeepers. She spoke of bureaucracy as an enforcer rather than a support and she said, "They keep us from getting out there and really letting loose." She indignantly asked how we can in good faith insist on teachers' obeisance and at the same time say we want to educate an independent-minded, thinking citizenry? She answered her own question by concluding that the real issue is that, in contrast to the commonly held belief, society really doesn't want thinkers. She said, "It is another case of a mismatch between words and actions. What we say about school is not what we do. It is simply too scary to consider what would happen if inner-city folks thought and solved problems . . . . The system keeps them in their place." Rachel went on to say that it is not what we should be, but school is a sifting and sorting system to keep the brightest and best on top and the brightest and best are those who are already connected. She expressed great sadness at that realization saying, "I hate to think that it's true."

As Rachel pondered the status of teachers in the current system, she stated that if they were free to think for themselves and to meet the needs of their students, then society would be transformed. She believes that currently teachers don't buy into notions that critical and creative thinking are important because they perceive that is not what is expected of them and the rules and

regulations we give them keep them from even considering it. She is also aware that textbooks are designed so that teachers only have to follow directions and don't have to think. She sees the fact that the thinking about what is taught and how teaching is done by someone other than teachers as a kind of minimum guarantee to keep standards low.

Rachel realizes that if teachers were trained as thinkers and to act on the basis of their thoughts, society would be transformed and the economic system would be altered. When I asked her, however, if schools were a function of the economic system, she hesitated a bit, wondering if resources could ever be distributed equally. Furthermore, she mused over the question if resources couldn't or shouldn't be meted out in some equitable way, did it follow that education could only be distributed unequally also? Retracting from that question somewhat, she drew a parallel between minimum wage and minimum competency, concluding that both set a low standard that aids in knowledge and capital accumulation at the top. Rachel also pondered the use of the word, expectations, noting that the way it is applied keeps learning at a surface level. Once again Rachel asked rhetorically, "Expectations for what?" When the question of doing away with school buildings and going to some form of tutoring came up she reckoned that the difficulty would

be that no one would be available to care for the children because, if there are two parents, both of them must work. Taking a more traditional tack about doing away with schoolhouses, she stated that her real reservations are that she really believes that the interchange among teachers and students in schools produces positive synergy. She said, "I happen to think that the living in the community (meaning the coming together in a formal school setting) is worth the time and effort."

When I asked what education would look like if she could design it, Rachel said that the first three or four years should be totally exploratory. Beginning around age eight, she believes that children should start to acquire skills and to study the disciplines seriously. She alluded to connecting themes as a way to bring depth to the curriculum. She backed away from that notion slightly when I suggested that Winston-Salem's rich history offers extraordinary learning opportunities. She honestly admitted her reluctance based on her lack of knowledge and the amount of research it would take for her to be a teacher or facilitator in such a school. This strand of the discussion closed with Rachel's notion that college is not a productive experience for everyone and that we should put a lot more time and energy into helping students make wise decisions about trades.

In contrast to the way bureaucracy generally functions, Rachel believes it could become enabling. She believes it should function to provide opportunities for students and teachers to experience things that they could grab hold of that would make them see themselves in a new light. Her hope for the future lies in each person who thinks critically and asks questions. Her strategy to preserve the program at her school in the face of all of the impediments is to keep the momentum provided by the vision going and growing through nurturing her staff so that "they become extensions of the idea," and "to analyze all of the angles and to play them productively so that the ball ultimately gets to the right pocket." She sees the road, however, as difficult and complicated by the fact that our culture has no values except for money. She equated money with test scores, saying that they represent the same quantifying mentality.

The conversation ended with two short interchanges. The first concerned the possibilities for connection that exist in small schools and that the efficiency experts who hold sway in these matters have all but decimated small, intimate, educational environments with their treatment of children and teachers as objects. Finally, we left unresolved the question of whether or not the real agenda of school is consciously hidden or whether it is so interwoven in the culture's taken-for-granted truth that

it is unrecognized. It is very interesting that Rachel called me two weeks after the interview and said that her intervening experiences had demonstrated that she had been entirely too positive and hopeful in our conversation.

### Interpretation

The first thing that struck me about my talk with Rachel was her tireless dedication to her school, the students who attend, her staff and to continuing to strengthen the supporting surrounding community of parents, business leaders and people who work near the school and who volunteer in support of it. It is obvious she derives energy from the deep connections she has to the children and to the other people who comprise the learning community as well as from the belief that she is doing what is in her students' best interests. At one point she expressed the thought that some of my cynicism is a result of being separated from the action which is in the schools where the children, teachers and parents connect. The energizing force of those interactions in one location explains Rachel's reluctance to consider radically different organizational structures like I suggested for educating the young. However, the tension between what Rachel and many other members of the school community want to do and what the system will allow is evident. For instance, the parents petitioned the school

board to allow a middle school to be established in the site and in accord with the vision of the elementary program. The denial caused ripples of anguish.

Similarly, Rachel's frustrations from inhibiting policies and procedures is considerable. They sometimes appear to border on hostility and range from fairly minor but irritating paperwork problems to the serious restraints placed on teachers that include the necessity to abide by curriculum mandates in tandem with testing and other public accountability measures to receive good evaluations and the pressure to cram students full of the information needed to score well on standardized tests. Rachel firmly believes that because these restrictions are almost impossible to avoid or overcome, they keep teachers from meeting the needs of their students as they perceive them through daily contact. In that regard, Rachel is cognizant of the cumulative effects of seemingly insignificant requirements that work together to keep people in line and that have the effect of forcing teachers and principals to serve the system rather than the children.

Rachel's level of critical consciousness is remarkable. She has observed that people are employed to enforce barriers and they subsequently build protective turf and power bases around those barriers. The obstacles are, thereby, reinforced and augmented which makes them



nearly impenetrable. Rachel perceives that the duplicity of bureaucratic language and the dichotomy that often exists between words and actions are strategies to maintain turf and power. The net effect is that service, dedication and loyalty are required by the system. Education of the kind that represents an intervention in the consciousness of students and teachers is almost regulated out of existence. The restrictions are so many and so complicated that the possibilities for meaningful reform are very limited. A good example in Rachel's mind is the contradiction between the claim that education is about encouraging people to be independent minded and critically aware and the amount of time, energy and money that is devoted to keeping teachers subservient as exemplified by imposed pedagogy through mandated teacher training programs and procedures, state adopted textbooks and state written and approved curriculum guides. However, as demonstrated by an analogy she made between her job and a pool table it appears that Rachel still has a great deal of faith in the system. She seems to believe that if she is smart enough to play all of the angles things will come right.

There were several especially interesting moments in the conversation. First, Rachel stated that schools are a sifting and sorting mechanism that keep the well connected on top, but she was reluctant to equate that

with the idea that schools are in thrall to the economic system. As we talked on it became apparent that while she thinks sifting and sorting students is wrong, she believes that the unequal distribution of economic resources in our system is inevitable, and, she mused over whether it follows that unequal distribution of educational resources is inevitable also. Even though she stated that money is our culture's only value and implied her disgruntlement with that observation which she equated with the same quantifying mentality that measures educational achievement with standardized test scores and even though she stated that turning teachers loose would upset the economic system, she was unwilling to make a firm correlation between the economic system and the educational system. She went so far as to imply that serious changes in the educational system are especially difficult because the schools now take care of the children while the parents work, but she continued to back away from implicating the business community as inhibitors of educational reform. I now wonder if she has caught the significance of the increasing use of business terms like executive, management, and facilitator to define the work of educators. It is difficult to explain this lack of clarity. Rachel is up to facing realities so it is hard to say that she is conflicted and unwilling to think about a possible relationship between economics and schools. A

possible explanation is that her relationships with the business community have been excellent and very helpful to her school. Her reluctance may be a result of her affection and loyalty. It must be noted that while the business community has been a wonderful support, none of its members have ever interfered with either programmatic or instructional decisions of the school. At any rate, Rachel acknowledges that the current educational system does not serve all of the children and that it relegates many of them to inferior economic and social status that she suggested is possibly accentuated by educating all students as if they were going to college. She thinks it is a mistake to make college the only acceptable goal worthy of students' aspirations and that some students should be channeled into trades. We did not clarify whether she meant that some students should be trained as thinkers and others as doers or whether all students should be given the opportunity to become critical, reflective and responsible thinkers whose thoughts and actions are in reflexive relationship. Rachel's point about a possible correlation between minimum standards and minimum wage as two different means for maintaining the economic and social status quo was insightful and thought provoking.

A second interesting exchange occurred when I asked Rachel how she would design an instructional program if it

were hers to do. I was surprised at her focus on the established disciplines. It is perhaps an overstatement to say that she accepts them as manifestations of final truth, but her language didn't indicate any interest in altering the traditional content or organization of curriculum. While I had not expected the Heathcote approach of linking the past to students' consciousness about their responsibilities for shaping the future, I did expect a more critical view of the content of the school experience. Furthermore, when I brought up the idea of mining the history of Winston-Salem for its historical and sociological riches, I perceived some hesitancy about the research and work that would be required to shape the lessons. As I thought about it, I realized I have encountered this phenomenon before. As Rachel said, teachers have been trained to rely on textbooks and curriculum guides to the extent that they lack the confidence to strike off on their own. In fact, policies and procedures restrict them from doing it. Furthermore, nothing in the directives that define their jobs gives teachers the opportunity to explore the ambiguous questions without answers that Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins name as the only really important ones. So, teachers are without license to act independently and they are therefore afraid. In spite of the fact that Rachel talks about letting go, she, I suspect like most

teachers, is in the kind of oppressed state of mind that Freire describes. Authority is so ingrained that the fear of really breaking away is immobilizing. In fact, after I gave Rachel the description of our conversation and my interpretation to read, she said, "You stand naked if you don't stay in lock step."

The great hope that came to me from this conversation was the reality of Rachel herself. Like all of us she is clear on some things and muddled on others. She has strong emotional attachments, but she is ready and willing to give up what no longer benefits students and teachers. But, the point is that she is intelligent, sensible, thoughtful and she knows that she is in process. She accepts that struggle. In addition, Rachel prizes critical and reflective thought. She welcomes consciousness raising dialogue and she champions critically aware people. She stands ready to entertain new ideas and to implement those she can internalize. She has done an exemplary job of leading her staff and implementing a program that in many ways runs counter to the system. She is very thoughtful and reflective about what it means to be an innovative leader and how the work must be done. She works at relationships and hers are strong. The students and the teachers in her school are happy. The parents support Rachel and the school. Other principals like and respect her. She is ever hopeful and

that works in her favor. Perhaps she doesn't even know who Paulo Freire is, but it is clear to me that Rachel is enmeshed in a journey toward his concept of praxis which is closely tied to establishing horizontal and connecting relationships.

### Cathy

Like Rachel, Cathy is also in her mid-forties and happily married. She and her husband, who owns his own business, have no children. Cathy's experiences in education are somewhat broader than Rachel's. She has a doctoral degree and in her twenty-five year career, she has taught, worked for the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction, principled two elementary schools, and she has held several high administrative positions in large urban school systems. Cathy asked to be transferred to her current principal post several years ago. I framed the conversation by asking Cathy if she would visit with me about the things she has observed and experienced in her many varied roles during her years in public education.

Cathy surprised me when she prefaced the actual interview by saying that working as a principal has made her increasingly hopeful. Her school is 70% minority. It has a long history of racial turmoil, parent dissatisfaction and teacher disgruntlement. The minority

children come from a drug infested housing project and the white children come from a middle-class neighborhood of modest homes. Cathy describes the Black children as topping out of the "at risk" category. "They are children in crises." But, she finds the formidable challenges of her school preferable to working at the Administrative Center which she describes as visionless and as "one massive case of burnout." Like Rachel she believes this is attributable to the isolation of educational bureaucrats from the action, from the children and from the parents unless a really big problem surfaces from the school level. She believes, therefore, that bureaucrats seldom experience the joy of daily contact with students and, as a result, they begin to focus on their positions in the bureaucracy and to build up turf around themselves. Their careers become tied to advancement within the power structure rather than focused on educating children. Politics becomes the dominating feature of their professional lives and Cathy was tired of coping with the problems of doing what she thought was right for children in the face of the retaliations that always occur when differences of opinion emerge among those fixated on increasing their power.

In three years, Cathy's warm, ingratiating manner, intelligence, sensitivity and competence have transformed her school from a cold, hostile place into a learning

environment that is attractive and filled with joy. It has been described as cozy. Parents, teachers and students have learned to trust Cathy and the school and while Cathy did not suggest any correlations, it is interesting that the minority children at her school outscore other minority children in the system on standardized tests by an average of twenty points.

Surviving as the principal in Cathy's school would be taken by most everyone as an adequate measure of success. She admits that it has not been easy, but she has gone far beyond a maintenance mode. Unfortunately, she is nervous about how long she will be allowed to remain. Central administration's power to move principals is always looming and Cathy sees it as the primary way that principals' power is kept in check. She stated, "Principals are sent to fix schools. If they get too much power in the community or are too successful in any way, they are moved." Furthermore, Cathy thinks that principals are purposefully kept naive and unsettled. One strategy is to place schools in competition with each other through test scores and principal evaluations. "There is no sharing. Everyone is scrutinized."

Cathy stated that her happy tenure stems first of all from her deep belief in all children. She talked about her students who live in a veritable war zone and whose parents are drug addicted and sell "crack" for a



living. She became emotional as she described their triumphant spirits and resiliency and how they come to school everyday with an insatiable appetite to learn, a desire to do well, wanting to please, and brimming with hope and affection. She seemed to speak with relief when she said that she has found that even children damaged by "crack" before they are born have a conscience. She talked of the sweetness of all children, their intelligence and how they respond to beauty in the face of fantastic odds.

Cathy believes that a second factor in her success is that every child, parent and staff member associated with her school is given respect and treated with dignity. Her door is always open and she listens intently to everyone. She says that she is quick to apologize when it is appropriate and that all grievances are promptly redressed. In addition, she insists that all staff members demonstrate similar attitudes toward everyone in the school community. Because of her belief in the importance of the role models that schools can provide, Cathy demands that her teachers practice what they preach in every situation. "Children believe in what they see, not what they hear." At the same time, Cathy does not pander to parents, staff or students. For instance, like every principal in this day and age, she deals with considerable religious as well as racial diversity, but

while she exhibits sensitivity to all beliefs and positions and is judicious in her selection of signs and symbols, she refuses to strip her school of seasonal celebrations. She is, however, extremely careful to provide for those who choose not to participate.

Cathy believes that the most important factor in her success is that her school is politically unimportant. If she were in a high profile place, an achievement oriented program as demonstrated by scores on standardized tests would be required. But, because most of the children who come to her school have already been thrown away, no one cares what goes on so long as there are no calls to the administrative center. Therefore, Cathy is much freer than the average principal to develop a program that meets the needs of her constituents.

Cathy's primary belief is that when the traditional family fails as she thinks it has in a shocking number of cases, the schools must act as surrogates. School must have the courage and fortitude to provide love and discipline, and set high expectations as well as tend to all of children's physical needs including food, clothing and health care. Teachers must also be prepared to nurture all of the children and instill basic values like the Golden Rule. "While I believe in involving the parents to the utmost and while I really do think that every parent wants the best for their children--even when

drugs keep them from exhibiting that concern--if schools don't raise the children, no one will." In that regard, Cathy admits that she wants to distance many of her children as much as she can from their home environments by making school a special and wonderful place where kids are loved, treated with dignity and where they feel safe. A significant problem for Cathy and her staff is that the children don't want to leave the school. While the school is open 11 1/2 hours each day and operates on a year-round schedule, many of the them are disturbed the day before vacation and on Friday, because they know they can't come back the next day.

Cathy is very open about the fact that within her school she does as much as possible to override the system. She struggles to build a sense of community rather than raise test scores. She has done away with aggressive competition to the extent that state regulations will allow. She develops strategies based on her belief that the only way to help her students get ready to survive in the outside cutthroat world is to give them unconditional love and acceptance. If she could she would make all classes into multiage and multigrade learning groups. She has been successful in turning her budget for the academically gifted into a total school enrichment program. All students go to "AG," which removes the stigma it has among Black students in other

schools. She justifies this model through her belief that many of her students are very very bright, but because of their backgrounds, they have linguistic deficits. She sees them as global learners who have unparalleled ability to think quickly and solve problems which they prove every day of their lives on the streets.

Cathy contends that we know how to provide programs that would ultimately diminish the number of people on welfare. The early childhood program at her school that works with women and their children from conception until the children enter kindergarten is a perfect example. Cathy says, "The research is done. We need prenatal care, early childhood education, parent education, and quality elementary schools. We know how to structure schools. We can, but we don't!"

Cathy believes that society doesn't want to make up the kinds of deficits her students have because it is important to the economy to maintain an underclass. She thinks the intent is clear in the way we fund education and in the things we emphasize and reward. Cathy avers that there is a conspiracy for economic benefit that is accomplished by transforming everything into a statistical problem. "The education structure is driven by economics. We have to keep a large pool of unemployed. School is for grading, sorting and a holding pen." Cathy believes that to get education on track and to save our children we must

begin to consider the implications of what we do for individual lives and the whole question of quality.

### Interpretation

There were many extraordinary facets to my conversation with Cathy. First, like Rachel, she was completely straightforward, but her clarity was remarkable. Even though she had only a general idea about what I would ask and what I was interested in learning, she obviously had thought through every issue I presented and she was prepared to speak about each of them. Second, Cathy's thinking about education and the function of schools definitely diverges from the norm and she is fearless in stating her opinions. Third, Cathy has found a way to communicate her thinking so that no one is alienated enough to prevent her from doing what compels her. In this regard she emulates Dorothy Heathcote's notion that real creativity is going as close to the edge as possible without falling over. Finally, Cathy has a definite theory of education that not only grounds her practice but is in reflexive relationship with it.

Because Cathy's practice is firmly grounded in theory and because she is so talented at committing people to her cause, she has been able to guide her staff toward a vision of education that enables them to work joyfully with the extremely needy children in her school. Cathy

has infused her belief into the thinking of her staff that the American family is failing and that schools are the only agency with enough resources and adequate access to the children to make a difference in the deplorable condition of many of them. She worries openly that the circumstances of so many children is a dark portent of things to come that will affect all of us. During her tenure the school staff has come to accept responsibility for the affective as well as the cognitive aspects of children's development and they now also accept responsibility for nurturing heretofore unlovable children. The burden is tremendous and far more complex than the sum of what extended families and school were once expected to do cooperatively. The only precedent for this full integration of functions is the orphanages of the 19th and first half of the 20th century which had very mixed and often dire results. But, under Cathy's guidance the teachers and staff seem ready to take up the challenges. They now take pride in how few suspensions they have each year. They welcomed the year-round calendar and the 11 1/2 hour days because those structures limit the time the children are away from school. Teachers and other staff members are being slowly educated to see achievement in much broader terms than scores on standardized tests. They have come to enjoy the noncompetitive atmosphere where grades are deemphasized

and all aggressive behaviors are discouraged. The staff now accepts the notion that all children have strengths that should be developed and they now support the idea that it is credible to divert the funds for the academically gifted program for the benefit of all of the students.

Because the entire staff is guided by Cathy's vision, everyone cooperates to afford the children many opportunities that they would not have in another environment. I have no indication of Cathy's conscious intent, but it is interesting that many of these experiences are somatically based. For instance, the cafeteria is decorated on a regular basis for a formal lunches with linen, indirect lighting and entertainment. Children and teachers dress-up for these occasions that have become much anticipated monthly events. Cathy has established a formal partnership with a large and influential arts organization in the community and the entire staff has worked with a artists-in-residence to develop learning opportunities for the students that relate sound, movement, touch as well as sight to the traditional curriculum. The visual art program is very strong, integrated into the traditional program, and the art from the school is consistently among the award winners. A dance teacher and a drama teacher are in residence two months each year and requests from the staff

for their services far exceed the time they are in the school. A clogging team that performs throughout the county rehearses several times a week with help from the entire staff to procure tap shoes and costumes. The physical appearance of the school radiates warmth and love. The staff scours rummage and yard sales for bargains. Every room has a sofa, comfortable chairs and lamps. The bear is the school mascot and teddy bears turn up in every nook and cranny. The lobby is filled with them and they are redressed and rearranged for every season and every occasion, which echoes Morris Berman's notions about the human need for "transitional objects" that is particular to this culture.<sup>9</sup> If he is correct, and if Cathy is correct, the teddy bear is a very important figure in any setting that is charged with the tasks of both nurturing children and introducing them to the outside, objective world.

Cathy's belief that the schools must take full responsibility for the lives of individual children as the first step in rebuilding the social fabric of the nation takes her perilously close to coopting parents. While she works with parents at every opportunity, she admittedly develops strategies at every juncture for intervening in lives of children as quickly and thoroughly as the political climate will allow. Through the year-round schedule and the extended day program, she has



successfully intensified her school's influence on the students' lives. The cooption is offset somewhat by the respect she insists that every member of the school community is due and the attempts to involve families in the school's vision through such measures as running buses to neighborhoods to pick-up family members for conferences and assemblies and moving PSAT meetings into the public housing project where many of the students live. In lesser hands, these seemingly opposing techniques would become a disconnected group of counterproductive strategies. In contrast, Cathy's clear vision has molded them into a finely woven tapestry that gently but firmly holds the children. Taken together the interventions coupled with the attempts to bring parents into some relationship to their children's education has the effect of providing a network that will prevent the students from slipping through the cracks.

The joy that Cathy has created at her school is inspiring. It is impressive that she would choose to apply her intellect, charm and clarity of vision in behalf of many truly underprivileged children. But all of Cathy's work and all of her emphasis on regarding every child as valuable and potentially able to contribute to society could be interpreted as more talk that adds up to fitting children to the system rather than designing a system that benefits them. Certainly, she makes no

apology for preparing her students in the best way she knows to deal with the cutthroat world that awaits them. And, she has a clear idea of what that world is about. Her description is stark. Her talk about our economically dominated educational system, the consciousness at the top that she believes drives it, and the duplicity that is shot through the entire culture regarding the rewards of hard work actually conjure up the images similar to those that Charlie Chaplin created in his films. She speaks so powerfully about the discrepancies between what we know and what we do as to evoke visions of evil. She goes beyond Berman's interpretation in that she is convinced that the culture's penchant for positing truth exclusively in empirical data that undergoes statistical analysis is a plot to keep the power elite firmly ensconced in positions of control. Furthermore, she believes that the only reason she is free to develop a program that serves her children is that the system is so powerful that children who free themselves from their cultural milieu will be insignificant anomalies. In the preferred language, they will be statistical outliers, all of which raises the question of if she believes the system is so bad, how can she continue to operate within it.

The answer appears to be twofold. First, Cathy is not a revolutionary. In contrast, she keeps trying to make the system evolve and improve. The many roles she

has filled are probably testimony to her sense that there should be an established place within the system where she can make her influence felt beyond her immediate surroundings. In spite of the fact that her experience belies her sense, she keeps trying to make the things she knows work for children systemic and beneficial to everyone. Second, Cathy's school is very similar to my "lively spaces." Everyone applauds them, but no one does anything to extend them or their influence. The lack of notice that the outstanding results the Black children in Cathy's school have achieved on standardized tests is an excellent example. Educators say they are concerned about the discrepancy between the achievement levels of majority and minority children. Cathy stated that in her school the Black children significantly outscore the minority children in the system as a whole. If what she says is so, good sense should dictate that with all of the emphasis on test scores that top level administrators would energetically research why and how this is happening in one school in a large system. But, the achievement of these children is virtually ignored and not so much as a nod is given to Cathy or her staff for solving what causes everyone else to wring their hands. The whole issue is obviously little more than hot air. So why does Cathy keep on keeping on? Like my "lively spaces" Cathy is creating gaps in the system that permit children at a

particular time and in a particular place to experience beauty, to be part of a community and to gain some sense of who they are. Therein, lies enough hope and satisfaction for Cathy to continue. The pain of individual children's lives is at least momentarily alleviated and their horizons are to some degree expanded and brightened. And, things may actually have gone beyond that in Cathy's school! The children and teachers are on the verge of exploring the meaningful, unanswerable questions of life. The third graders and their teachers recently researched the whole question of capturing wild animals and keeping them in zoos. This year the fifth graders and their teachers explored the use of mathematical concepts to depict the concept of honor in visual art and in dance. Under Cathy's guidance, the students and staff appear to be working toward the horizontal connections where everyone learns together and from each other that both Freire and Berman contend give education authenticity. In the spirit of Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins, at Cathy's school, the students and the staff are in the process of joining together in a learning community that attends to all of the affective as well as the cognitive needs of each member. For everyone who is in some positive relationship to Cathy, her staff, the students and their parents, the school is a beacon. It is a wonderful example of the

success of horizontal connections. In contrast to the cultural norm, the future is discounted and the focus is on living in the present. Cathy's school is much more than a preparation for life. It is life.

### The Quartet

Through my years as an educator I have come to accept that the purpose of administration is to keep school systems operating according to Hoyle. Even though the appearance is that restrictions on individual schools and teachers are easing through the institution of policies like site-based management, legislated procedures that concentrate power centrally continue to maintain and strengthen the hierarchy. For instance, budgets are determined centrally and controlled according to state mandated accounting procedures. Purchasing is strictly controlled by legislation that includes state-issued contracts for equipment and materials that range from simple office supplies to sound systems and copy machines. Evaluations of teachers, principals and staff are based on technical models of educator training that are contrary to the ideas put forth by Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins. Furthermore, assessments of students' progress are confined almost exclusively to calculating the numbers they score on standardized tests that are restricted to a significant degree to recall of

information and technical ability to manipulate language and algorithms. Even the standards for evaluating student writing are strictly prescribed.<sup>10</sup> In fact, all of the latest political machinations are forcing education into an increasingly prescriptive mode that reinforces the all too prevalent notion that there is a perfect design and an ideal method that will meet both the needs of students and the culture.<sup>11</sup> To give the "devil his due," however, it is important to note that schools have often exhibited questionable judgement when they have been given the power to make financial and staffing decisions. There is a decided propensity to eliminate funds and positions formerly allocated to arts programs and to divert them into science or even athletic programs and to programs to contain disorderly students all of which can be explained by the pervasiveness and strength of the dominant ideology.

As I contemplate the current prescriptive trends, it is both inevitable and mandatory that I continue to ask how I fit into the overall scheme. While I derive considerable joy from the programs I am responsible for that are essentially concerned with issues of the human spirit and critical awareness, the constant struggle to maintain them as viable parts of the school programs demonstrates the general lack of understanding or the out-and-out rejection of their importance. Even though I

am able to create experiences that I have termed "lively spaces" that have what I consider to be real possibilities for helping people develop as fully conscious human beings, there is no way I can deny that I am part of a system that works against many of the things that I believe are intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, aesthetically, physically and spiritually essential. As I thought about the obvious discrepancies that are encapsulated in the differences between my job and my work, I wondered if I am alone in my discomfort as a system-wide administrator or if there are others among my peers who have doubts and concerns. To determine if other people who are charged with lending coherence to a large urban system are similarly troubled and if so, how they deal with the resulting tensions, paradoxes and dilemmas, I talked to three people. All of them work at the Administrative Center and have responsibilities parallel to my own. My past experience with each of them is that they are thoughtful, open and forthcoming. I knew their opinions about and interpretations of our work situation would be interesting and valuable to this study, so I asked them to come together with me to discuss ourselves and our responsibilities within a large, urban school system. We met over dinner and engaged in nearly two hours of intense and open conversation about our hopes, dreams, frustrations and common concerns about

education in general, our school system in particular and our functions within it. Everyone was aware that I was going to glean material from our conversation for my dissertation. The tape recorder was in plain sight. Of course, I promised anonymity, but I expected the other conditions would make the participants somewhat guarded. However, I was surprised at the free and open discussion. Perhaps the thirst for in-depth conversation about bothersome issues was great enough to overcome all inhibitions. At any rate, it was an interesting and enriching evening.

We began by discussing whom the educational system serves best. The three key constituencies that make demands on the schools were clearly defined as the industrial complex that wants trained workers who will increase corporate profits; the humanists who believe school should develop everyone's individuality and talents; and the social scientists who want to equalize everyone's opportunities and who join with those who are politically minded and want schools to educate students to be participating members of a democracy. The implication was that as a result of the heavy demands of these constituencies, schools are unable to develop a clear vision, and, furthermore, they lack adequate means to satisfy the often conflicting demands imposed on them by the vast array of constituencies that hold stakes in how



and why they operate. Echoes of Michael Apple's contention that all of the contestations of society are mediated in the schools resounded through this opening phase of the conversation. Thinking of the students that Tim Rollins mentored, I asked if kids who are excluded from regular or gifted education fit into academic, political, social or humanistic conceptualizations of education. All of the participants agreed that a whole group of students have been tossed away and one person made the interesting point that the system does everything possible to almost totally isolate and give extra benefits to students who make the highest scores on standardized tests. Simultaneously and with no sense of the irony involved, it has been legislated that students at the other end of the achievement score spectrum will be provided with the least restrictive possible environment and they are mainstreamed into a system where they have already failed. I described my "lively spaces" and how I try to create them so that they serve and join many categories of students and teachers. I also told of my aspirations to develop them to the point that they expand what Michael Apple defines as "the range of possible actions."<sup>12</sup> I explained how I want to figure ways to expand consciousness so that quality and the creation of community become serious educational concerns as well as the emotional, aesthetic and spiritual growth of students.

That enormous odds are allied against such a change was apparent to everyone which turned the conversation to why, beyond monetary concerns, we keep working in a system that so often is deadening rather than enlivening. We talked about the pervasive pattern of assigning multitudinous technical tasks to anyone who has been especially effective or innovative. Whether it is the erroneous but innocent thinking that important tasks should be given to capable people or if it is a plan to check heterodoxy, the result is the same. The energy and motivation of creative people is sapped and they either leave education or give in to the requirements that they become proficient at keeping the system's machinery in good working order. Either way, the system uses up creative and energetic people and the chances for innovation and change diminish.

The question of the effectiveness of working within the system to bring about change was probed in depth. The consensus opinion was interesting and probably predictable. The group was firm that you must be on the inside and learn to work the bureaucracy for your own purposes to accomplish anything out of the ordinary. Schindler of book and movie fame who joined the Nazis to help the Jews was offered as an example.<sup>13</sup> While Schindler made life and death differences for many individuals, I made the observation that he had not succeeded in changing the system. An analogy emerged

between my work and Schlindler's in terms of using the system and its machinery for my own ends. While my "lively spaces" affect many individual lives, they probably have little chance of making a systemic difference as they are now constituted. The thought was, however, that anyone interested in doing anything other than giving total support to the system must learn to drive the bureaucracy in contrast to being driven by it. In that regard, another participant talked of focused efforts to help teachers and students find purpose and make meaning through integrating the fragmented pieces of their lives which was captured in the phrase, "connect the dots." In a manner reminiscent of Paulo Freire the talk turned to the love that must exist between students and teachers and a sort of hermeneutic relationship that grows from connecting things in a way that enhances communication and increases the information flow, and the need to constantly assess both for their intrinsic value for students and teaching. Thoughts of a grand design created by a higher power entered the conversation along with the notion that some people are given extraordinary bureaucratic skills to be in a position where they can work effectively to implement the improved concepts and practices that they as well as others have developed. The sense of being part of a plan designed by a divine power stoked the enthusiasm of one participant and

interestingly, doors to broader influence seem to be opening for that person who is amazed at the different treatment that is forthcoming from outside the system as compared to the rejection or, at best, neglect from our system that many of us experience for what we consider to be our best thinking and work. As a result we feel diminished and threatened. The idea emerged that the personal challenge for each of us in the face of these dramatic discrepancies is a problem of continuously "connecting our own dots."

The question of whether emphasis on any level is placed on making meaning as compared to grasping someone else's meaning was considered. The response was that there is very little regard for making meaning at any level and that the focus especially for the academically gifted is on acquiring enough information and technical skill to get admitted to a highly rated college. The consensus was that little, if any, emphasis in education is currently placed on understanding, connecting or relating, and, in fact, children are trained to regard everything and everybody as an object to be used for their own advantage. Furthermore, if there is nothing utilitarian to be gained, they are encouraged to ignore both people and things. The analogy was drawn between the values we instill in children and the utilitarian, controlling, hierarchical organization of educational

bureaucracies and how all of the bosses in those organizations regard everyone below them as resources at their disposal. The notion was posited that the design of the educational establishment precludes people's best work; fosters managers who devote themselves to the status quo; and discourages leaders who could break into whole new areas.

Thinking about the hierarchical structure we work within brought us to questions of communication and trust. Everyone agreed that very little is communicated out of the Superintendent's inner circle and because all of the members of that group are protecting their own interests they are very wary of each other. Feelings of distrust filter down which encourages political infighting and limits what is considered to be acceptable discourse among people from different departments. The result is either no communication and disjointed delivery of services or, at best, technical conversations on inconsequential subjects such as how to schedule music teachers among twenty middle and high schools that each have different timetables as well as programmatic considerations. We talked about the prime example of the lack of communication that the school system has suffered from for ten years. In 1984, ten school buildings were sold or given away based on some incomplete demographic projections. In spite of the fact that the top officials

were warned that they had better calculate the numbers in a different way, the determination was made that the good press that would result from the apparent monetary savings would more than make up for the possibility of faulty figures. The schools have been seriously overcrowded ever since and if the next bond referendum doesn't pass, hundreds of mobile units must be purchased to house the students and existing programs. A brief discussion about the power of the press and its ability to shape educational policies and procedures grew out of this phase of the conversation. An especially dramatic example that was noted is in regard to the parents of students classified as academically gifted and how they have successfully established a private school within the public system for their children by playing all of the angles including skillful manipulation of the newspapers.

The question of whether we do anything better than we did twenty years ago evoked an astonishingly clear insight from one of the conversants. He said "We employ a hell-of-a lot more people! . . . We've enlarged the bureaucracy." Because the instructional staff continually takes the hits when cuts are called for, it never occurred to me that the numbers of bureaucrats had continued to grow. When I questioned how this could be, several examples were identified. Among them were the numbers of people who are needed to identify students for and

maintain them in exceptional children's programs because of the legislated controls; the legislated mandates that require utilization of specific accounting procedures and specific accounting software as well as the plethora of purchasing restrictions that require extra personnel to keep the school system out of legal difficulty and the extra certification and graduation requirements that have also resulted in staff increases. Meanwhile the general instructional staff has been decimated. It appears that the manner in which one instructional program after another finds momentary favor and is piloted here and there is simply one more unwitting ploy designed to give the impression that progress toward more and better education for all is underway, while a close look at the facts indicates that the undergirding that is necessary for meaningful change to occur like reduced class sizes, opportunities for teachers to work together and leaders with vision that are empowered to connect teachers to more appropriate and broadened concepts of education have been chipped away. At the same time, the legislated requirements that result in increased staff in areas like finance, purchasing and exceptional children continue the process of firming central control in technical areas that entrenches the existing system more deeply without the benefit of the balance that strong instructional development could provide.

When the question of "who is the system" emerged, there was no answer beyond the machinery that is comprised of policies and procedures that keeps education in the same mold it has traditionally filled. The consensus was that the current form is preserved because it benefits enough of the right people like the population that themselves were successful in a traditional model of schooling and who have successfully matriculated right on up to positions of influence. They now reciprocate by using their power to obtain the same or better opportunities for their offspring.

The conversation ended with a discussion of our own uneasy feeling about meeting and talking honestly, openly and critically about our jobs and our profession. We agreed that the entire system is aimed more at indoctrination than education which raised the unpleasant spectra of its duplicitous nature. The rather profound observation of one participant was that all of the talk about curriculum alignment begs the real issue which is the problem of aligning the system's values with the values of teachers, students, parents, other staff and the multitude of values that exist within these groups. The expressed hope was that if a small group of educators could ban together around authentic educational issues with a positive integrated focus, the generated energy would attract additional people so that there would be



sufficient momentum equal to the challenge of bringing about change. The problem that everyone acknowledged is that it is uncomfortable to be at odds with the system and even more problematic to discuss the generally unnamed issues. All of us felt subversive. Obviously the system has a virtual strangle hold. A multitude of reasons like concern about continued employment, lack of energy, discomfort with differences of opinion and confrontation neutralize people and render them mute. However, the participants agreed that it is exciting to be with others whose sense is that things have got to change and to honestly share concerns.

### Interpretation

There is a ubiquitous perception among teachers who work with students everyday and among principals that system-wide administrators are insensitive to the needs of schools. This perception, accurate or not, contributes to the cold, intimidating, abrasive image that is attached to central administration. While the net effect of the work that is done and the behaviors that are found at the administrative center may match this perception, the conversation with my three colleagues who have centralized bureaucratic responsibilities revealed an unexpected level of awareness and a desire to find ways to make changes that would result in an education system that is more

holistic, organic, open and responsive. There was considerable concern among them for developing educational vision that includes many more components than the current narrow focus on transmitting what we take for truth about the objective world. Implicit understanding of the concept of the social construction of reality was apparent in the faith the participants expressed in people's critical capacities, in their good will, their energy and in their ability to change. Although one participant did speak as if there is a definite right way for teachers and for kids, the understanding of the artificial and arbitrary nature of current categories, classifications and disciplines was also implicit in most of the conversation as was the need to connect horizontally in contrast to the current bureaucratic hierarchy. In that regard, two thoughts occurred to me as a result of this conversation. First, the hierarchical organization keeps people apart which prevents critical mass from developing that would make change inevitable. Second, this tendency to isolate people makes it easy for educators and others to stereotype people according to their functions within the bureaucracy. Criticism is, thereby, largely aimed at individuals which successfully deflects serious concerns from being directed at the system.

The analysis of how the system works was insightful. Everyone agreed that it uses people as

objects, weighing them down with technical duties and sapping their energy. All of the participants regarded the system as unforgivably duplicitous in that it sends messages of hope and of the possibilities for truly responding to the needs of children that will help them grow toward critically aware and fully functioning adults while shoring up the rules and regulations that are designed to unalterably fix things and cast them in stone. Any maneuvering within the system thereby, becomes very difficult. Furthermore, the system fosters wariness and distrust through structures that encourage turf development and protection that are transformed into power bases and used for influence peddling. Therefore, authentic communication becomes almost impossible and serving the students is only a secondary goal because preserving one's position requires pleasing whoever occupies the next step in the hierarchy. As a result, the system is focused on self-preservation that is achieved through formal and informal emphasis on procedures and techniques. While these measures do provide an "education" of sorts for teachers and others employees who must operate within what amounts to folkways, mores and laws of the education culture, they have little or nothing to do with educating students.

Interesting insights that grew out of the discussion included the realization that great effort is

devoted to isolating those that score well on standardized tests and equal effort is given to including those students at the opposite end of the spectrum in the regular program which creates an interesting elite class that in some ways resembles an aristocracy; that the system fosters managers who are charged with maintaining the status quo rather than leaders; and that contrary to appearances and because of legislated requirements, our litigious society and the myriad of court orders, the educational bureaucracy has increased almost exclusively in areas that have little or no bearing on instruction. The pattern that has continued as a measure to satisfy the current politics is to further diminish the size of the instructional staff which makes the chances for change even more remote.

The talk was an example of the kind of authentic communication that Paulo Freire champions in that it was open, honest and gave all participants the opportunity to discuss their hopes and dreams as well as their concerns, frustrations and the tensions they experience. Furthermore, the group advocated for extended networks of similarly conversing educators as a first step in the change process. While the issue of unanswerable questions about the human condition as the basis for education was not openly discussed, it is a short step from the talk that did occur about connections, trust, meaning making

and education for true understanding to Dorothy Heathcote's probing, searching model that is designed to expand and create new consciousness and Brecht's alienation techniques that expose the ideological underpinnings of the culture as well as the educational practices that grow from them.

It was interesting that the discussion revealed a certain level of discomfort and fear at the thought of rocking the boat too much. For one reason or another all of us want to keep our jobs. Therefore, everyone appeared to be searching for justifications for continuing to work in a system that is so troublesome as indicated by the talk about how important it is to operate inside the system to be effective. Reasons ranged from the experience of powerlessness when one tries to work outside the system, to the need for some degree of financial security, to not yet being willing to give up on the system. Finally, the admission by everyone that we felt subversive for meeting and talking in the authentic, straightforward manner revealed our own fear of the system and our knowledge of how it uses its power. In spite of the fact that each of us believes in the need for change and along with Paulo Freire that authentic dialogue is the first step toward that end, none of us was completely comfortable in connecting with each other in this way. In fact, we agreed to meet again to pursue some of the rich

topics that were raised and call out for further exploration. But, everyone found a reason to cancel the additional session we scheduled and so far no more in-depth conversations have occurred among members of this group.

I suspect that some of the problem is the perception that the risks of meeting in this way are too great and the thought that if we continued we would be trapped into action by the consciousness and conscience we had collectively developed, and it is obvious that none of us is ready to undertake the responsibilities of revolution. After all, each of us have undoubtedly had experiences when the system flexed its muscles to help children in ways that individuals or small groups would have been unable to manage. I think of teachers I have known who crossed the delicate line that destroyed the trust placed in them. Without a strong system that was capable of taking hold, it is frightening to think of what could have happened in some of those cases. Beyond the normal amount of human reluctance, timidity and cowardice, probably the fear lurked in each of us that without the support of the system, we would be unequal to the enormous challenges of establishing and maintaining educational integrity in these tumultuous times. Undoubtedly, there is something of the psychology of the master-slave relationship operating that Paulo Freire describes.<sup>14</sup> We

are probably terrified of being free. In our behalf, however, the issue extends to the problem of how to act responsibly in a complex and quickly changing world. The question of taking serious issue with something so intensely institutionalized as education raises the discussion of the courage, effort and tension involved in bringing about positive change. Each of the four of us who participated in this conversation believes that education should be placed on a different footing, but we are also aware of the devastation that is possible when an old and honored institution is leveled when there are only visions and unstructured dreams to replace it.

#### Conclusion

There is no question that all five of the people I talked to have the best interests of the school system at heart. For the sake of those students and the future, they would like nothing better than to see the system succeed. All of them would like to do whatever they can to improve education for children everywhere. Each of the people seemed eager and even hungry to discuss their individual takes on the issues, and they expressed the belief that honest, straightforward discussions can lead to improvement. They did voice discomfort at speaking about things that are somewhat contrary to the system's official position which is some indication of how closed

the system is to serious open discussions of a critical nature. However, that reluctance is also an expression of responsible people who are unwilling to commit themselves prematurely to a course that could make matters worse either by destroying what is in place when there is no viable replacement or by diminishing the opportunities for children who must grow up in the culture as it is currently constituted. The first alternative is about a revolutionary tide that sweeps everything in its path. The latter is about failing to provide children with the skills that the culture requires. Neither appears to the people I engaged in conversation as an acceptable alternative to the current system, because the power of the objective, positivistic conception of the world that has held sway for many years must not be underestimated. Even if that "dog has had his day," it will die slowly and hard, and, while each of the educators I engaged in conversation is at least to some degree aware of the limitations of the positivistic view of the universe and its attendant mode of educating the young, it will be a long time before another notion takes form and generates enough energy to give sense to the raw experiences of life. To make up for the discrepancies between the current model of education and the actual needs of children as they encounter them daily, the two principals walk a tightrope between official policies, procedures and



even legalities and the desire to assist their students to become healthy, fully functioning adults who are aesthetically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally developed and critically aware.

Generally, each discussion was interesting, energizing and sometimes inspiring. Everyone thought change was in order, but that it would be difficult because the hierarchical system is so firmly in control. All of the participants had special insights into its workings and the implications of established policies and procedures. They agreed, however, that the current organization precludes the kind of open naming dialogue that we were engaged in and so long as decisions are made and administered from the top down without a structure that encourages trust and free, open exchange of ideas, very little will change. While the limitations are great, everyone was encouraged to find others interested in talking about the issues in an informed and intelligent way. They also appeared to agree with Paulo Freire that open, honest discussion is the initial step in the change process.

Cathy had the clearest and most comprehensive view of the underlying, foundational subtext of schools and of the implications for the culture. Rachel is more at ease with the economic and political system than Cathy and has a difficult time accepting what she knows is true about

the hidden agenda of schools. Both of them acknowledge the pressure of mediating the differences between what they know is helpful and the policies and procedures that bind them. They continue because they are buoyed by the children and their staffs and they do everything they can to protect them from restrictions they regard as counterproductive and in some cases deadening.

The standard for improvement that was implicit in all of the conversations appeared to be movement away from the current, ubiquitous, technical, skill oriented training that now passes for education and toward programs that provide experience, broaden horizons and develop critical consciousness. Both principals are very active in that regard. They are engaged in developing opportunities for their students and staffs that will connect them to the larger world and give them the sense that there is a relationship between school and life as it is lived beyond the schoolhouse doors. The central office people were more focused on a theoretical plan that indicates the nature of the gap between central office and schools. It probably explains the hint of a "we vs. us" gap in the conversation with each principal lending emphasis to the function of informal personal relationships in connecting the various parts of a hierarchical bureaucracy in contrast to what would exist

in a structure designed to encourage the exchange of ideas.

The central office administrators felt more restricted than the principals. A possible explanation is that their functions revolve around establishing and maintaining some degree of coherence throughout the system which enmeshes them firmly in policies and procedures rather than directly in the day-to-day lives and fortunes of children. It is obvious that the children enliven the principals as they mediate between the policies and procedures they must honor and the acute human needs that the students carry with them. Regular contact with students is indeed a benefit that central office administrators do not enjoy in the current scheme of things. While none of them expressed a desire to reclaim teaching responsibilities, I wonder how the system would be changed if all bureaucrats including financial officers, lawyers and even superintendents were required to do some regular, structured teaching. It would be interesting to see how seemingly mindless policies and procedures would be affected if the makers and enforcers were required to implement and abide by them in yeasty classroom settings.

If nothing else, my conversations with these five people demonstrated Paulo Freire's notions of the power of open, heartfelt, unassuming dialogue. There is no

question that each of us who participated was energized; that all of us formed new ideas and gained new insights through the process of talking to each other in earnest; and that while none of us was completely willing to come into the open with our views, each of us had the sense that if the conversations were continued, we would have no recourse except to search for the means to take action. From a personal standpoint and for the research purposes of this paper, these conversations proved the notions that every person has vast critical capability; that everyone possesses important knowledge and no one has a corner on the knowledge market; and that everyone's consciousness can be expanded and changed. It seemed as if the participants in these conversations were engaged in the kind of educational process that is advocated by Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins. The relationships were horizontal. There was no pretense or posturing. The discussions increased critical awareness that made the familiar strange. Each of us felt emotionally, psychologically, mentally and spiritually involved and enriched. The only thing missing was the sensual experience that participating in art making could have provided which is what I suggested for the second meeting with the central system administrators which never occurred. In large measure the conversations demonstrated beyond a reasonable doubt that the concept of education as

the intervention in consciousness is a reasonable and viable concept which leads me to the conclusion that meaningful change that constructs rather than deconstructs is a slow and painstaking process of developing many pieces that are carefully taken together in a manner not unlike a work of modern art.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Berman, 1989, throughout.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 91 and Throughout.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., Throughout.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>A local free-lance writer recently recounted her son's experience on the state prescribed writing test. The students were asked to describe a kitchen. He received a low score because he not only talked about the things he imagined he would see, but also those he would smell, touch, taste and feel rather than restricting his essay exclusively to sight.

<sup>11</sup>The recent requirement by the North Carolina Legislature to make phonics the preferred method of reading instruction is a good example.

<sup>12</sup>Apple, 1982, p. 166.

<sup>13</sup>Keneally Thomas, Schindler's List, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982.

Schindler's List (videorecording)/an Amblian Entertainment Production, Directed by Steven Spielberg, Produced by Steven Spielberg, Gerald R. Molin, Branko Lustig, Screenplay by Steven Zaillian, Letterboxed ed., Universal City, Ca: MCA Universal Home Video, 1994.

<sup>14</sup>Freire, 1970, Chapter I, pp. 27-56.

CHAPTER IV  
POSSIBILITY, HOPE AND FAITH

As I contemplate the essence of this paper, I become increasingly aware that it has been a marvelous journey of meaning making. Through the labors of reading, thinking, discussing, reflecting and writing I have connected many seemingly disparate elements of my life and practice and I have struggled to shape them into work that has sense and significance. Through this effort my life experiences have taken on new relevance and relationships to my work. Careful examination of who I am and what I do has directed the form and content of my research. My life experiences, my work and my research have become the foundation of my belief that the current educational paradigm is inadequate as well as for my vision for education. Through this effort toward relevance and wholeness, the paper has taken on aesthetic dimensions. In that vein, it is often recounted that Michelangelo studied every block of marble to discover the form that was trapped inside before he ever took up his tools. While this paper can in no way be compared to a great work of art, it does share that quality of emergence in that it has come forth from a previously inadequately examined

life and experiences that are an analogue for a seemingly impenetrable, undifferentiated mass of marble. Mosaic, however, is probably a more accurate form for comparison than sculpture because each of the many pieces that are important to the form and content of this paper are substantial, separate and have some integrity in and of themselves. However, taken together they become something much greater than the total of the individual pieces. In this way, the paper parallels my life in that both represent a struggle to connect things so that the whole is authentic, balanced, meaningful, greater than the sum of the parts and so that there are at least hints of elegance and beauty.

In the first chapter I tried to make sense of the bits and pieces of my life and to bring to consciousness how they have connected to form part of the undergirding for my educational views. I am reminded of an unmortared wall that is constructed of many stones of very different sizes and shapes and the way they are connected with respect to each other in long-standing monuments of human practical and aesthetic ingenuity. In those first pages I explored how I have struggled to work within the system to open it up and how, from a somewhat arrogant or perhaps naive estimate of what I thought I could accomplish, I have come to accept that my efforts will be confined to the creation of what I term "lively spaces." Limited as



they are by the current focus and organization of education which is the foundation for both the sterile physical as well as spiritual environment where what passes for teaching transpires, "lively spaces" address the obvious hunger that students and teachers have for holistic, enlivening, joyful experiences by providing opportunities in school settings that contribute to the full, integrated, physical, emotional, psychological, intellectual and spiritual development of the participants. "Lively spaces" also include possibilities for relating the experience of school to the outside world, joining individual lived experience to the large enigmatic questions of the human condition and for awakening and developing curiosity and critical awareness in pursuit of understanding and meaning making. The pedagogy of "lively spaces" consists of carefully formed, intense, vibrant events that ideally include dialogue and reflective elements and that are specifically designed to suit the students and teachers who partake of their substance. Of course, what I aspire to is transformation of the entire school experience into a series of interrelated "lively spaces" which is the source of a significant portion of my frustration. I am fully aware that until there is a shift in the cultural consciousness and, hence, what constitutes schooling, I will have to continue to engage in wily maneuvering to be about what I

consider to be my real work. Therefore, as long as I continue to be employed in a public school setting, I must endure the tension of moving against the grain. I ended the first chapter with questions that I formulated out of my own life and its connections to my years as an educator. These questions coalesce around issues of connection in contrast to the current mode of separation and fragmentation; of the limitations imposed by the current organization and structure of education; of the inattention to the importance of creativity, critical awareness and meaning making in the way we currently conceptualize the educational experience; and whether sufficient energy exists to form a base for reconceptualization of educational theory and the reformulation of school practices. These questions set the tone for the inquiry that comprises the remainder of the dissertation.

Through the years, my work with students has led me to believe that all people have the capacity to grow, develop, and become more critically capable through an education that is undergirded with aesthetic, experiential and meaning making considerations. In Chapter II, I connected my work and my vision of education to thinkers and practitioners of considerable stature whose work points in similar directions. Morris Berman and his theory that is explicated in his book, Coming to Our

Senses, are foundational.<sup>1</sup> Berman holds that the Cartesian paradigm of universally applicable truth and the supremacy of disembodied mind that form the basis for the scientific focus and the hierarchical organization of the modern era are exhausted. As a replacement he offers an integrated model of horizontal connections that is based on the notion of somatic experience as the primary if not the exclusive means of coming to know wherein the entire "world would become a work of art."<sup>2</sup> Paulo Freire adds the dimensions of the educative power of the spoken word and authentic communication, and of how a reflexive relationship between authentic words and actions that constitute praxis invests both words and actions with significance and meaning. Master teacher, Dorothy Heathcote is an exemplar of praxis who utilizes her expertise in drama to bring her students to new levels of critical awareness and competence in her quest to help them develop into full, connected human beings. Like Mrs. Heathcote, the playwright, Bertholt Brecht, also held to a belief in the extraordinary power of the dramatic form to lift minds out of the "taken-for-truth" reality and to help people achieve new levels of critical awareness enabling them to identify controlling ideas and to assess them as alterable contruals. Visual artist and teacher, Tim Rollins, represents a new generation of artists and educators that understands the shortcomings of the modern

educational paradigm and who believes that all human beings have a capacity to make meaning and to improve their critical capabilities. Taken together, the ideas of Berman, Freire, Mrs. Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins comprise a vision of the world and of people that would foster a holistic educational model designed to develop body, mind and spirit; that focuses on critical awareness and the ever changing and changeable character of reality; and the basic necessity for connectedness in coming to know.

Through my work that developed into Chapter II, I gained considerable theoretical insight into what a new and fuller vision of education might be. In accord with that vision, an important premise of this paper is that thought must always be accompanied by action and it is mandatory that the two be in reflexive relationship. It seemed imperative, therefore, that I supplement my theoretical investigations with some sense of practice which I prefaced with personal explorations of how ingrained hierarchical, bureaucratic structures and separations that form the basis for the educational system are. To gain some understanding of how these things affect the day to day operations of schools and the bureaucracy as well as whether there is vision beyond the controlling paradigm, I searched out five fellow educators that I perceived have concerns similar to my own. I

engaged them in open-hearted and open-minded discussions about their understandings of the current design and purposes of education as well as their ideas concerning the possible form and content of change. To my surprise and delight, I found these people ready and eager to talk about the issues. It was obvious that all of them had been worrying about the discrepancies between the obvious needs of students and what is being foisted on them. All of the participants in the conversations were also concerned about the deadening effect of the current controlling paradigm on creative visionary people who could provide leadership as the modern era comes to a close. The group cited increased accountability measures, attempts to posit all educational value exclusively in so-called academic disciplines, increases in graduation requirements, and rigidly enforced and expanded certification requirements for all education personnel as examples.

In the remainder of this chapter, I reflect on the questions I posed at the end of Chapter One and the insights I have gained. The first question I wondered about was why mind has been anointed as the exclusive means of coming to know throughout the Western world. Berman posits that the mind over matter ideology grew from Cartesian thought that was firmly ensconced as truth through advances in science that found form in the

Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. The model is so powerful that we continue in thrall to the idea that not only is mind supreme, but matter has no part in pure thought and reason. The supremacy of mind is our "taken-for-granted" reality, our ideology and our creed and is, therefore, deeply ingrained in every facet of our culture. Schools, of course, reflect our inability to imagine another reality.

Explanations of why we separate objectivity and subjectivity and why we eliminate emotional content from education which comprise questions two and three, is deeply intertwined with the answer to question one. Berman traces the origins of the prevailing positivistic view of the world to antiquity, but he holds that the notions that established the supremacy of pure thought and mind took firm hold during the Enlightenment. Empiricist, materialistic interpretations of the world that led to bifurcations between subjectivity and objectivity and emotional and rational were primarily fueled by the rise of science in eighteenth century France. We continue to be enslaved by the notion that reliable truth can be discovered only in sterile, clinical environments unencumbered by human emotion which has led us to believe that emotional and psychic distance between observer and observed is mandatory for truth to emerge. According to Berman we are so enmeshed in consequent erroneous notions

of what truth is and how people come to know that we have become unidimensional creatures. He maintains that our ignorance of the importance of somatic experience has cut us off from essential qualities of our humanity that emanate from the rich, spiritual and emotional movements in the interiors of our beings. Because we are enamored of the idea of a universal, unchanging and external truth and by the idea that our task is to discover it, we are in a constant panicky state of trying to fix things. Berman maintains that our consequent fear of movement which may be the only constant in life has set us on a course away from life and inexorably toward death. While Berman, Freire, Mrs. Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins stand in contrast, schools continue to reflect the objective, rational cultural bias that is enforced through programs, policies and procedures as I have pointed out throughout this paper.

In questions four and five I posed the issues of systemization and institutionalization as agents of stultification and whether people can ever take precedence over policies and procedures in education. Both are addressed by Berman in his thinking about our culture's insecurity with the qualities that make people human. Our obsession with stabilizing and fixing things is a manifestation of our distrust of the fluctuations that are immutable characteristics of life and human beings.

Systems and institutions are our attempts to increase predictability and achieve certitude. Policies and procedures are their minions. By creating and implementing stringent controls, we hope to be able to bring both life and human beings under control. The result is that the energy is drained from people and from their ideas. As I said in my conversation with Rachel, the octopus, meaning the system, ejects ink while it extends its tentacles to squeeze out life. Berman calls the process co-optation of the enemy which he likens to the cannibalistic practice of eating enemies to absorb their power. The issue is that the values of stability, fixity and certitude are imbedded in the culture and systemization and institutionalization are their moorings. Because people are likely to make exceptions or change their minds, they are regarded as untrustworthy. Therefore, the thought is that systems and institutions must be continually strengthened to save us from ourselves.

The two principals and the three central office administrators agreed that the system's policies and procedures are deadening and that the system rather than people are in charge. Rachel commented several times about her inability to determine the purposes for most of the requirements and regulations. Cathy is in a struggle to counteract the dehumanizing efforts of the institution.



Both feel plagued by the regimentation. The discussion among the central office people about who is the system brought them to the conclusion that the controlling force is the body of policies and procedures that regulate the life and joy out of the school experience. It seems fair to say that everyone was in accord with Berman, Freire, Heathcote, and Rollins who, like Brecht until his death, are trying desperately to break through to a new educational reality. However, until the dominating conceptualization of life and the world undergoes a dramatic transformation, institutionalization and standardization will continue to be stultifying and the system rather than people will be in charge.

Another of my questions concerned the possibility of connecting individual lives to current educational philosophy and practice. Paulo Freire, Mrs. Heathcote and Tim Rollins struggle daily to make education relevant to individual as well as collective lives. Bertholt Brecht regarded the theatre as an effective pedagogical tool because of the power it holds to touch human hearts as well as minds and to establish emotional as well as intellectual bonds between people and issues. Mrs. Heathcote and Tim Rollins hope that by working with enough students and teachers over a period of years that they will live to see change to the extent that students lived experience becomes directly connected to the work of

schools. Though they fight anger and despair, they maintain a steady course and an evolutionary approach. However, and this responds to my question about why promising programs move outside the system, Tim Rollins left the employ of the New York City Schools because he felt constricted by the rules, regulations and certainly by the way students are categorized. Mrs. Heathcote has never worked for more than a few weeks at a time in anything that resembles our public education system. She is well aware that the system would be intolerant of her intentions, style and methods in a regular setting and on a regular basis, so she accepts that her work and efforts to change the system must continue from the outside. In the same vein, Freire and Brecht are examples of personalities and attitudes that the system would never tolerate under any circumstances or within any time constraints. Both Freire and Brecht believe that the cultural consciousness is the source of the many unhealthy, dehumanizing bifurcations and fragmentations that are so deeply embedded that the only recourse is to revolutionize it. For the reasons outlined earlier, the system is set up to control change through stamping it out or coopting it. Promising ideas and programs are tolerated only to the extent that they do not make significant alterations in what is neatly in place.

The two principals concur that school as it is currently constituted and educational philosophy and practice that makes connections between the work of schools and individual lives are incommensurate paradigms. However, both Rachel and Cathy have found hope and success in the ways they have been able to stretch the educational program for the benefit of children. While they continue to work from within, they are always aware that their professional careers and their programs are in jeopardy if they extend their ideas too far. As Rachel's comments indicate, if she and the teachers really cut loose, they would have to leave the system. In contrast to the principals, the central office administrators felt hemmed in by the policies and procedures that they are responsible for administering. To a significant extent the burdens of enforcing, implementing and maintaining the deadening influences weigh heavily on them. As both Rachel and Cathy mentioned, daily contact with the children keeps them going and the system-wide administrators are deprived of the invigorating effects that are provided by finding ways to bend the system so that it works for students.

The conversations with the principals and my central office colleagues supplied surprising answers to the questions of whether or not other practitioners are as bothered as I am by the current system as well as by the

barriers and resistances to change. I was aware that there are many operative forces such as the hierarchical bureaucratic structure; the grade level and classroom organization that isolate educators from each other; and the conceptualization of teaching as instructional technique that prevent colleagues in education from knowing each other in sufficient subtlety and texture to understand more than each other's superficial concerns. And, while I selected these people because of my perception that they were thoughtful about the current state of affairs, I was, however, taken aback by the level of awareness and the depth and breadth of concern that they exhibited. All of them were trying in their own ways to expand "the range of possible actions," as Michael Apple suggests, and the conversations revealed considerable understanding of the powerful influences that inhibit us from refocusing education and turning the current paradigm inside out.<sup>3</sup> Not only did I find allies who also have visions of what education could be and who would like to participate in implementing something different, but these conversations also helped me to further clarify my thinking about why change is so slow and often seemingly impossible even when there is recognition that it must occur.

In the conversations with my colleagues it occurred to me that because science has taken on something of the

role of religion in the modern age, and because it has so successfully been translated into technology the conception of education as a technological enterprise has such a firm hold that it will be almost impossible to dislodge it. It appears that the operative vision is to eventually assign as many teaching tasks as possible to the computer and to use telecommunications to reduce the teaching force. We have already eliminated subjectivity, emotion, the senses and most physical experience from education and we are working to also expunge human interaction. Perhaps my notion of eliminating school buildings and making education a concept rather than a place will be coopted and distorted beyond recognition by eliminating all face-to-face communication through interactive television technology that will beam all lessons into homes completing the separation between education and experience in and of the world.

It seems that the possibilities for future disconnection and fragmentation that constitute seemingly insurmountable barriers to the development of new visions and practices are endless. Most people lack sufficient critical awareness to grasp that whatever happens is not inevitable and even to people with some vision like my colleagues and myself, the system appears so strong that meaningful change seems impossible. Beyond a few paltry "lively spaces" that we randomly create and execute,

fundamental change seems a distant dream. In addition, we are further crippled because even in the most farsighted among us, the hopelessness couples with self-doubt and a normal fear of change. Moreover, these doubts are also strengthened by the examples we have seen of people in positions of responsibility who engaged in terrible excesses. Because we care, we feel compelled to explore all of the implications of freeing those who hold influence over the lives of young, impressionable human beings from the theories, practices, policies and procedures that constrain them. The lack of restraint that is rife throughout the postmodern world and that increases the possibilities of abuse gives us considerable, additional pause. We are mindful of the importance of keeping the balance between control and abandon, the particular and the general and the common and the idiosyncratic. Our sense of powerlessness and our fears that are founded in our experience join and slow us down. Eventually, we are neutralized. We are reduced to a homeostatic state and as Freire suggests, we have developed into our own barriers. We have become our own enemies.

As if the barriers outlined in the foregoing description were not enough, a different kind and degree of challenge is lodged in the actual resistance to change that generates from people who accept the Cartesian

conceptualization of the world as the final reality. Because they are often in positions of power that they have garnered through unquestioning complicity with the system, they are able to influence laws, policies, procedures and work in behalf of institutions that reinforce the controlling ideas and keep the current view of the world in place. The majority of educators fit into this category. Most of them went into education because they loved and succeeded in school the way it was when they were students. Holding to the notion that the operative model of the universe will reveal all secrets of the physical and human world over time and through continuing, exemplary human effort, Cartesians interpret evidence of the insufficiency of the objective, rational, exclusively mindful approach to life as a matter of lowered standards and expectations. Their reaction is to tighten controls which they do in education by imposing more and more standardized tests, calling for stricter and increased accountability for teachers and students as indicated by higher test scores, increasing requirements for educator certification, and restricting the curriculum to mastery of technical skills. They think they are providing an invaluable service to humanity by insisting on the path to truth and, hence, salvation. Like the writer and scientist, C. P. Snow, the faithful to the Cartesian creed cite the accomplishments of science and

technology in understanding and eradicating disease, in space exploration, in developing procedures that increase food production, processing and preservation, for instance, as proof of the correctness of their position. As the unrest has grown, their unquestioning commitment intensifies and takes on personally threatening dimensions. As the conceptual landscape continues to shift, they sense that the entire milieu in which they achieved success and significance is at risk. They, therefore, increase their investment of time, money and themselves in preserving the status quo. More often than not, they realize some success in controlling the speed and nature of change. The elections of 1994 and the fallout from them that threatens tangible and intangible support for innovations of all kinds in education present a dramatic example.

Actual resistance to change that has naturally evolved out of our ideology of the last two hundred years has had some particularly sinister effects. With increased specialization and separation of functions, systematization and roles have become so entrenched that flexibility within organizations is largely an anomaly. For instance, the rise of professionalism has created a management class in business and in education that has made the prized organic leadership of yesteryear that grew from within institutions appear outmoded. The result is



that people are no longer bound to improving the health of institutions. In contrast they become consumed with their own advancement within categories and their careers become a matter of upward mobility within bureaucracies. For instance, CEO's of major corporations hop from company to company like fleas. The average tenure of a school superintendent of a large system is less than three years. The resulting unfortunate drift is toward self-absorption. The focus is on becoming head of a whole as compared to what is in the best interest of the whole. Those in the highest positions of power and influence, therefore, become so mobile that they have no binding commitments beyond their own individual ambition. They increasingly lack interest in the common good. Michael Apple says this ubiquitous syndrome in business and education is a perversion of the American ideal of the rugged individual. His term is "careerist individualism," which is descriptive of the drive for self-preservation that leads the most successful among them to become masters of duplicity.<sup>4</sup> CEO's talk of work force preparedness as a function of the abundant life for all which is actually a program designed to maintain the corporate power structure. They state their purpose for pouring money into education as initiating true reform and concurrently they insist on evaluation plans that reinforce the existing paradigm. School superintendents exhibit similar

inorganic qualities. A prevalent pattern as new people head up educational institutions is to reorganize in the name of better and more efficient service when the real purpose is to establish a personal power base. The result is a very sophisticated form of the discrepancies between words and actions that figured so prominently in my conversation with Rachel. The effect is similar to that produced by the masters--the oppressors--that Freire describes so eloquently.<sup>5</sup>

While efforts continue to restore the controlling paradigm to its previous strength, social, cultural, political and scientific developments point up that we have come to the end of the modern era. The power of scientific positivism is flickering and while we know that change is upon us, the antecedent insecurities of even the most clear-sighted among us are magnified because we have fabricated the institutions of our culture on a certitude that is failing. Even though we confront evidence daily that institutions that we have relied on from our birth no longer serve us well, few among us face the future unflinchingly largely because none of us has a clear sense of the dimensions of the fundamental and monumental changes that are underway. Furthermore, we are scared to death of what the future holds if we let go of what we have. Because we are threatened at the core of our beings by the feared chaos that seems near, we are emotionally,

psychologically, physically, intellectually, morally and spiritually bereft and almost all of us are to some degree and from time to time tempted to throw down the gauntlet, fortify the ramparts and fight to preserve what we perceive to be ours.

But, all efforts to stop time will inevitably fail. Events and developments are far ahead of our ideology. Quantum physics has destroyed all notions of objectivity and the world as a watch-like mechanism. Hierarchical political and economic patterns are under siege everywhere. Social institutions like home and family are endangered. Very shortly, the face of reality will be so changed as to be largely unrecognizable. Walter Brueggemann has quoted from and paraphrased Langdon Gilkey's description of our situation and the changes we face that are unprecedented by their speed alone.

Intellectual know how (and its resultant technology) has failed to deliver the good life and has revealed itself not only as ambiguous but also lethal in its consequences. "What seemed good has turned out to be enormously ambiguous."

The political promise of the Enlightenment has failed to bring peace and has led to powerful tyranny sustained by ideology.

"Salvation history has collapsed." Gilkey observes that with Western culture as the carrier of good in its struggle with evil, "a good case can be made that the spiritual substance of the Enlightenment took its shape against the Hebrew and Christian myths of salvation history." Said another way, the claim of "progress" has not worked out at all convincingly.

Confrontation with world religions has shaken the monopolistic claims of Western religions that are closely allied with the Enlightenment and with its forms of domination.<sup>6</sup>

Our patterns of domination have simply broken down and along with them, the certitudes that support them. Our fundamental perceptions are that not only is the world different from what we have perceived it to be, but our very lives as we have known them are at risk also. Entry into the postmodern world has challenged our physical beings as well as our centers.

Walter Brueggeman not only characterizes our situation, but he offers some help. The premise of his book Texts Under Negotiation is much like Berman's.<sup>7</sup> He holds that the vision that underlies the modern world is one of physical and political mastery achieved through objective control unencumbered by the body. It is nested in Cartesian thought which Brueggemann suggests was a result of Decarte's reaction to the disintegration of the medieval synthesis of meaning and power that was similar in its magnitude to the breakdown that is upon us today. Brueggemann believes that Decarte's thought, that has dominated the Western world for over 200 years, was a personal attempt to fend off chaos. The argument continues that in accord with the thinking of Decartes, two kinds of knowledge emerged as reliable. The first consists of rational, logical coherence that is

discernable by the detached, disinterested, disembodied mind. The second is experiential, empirical and factual. Both of them, Brueggemann avers, connected successfully to masculine power. Truth was posited in the written word and characterized as universal, general, timeless and absolute. In contrast, in the postmodern era, we have arrived at a point where we are faced with the knowledge that all truth is contextual and that the knower contributes to what is known. Objectivity does not exist. "It too is one more practice of ideology that presents interest in covert form as an established fact."<sup>8</sup> There is no certitude. Nothing is or ever will be settled. All we can count on is continuous movement and change. All we can hope for is that individual and particular truth will pertain elsewhere. All knowledge, like all politics, is, therefore, essentially local.

Brueggeman, however, offers some suggestions that may help us make "sense out of the rawness of experienced life," as we work to reconstitute our world.<sup>9</sup> He suggests that we replace our notions of objectivity and mastery with models of perspectivity and advocacy. In contrast to ideas of universal, unchanging truth and the "anything goes" attitude of relativism, perspectival practice is constituted of many initiatives that attempt to redefine reality. Through careful, thoughtful consideration of perspectives other than one's own; through voicing

individual and particular truth; by proposing that individual knowing applies elsewhere, we learn to live without certitudes. According to Brueggemann, the belief of the last 200 years is that "reality is a settled matter that language can describe but on which it cannot actively impinge."<sup>10</sup> It must be altered to include the understanding that the patient dialogue Freire suggests is evocative and constitutive of reality. In the future we will be called upon to "picture, portray, receive and practice the world in ways other than it appears to be at first glance when seen through a dominant, habitual unexamined lens."<sup>11</sup> In an unprecedented manner, imagination that requires full and integrated participation of body, mind and spirit will be central in understanding, knowing, and coming to grips with the new reality.

Along with Berman, Freire, Mrs. Heathcote, Brecht and Rollins, Brueggemann believes that "reality . . . is . . . an ongoing, creative, constitutive task . . . ." <sup>12</sup> As everything will be subject to continuous negotiation, the imagination must become an important and legitimated way of knowing. Brueggeman states that in the new world that is yet to be imagined, there will never again be one large ordering. In contrast, many acts of counterimagination will produce many worlds. Furthermore, he maintains that the pieces, materials and resources that will "fund" these

many imaginative construals are already present in the world, in our minds or are incipient in our imaginations.<sup>13</sup> It is fresh voicing, new looking and bold imagining that will "fund, feed, nurture, nourish, legitimate and authorize a counterimagination of the world."<sup>14</sup> But, Brueggemann cautions that we cannot expect them to present themselves quickly or full-blown. "The new world is not given whole . . . ." <sup>15</sup> Rather, the pieces will emerge slowly from underneath "the visible structures" in the "little, specific details that hold hidden power . . . ." <sup>16</sup> Disclosure will require patience and faith in the relevatory power of the shards. In addition, because "the old imagined world is lost but still powerfully cherished, . . ." remnants of Cartesian thought and practice will linger and inhibit us for a long time.<sup>17</sup> "It is a world unexamined, but passionately held."<sup>18</sup>

In the context of a different world that is about to dawn on us, Brueggemann explores the issue of what enables people to change. He maintains that neither doctrinal argument nor cognitive nor moral appeal will have significant impact on the way people live their lives. Rather, he believes that transformation is a painstaking process that must be initiated and supported by "models, images and pictures that characteristically have the particularity of narrative to carry them . . . .

Over time these pieces are stitched together into a sensible collage, stitched together, all of us in concert, but each of us idiosyncratically stitched together in a new whole--all things new!"<sup>19</sup>

In the face of this postmodern era that is upon us, it is difficult to think about what one does in the context of an educational bureaucracy that was designed for another world. As I contemplate the problem, it occurs to me that there is a direct relationship if not a complete correspondence between Brueggemann's notions of bits and pieces that emerge slowly into consciousness and over time connect in such ways as to fund truth and John Dewey's ideas about what constitutes experience and its organic nature. Dewey equated coming to know or consciousness with truth which he believed like Hegel before him and in accord with Brueggemann is created by human subjects living in their own time and in their own place. Because it is created by human consciousness in a specific context, truth is alive, growing, changing and, like bits and pieces, can be characterized as the growth and development of independent elements into the kind of organic unity that I am striving for in this paper. Furthermore, Dewey, like Brueggemann, believed in the transactional nature of coming to consciousness in which the knower as the embodiment of time, place, culture and experience and the knowing are transformed. In other



words, knowing changes both knower and known. In Dewey's thinking, the fulfillment of experience is in consciousness which is the moment in Brueggemann's mind when the bits and pieces connect with each other and past experiences and achieve significance. For both Dewey and Brueggemann, coming to consciousness is the process and also the product that through their continuous relationship informs experience with meaning and carries it forward. This is to say that for both men, every fulfilled experience carries the possibilities and expectation of future experiences. What is retained from past experience is embedded in the future, focuses meaning and forces the mind to stretch forward as new problems and interests grow out of the gradual build-up of knowledge. To Dewey, like Brueggemann, consciousness and the consummations of experience are acts of emotionally pervaded perception that proceed by waves that extend serially through the human being and that contain countless seeds of future possibilities for the development of more knowledge and hence experience.

There is also a strong relationship between Brueggemann's and Freire's ideas of the power and function of speech in the world that they hope will come to be. According to Brueggemann, a chief characteristic of modernity is faith in the written word. In contrast, he and Freire believe that critical and liberating dialogue

that presupposes action is the preferred method of liberation from the old world and the means by which people educate each other. In concert with Freire's position, Brueggemann believes that in the postmodern age the emphasis will return to the spoken word. Echoing Freire's notions of the power of speech in the creation of reality, Brueggemann says:

The shift entails recognition of speech as decisive for our existence. Hegemony, intellectual and political as it always does, had eliminated probing speech, daring rhetoric and subversive text . . . . Our new intellectual environment acknowledges that human agents are in the process of constituting reality and that . . . formative work is done through rhetoric . . . . Speech is . . . evocative of reality and constitutive of reality . . . . Speech becomes decisive for reality for speech pictures, portrays, imagines and authorizes reality in this way and not in some other.<sup>20</sup>

Both Freire and Brueggemann believe in oral communication as a particularly significant means of coming to critical consciousness. Even though Brueggemann appears to be thinking more of the preacher who presents the fullness of the Biblical text and Freire's notions are grounded in a vision of people who talk together as equals, in both of their minds it is through speaking and listening that we free ourselves from the Cartesian world view.

Furthermore, both men aver that in the face of the resulting multiple realities, devising ways to live together in some sane and sensible manner will require

careful and sensitive speaking, listening and acting that will enable people to find connections with each other and to modify and expand their individual castles of contemplation. In both men's minds spoken words that are in reflexive relationship with action must be the basis for the new world as it comes to be.

Even though I have wrestled with Dorothy Heathcote's notions for twenty years, I am only beginning to realize the fullness of her radical stance which I have come to appreciate in more of its dimensions in relationship to my other models. All of them, including Brueggemann, advocate that we make the world strange in a Brechtian way that demands that we reexamine our "taken-for-granted" reality. We must "unpack and examine our baggage."<sup>21</sup> By shifting from hierarchical to horizontal structures and through patient, open-hearted, alert experience, acceptance and communication of and reflection on seemingly disparate and disconnected fragments we must reenvision, reconstitute and reenliven the stuff of our lives.

While I am excited by the possibilities for energy and creativity that are inherent in the diversity of this new world, I am overwhelmed by the difficulties that are implicit as we struggle to hear and understand each other. Because hegemony will pass from the scene, we will no longer share a common ideology. Words will lack common

meanings. Experience will have multitudes of interpretations. So, how will we bridge the ever growing numbers and sizes of the gaps that exist between and among us? Are we destined to live in a Tower of Babel throughout the postmodern age? Once again, Brueggemann is helpful. He avers that the work of accommodating the plethora of existing and emergent realities must be grounded in the ability to imagine and appreciate all competing truths. Through activating and training our imaginative abilities and through reverently entering the contexts of others, we will be able to connect on horizontal planes and the Tower will tumble down. We are no longer ships passing in the night. Of course, we must accept that communication will never be perfect, but Brueggemann's expectation is that through supplementing traditional means with aesthetic, creative and humanistic dimensions, we will come to whole new ways of reaching each other and, perhaps, entirely new languages. I am reminded of John Dewey and his rift with Hegelian thought over the boundedness of mind. Like Dewey, Brueggemann is suggesting that mind is boundless. Unlike Dewey whose confidence was in the scientific process, however, Brueggemann believes our faith must be in the imaginative process and its potential to open entirely new, in the sense that we have never been there before, previously unexplored worlds.

Leonard Shlain is even more explicit than Brueggeman about the vital role of imagination in filling the void that we are about to encounter as the old world slips away. Echoing Brueggemann in his belief in imagination as a means of reconnecting people in a manner that will enable us to hear and understand each other, he says, "Because of the erosion of images by words . . . , we forget that to learn something radically new, we need first to imagine it. 'Imagine' literally means to 'make an image.'"<sup>22</sup> Like Brueggemann he offers the parasensual world of intuition and imagination, the world that transforms craft into art, as an avenue for creating new and adequate visions and processes. When he quotes Paul Gauguin who said, "There are only two kinds of artists-- revolutionaries and plagiarists," Shlain ventures a step beyond.<sup>23</sup> Continuing on that course, he posits that not only is imagination essential in all coming to know and that true artists by their very nature are countercultural, he holds that when imagination is developed and bodied forth into the world as in the case of great art, it has prescient power. He states that it is the revolutionary artist as defined by Gauguin who, through the application of unusual imaginative powers, is able to bring forth in a particular way what has been hidden so that it heralds the future. Robert Hughes, the art critic, concurs. In his book, The Shock of the New,

he says, "the artist is a precursor; the truly significant work of art is the one that prepares the future."<sup>24</sup> In a similar vein Marshall McLuhan said, "I am curious to know what would happen if art were suddenly seen for what it is, namely exact information of how to rearrange one's psyche in order to anticipate the next blow from our extended faculties."<sup>25</sup>

If these people are to be believed, not only is imagination able to forge connections in the present and between the past and the present, but, when it is developed to the highest degree, imagination has the power to bridge to the future. Conceptualized in this way, art becomes a marvelously pragmatic process and product. William James, the father of American pragmatism, held that the essence of pragmatic practice is to search out and examine every implication. It seems to me that Shlain, Hughes and McLuhan are suggesting that artists who are not plagiarists are in the very business of presaging the future through perceiving and examining implications. Dr. David Purpel has offered that the crux of what all of them and I are talking about is "the art of pragmatism and the pragmatism of art," in that the true artist by Gaugin's definition is one who brings aesthetic dimensions to the exercise of perceiving the future through fully understanding and uncovering the implications of the

present.<sup>26</sup> As Aunt Leta said when she was totally amazed, "Whoever would have thunk it."<sup>27</sup>

I immediately think of Picasso and the cubists. About one hundred years ago they presented reality as a matter of intersecting, overlapping, intruding planes that suggest the encroachments and collisions of the multiple, layered, juxtaposed, simultaneous, individual and cultural contexts that are analogous to Brueggemann's potsherds and the notion of competing truths that are prominent characteristics of the last days of the 20th century. Multi-dimensional cubes and prisms which exist in space but can never be viewed totally from any point or at any time, replaced the unambiguous, clear, focused, easily recognized forms of Renaissance art. The change to the painful and difficult 20th century pictures that defy easy or singular interpretation, that exploded paradigms, destroyed perspectives, demolished ideologies, and antiquated modes of inquiry presage the lived experience of people a century hence. The pictures literally will not stay in their frames. The only way to make sense of cubism is to imagine in unprecedented ways by holding rational thought and logical words in abeyance until they can be delayed no longer so that perception can be filled as completely as possible. Language will grow out of the slowly emerging shapes of the new reality and will be the last phase in the process of coming to know. Technique,

thereby will be properly placed. It will follow perception as the means of manifesting dreams and visions in the material world. It will make them flesh. Once again I quote Berman when he says, "The world will become a work of art."<sup>28</sup>

But, how is this to be done? Even though I in no way want to discount the difficulty of working out the whys and wherefores of a new system of education, for they are certainly foundational, I am fully cognizant that philosophy is one thing and practice is another. One does not necessarily result in or affect the other. And, there is no getting around that the hard work of implementation is where the proverbial rubber meets the road. The difficulty of making changes in the day-to-day school life of teachers and kids is where the hardest work of all must be done. For, if even some of what I am suggesting were to be put into practice, textbooks, standard courses of study and established accountability measures would fall away. As a result, fear, the sense of loss, and the open resistance would intensify. All of the people, and they are legion, who have bought into the system would rise and take up arms. For reasons that I have tried to recount throughout this paper, the legions include teachers, administrators, parents and everyone who has enjoyed any degree of success in the current system--in a word, the cultural majority. For instance,



the huge education industry of textbook and educational materials manufacturers would fight to the death. The corporate power structure that uses the schools as a training ground would exert all of its muscle. Even teachers who have their doubts would be terrified at the thought of teaching without their satchel full of tricks that we euphemistically call methods. In fact, it may be a generalization, but the difficulty of making significant changes in education is exemplified by the current school reform efforts. While many of them grow out of the ubiquitous unease with education as it is currently constituted, even the efforts categorized as most liberal are basically new means to old ends. For instance, numerous programs are available that are founded in the obvious joy students find in participating in the arts. The idea not unlike that of the old JDRIII program is to use art, music, dance and drama to increase standardized test scores. However, because these scores have achieved increasing prominence in the educational scheme, using the arts as vehicles of academic instruction is less innocent than it once was. Programs like "Learning to Read Through the Arts" out of New York City and the "A+ Schools Project" in North Carolina are good examples.<sup>29</sup> While both recognize that the somatic foundation of the arts enables them to provide opportunities that constitute experience giving them the power to motivate students to

perform and to bring some joy to the school experience, both programs value the arts to a disturbing degree to the extent that they produce results that can be quantified. In large measure, individuality and multiple perspectives that are part and parcel of all participation in the arts are regarded as important factors in helping students learn established meanings in contrast to making meanings. Both programs like many others discount the power of art making as a process of discovery and exploration of new worlds in contrast to established worlds and, hence, of the unanswerable questions of the human condition which is what this paper is advocating as the basis of the new education.<sup>30</sup> The real challenge as has been stated before is a total change in cultural consciousness that neither of these programs or others of their like openly address. In the face of these odds, I have to ask why I think something can be done and how is it possible to begin?

In a nutshell, this entire paper is grounded on the premise that our educational system is a manifestation of our culture that belies the notion that every human being holds enormous promise. So, because it is designed accordingly, both the organization and content of education are limited and limiting. It is backed by strong ideology, thick bureaucracy and the power of money and influence. But, in response to the can it be done question, none of those factors designed and operating to

fix the present and carry it into the future take into consideration the wonder of inexhaustible human possibility. As Cathy recounted, the children in her school come out of a veritable war zone everyday with smiles on their faces and an unquenchable desire to learn. Lamont who was relegated to classes for the mentally defective took on the role of a Pilgrim encountering the Native American people indigenous to the area around Plymouth Rock, analyzed a difficult situation and devised ways to communicate without words. A fifth grader assumed the role of a preacher of the Christian gospel on a wagon train that was confronted by a Native American chief who refused to let the 'pioneers' move further west. In a blinding flash of insight, he realized the power of written language and successfully negotiated to transfer it as a condition for freeing his people. William who is somewhere in the belly of the prison system was so intrigued with questions of courage, perseverance and mystery implicit in Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe that he ran away from home to come to school. These people and their possibilities fill us with hope and with the belief that it is always within human power to do something. Furthermore, they also face us with the reality that for the sake of human possibility, we must do something.

The models of heroic practitioners like Cathy and Rachel who struggle everyday to achieve something inspire us. Certainly, we cannot forsake them. Their valiant efforts makes it incumbent upon us to transfer, elaborate and expand their efforts. The public outcry over the Standardized Transcript indicates a sense among the general population that education is more than achieving in easily quantifiable disciplines. The humanistic, nurturing elements of the Downtown school are what make it so popular with students, teachers and parents. My conversations with my administrator colleagues indicate an unexpected level of awareness and concern. The question, then, is not if, but what it is that we do and how do we start.

We begin, I believe, with the teachers and with those who are trying to enter the profession. It is a good place because the structure is already there. We can expand formal and informal components of teacher training and staff development programs to include multi-dimensional, aesthetic experiences that draw content from the human condition. We get everyone up, moving and experiencing. We demonstrate that dance does not belong to dancers; visual art to artists, musical composition to composers, drama to actors; or poetry to poets. Not only do we provide opportunities for participants to learn that aesthetic experience belongs to everyone, we prove that

creating is a natural and essential part of being human and that aesthetic experience is, in fact, the very crux of life. Teachers and "wanna bes" choreograph, dance, draw, paint, write music and poetry, create drama and engage in naming reflective dialogue about "man in a mess."<sup>31</sup> Through this new training, they learn to escape the confines of the current structure that centers on studying about things. They enter the world of envisioning, creating, naming and doing. Teachers and those who aspire to the title find themselves and their connections in images that precede words. Language develops through authentic dialogue and in the sorting and reflecting that follows. The current notion of talent becomes antiquated as all people struggle to make things strange, to imagine, to perceive, to connect, and to make manifest by discovering the poets within themselves. Through these somatic experiences individuals, groups and maybe someday, significant numbers will be transformed.

An example of these kinds of experiences occurred recently when a principal asked me to design a staff development experience for the entire faculty of her school.<sup>32</sup> The principal decided that since the Governor and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction had declared that the arts would be emphasized and honored in schools in 1995, she would set aside some staff development time for her staff to experience the arts in a

way that would be meaningful to them and to the children they teach. I collaborated with visual art, drama, dance and music teachers to plan a morning filled with opportunities to expand the participating teachers' notions of what can and should happen in elementary schools. Our idea was to choose a universal theme that was applicable throughout the curriculum as well as in the situations that teachers and children face daily. After lengthy discussion among the five of us, the principal and the assistant principal we decided on the central theme of "unsettled spaces," which we were determined to transform into "lively spaces" for all participants.

We began the morning by discussing with the group how children learn in different ways and how the arts can provide experience and therefore make up some of the cultural deficits that are so often cited as the reason for substandard performance in school. We also talked about the difference between "infusing the person into art and the art into the person."<sup>33</sup> We carefully explained that the morning would be focused on the former and that we would ask no more of the participants than they ask of their children everyday in school. We made it clear that the issue was participation and not talent and that the only things required were open-minded willingness to follow directions and the investment of self. I revealed

the theme, asked for their commitment and introduced Pam, the dance teacher.

Pam began by asking the participants to quietly imagine "unsettled spaces" first in their own lives, then in the lives of children they teach and finally within the academic context of their classes. Next she asked them to find a space away from everyone else and to close their eyes while she built images for them of "unsettled spaces" that they might not have identified. Then she asked them to imagine a particular "unsettled space," which she explained could be a situation, that they knew well and to place themselves in it. Subsequently, she asked them to move in increasingly larger ways to demonstrate something of the space that held them, using her narration to help the exploration of textures, colors, sizes, shapes, feelings and other elements of or associated with their imaginary surroundings. Finally, she asked them to select one word that would capture as many things as possible about their space, to open their eyes and to move to the area that was marked with the same color as their name tags.

Sheila, the music teacher, had placed all kinds of objects in each area that could be used to make sound. Each person was given a piece of paper with the directions to select an object that would best demonstrate their word and to take some time to practice making the sound and

saying their word in some relationship to each other. Each of the five of us leading the experience was with a group to guide them along and after five minutes, we took the lead in demonstrating our little compositions of words and sounds within the privacy of the small groups. Many of the examples had some aesthetic merit. One group was able to meld the work of all the members into a musical selection of some quality and distinction which they demonstrated for all participants.

Next, Lori, the visual art teacher directed the group to explore the boxes of scrap material on the tables and to combine the pieces of fabric and crayon drawings to make designs with color, texture, line and space that illustrated everything they had discovered about their "unsettled spaces." She primed the group with simple but imaginative illustrations of lines, textures and colors that created mood. The participants were free to title their work or to simply let it speak for itself. When the works were complete, and, many of them were sculptures, they were placed on tables for later viewing. The drama teachers brought the group back together and asked them to share their words which were inscribed on chart paper as the participants spoke and to tell briefly the new associations they had made through the experiences. Finally, the group was asked to make the connections to their classroom responsibilities, to specific curricular



areas, and to share their thinking about how experiences like the ones we had provided could help children in their journeys through school and through life.

The teachers' responses throughout the morning were remarkable. They indicated full engagement and deep enjoyment. Everyone danced, made music and created art. It was surprising that no one was reluctant. As they shared with each other, they began to open up in new ways and at a deep and personal level that appeared to be unprecedented. One teacher described her art project as a representation of her struggle with kidney failure. Another spoke of her loneliness that she was trying to express that has surrounded her since the death of her parents. In their written comments, the teachers repeatedly thanked us for the session. Several of them had obviously begun to reflect on their own teaching, the usual lack of physical and emotional content, and the resulting lack of meaningful connection to the students. Excerpts from their written words included the following:

I will strive to provide my students with an uninhibited environment to allow them to explore and express themselves.

I enjoyed today! I'd like to know about any workshops in the area that address using the arts in the classroom. Thanks for providing us with such a great alternative for reaching children in the classroom!

During the experience I have gone from tears to peace.

This has been such an uplifting morning. I feel that children as well as teachers will benefit.

This workshop allowed me to have better insight into myself, which will in turn help me to help my students have better insight into themselves through music, art, dance and drama.

Opening up, embracing curriculum is antithesis of curriculum embracing the students as we have relied on in the past.

Catharsis!

I came away from the session having experienced once again that the culture is ignoring people's basic human needs, and anxiously wondering about the condition of children if teachers are in such acute distress. For instance, words like anxiety, worry and anger were among the most prominently chosen. It was obvious when the session began that the teachers were very tense and didn't want to be there. It was breathtaking to watch and feel them relax as the morning progressed. Their responses to the session were in accord with many of the things that Rachel had said in our conversation. These teachers felt that they had no right or permission to work with children in a way that incorporated the emotions and initiated learning through physical experience. I was struck anew by the thoughtless manner in which we conduct school, failing abysmally to tap into the true source of human power and creativity and into the very things that would give it significance.

I realized also that I too had gained hope and confidence from this session. I was energized. I was enlivened. Like the teachers, I had a sense of well-being. I was healed and whole. I was also reconfirmed in my notion that it is not only children and teachers that need to move out of the mechanical model. Everyone, including the bureaucrats like myself that are perceived as the providers of experiences, require the same kind of nurturing, acceptance, and opportunities for expression so that they are at least momentarily "stitched together into a sensible collage."<sup>34</sup> I, therefore, felt confirmed enough to begin planning another session. This time the session will be for all music and dance teachers during the professional days in the fall. In the course of planning this event, I had the opportunity to speak to James Houlik, an internationally known saxophonist who teaches at the North Carolina School of the Arts.<sup>35</sup> In addition to his extraordinary musical accomplishments, he happens to be visionary and articulate about the course of Western civilization. He has agreed to provide a lecture/demonstration concerning the common impulse that underlies all of the arts and its connection to every facet of life. In the course of our conversation about the upcoming session with teachers, Mr. Houlik recounted his recent experience of participating in a conference that included noted people from the highest

echelons of business and government. He described how these people became teary eyed as they listened to great music and how in discussion session they seemed incapable or unwilling to connect the music and its performance to the decisions they are making about national and international conditions and events. I told him of the experience we had just had with the staff of regular school teachers and how they had demonstrated extraordinary needs to express themselves, to connect to each other and to the larger issues of the human condition. I also described how we had somehow come to them at a time when they were able to open themselves to new possibilities. His response was remarkable. He offered the notion that teachers are the priests of our culture and that we totally fail in ministering to their real human needs and hence to our own. His thought is that we should be guided by the responsibility for the good of us all of providing experiences that will transform our priests--our teachers--into shamen. WOW!--The lightening bolt!--a total encapsulation of Berman, Freire, Heathcote, Brecht, Rollins, Brueggemann and Shlain in a phrase. Furthermore, Mr. Houlik confirmed my thought about the place to begin the process of transformation is with teachers.

Our efforts to this point seem puny in face of the magnitude of the problem. They do, however, address the

issues and planning, executing and participating will reveal additional information and possibilities. Furthermore, they incorporate meaningful and serious dialogue among teachers which is perhaps the single most important thing that would foster significant educational change. And, remembering Brueggemann, we must not expect too much too soon. He cautions that things will not come easily and quickly. Perhaps the words for the difficult upcoming days ahead are faith and patience. We must have faith that it is possible to gradually learn helpful things and, therefore, to do proper things, but infinite patience will be required to develop, place and execute them. For instance, as overwhelming as dealing with the consciousness of teachers may seem, what in the world can be done about administrators who are more deeply hidden within the bureaucratic bastions. It is widely accepted that until their consciousness is altered, any change in the teacher ranks will be gobbled up. Recognizing this reality, Dr. Purpel asked me, "How are you going to get your administrative center colleagues to dance"?<sup>36</sup> I propose small cell-like meetings like the one that I have already had with my co-workers. The focus would change with every meeting. Sometimes, we would discuss books, ideas and the challenges of transforming theory into practice. Other times we would have experiences composed of singing, dancing, writing, painting, acting and

reflecting on meaning. Through ongoing discussions of human development, education, society, reality and, of course, the personally enriching aspects of the interactions, I would expect the meetings to gather momentum and, hopefully, they would burst their private bonds. Other administrators could be invited. Other groups could be formed. The only covenant among us would be that every group would decide its own agenda and the form of its meetings and that every group would attend to praxis. For, the work cannot stop with the thinking about. There must be some doing of and the two must be in reflexive relationship.

In addition, I am aware that to really achieve some sense that efforts to change consciousness are underway, there must be some forays into the larger community. The place to begin is probably with students' parents. I'm thinking about making PTA meetings experiential interactions among parents, teachers and students. I doubt that parents could resist being mentored through art lessons by their children. How many parents could remain uninvolved in a drama or perhaps even a dance if their children invited them to participate? I can imagine children and parents going together to Reynolda House and SECCA to use the paintings and exhibits as springboards for interactive experiences.<sup>37</sup> Not only could parents and children work together to make meaning based on the

presentations of multiple perspectives by postmodern artists and comparing and contrasting them with artists of the Hudson River School for instance, but they could transpose their meanings into drama, dance, music and additional visual art. Chuck Close, Fred Wilson, Thomas Harte Benton, John Steuart Curry, Jacob Lawrence, Charles Sheeler, Charles Burchfield, Robert Gwathney and Georgia O'Keeffe could open whole new realities for parents, teachers and students to study and experience. I have also always thought a student/faculty orchestra could be a charming and bonding aspect of a school program, providing significant and numerous possibilities for horizontal relationships. But, what about a student/teacher/ parent orchestra, chorus or dance group? What about parent/teacher/student book and issue-oriented discussion sessions? What about extending to grandparents, aunts, uncles? What about intergenerational groups of every size and description? The possibilities abound.

So, what is it finally I have to say about how to transform education for the postmodern world. First of all, the above examples and ideas illustrate that things are as Brueggemann suggests. The text is in our midst. It may be hidden, but it is in our minds, bodies, spirits, emotion, imaginations and in the possible connections among us. Perhaps it is little more than John Dewey put forth a long time ago. We have to educate the entire

human being which both Dewey and Berman believe begins with organisms physically reacting in so far as they are able to the totality of the environment that surrounds them. No preconceptions. No prior selections. Everything strange. ". . . all things new!"<sup>38</sup> I am reminded of another class I taught a long time ago. A group of sixth graders was interested in exploring outer space.<sup>39</sup> We prepared for several days. On the morning of the flight we never left the classroom, but the students through the imaginary context of the drama explored every object, nook and cranny within it as if they had never seen their surroundings before. The work was imaginative, inventive and remarkable because the drama had provided the students with the opportunity to connect and invest in the situation. They were, thereby, able to suspend their disbelief and allow things to become strange. Their emotional, psychological, physical and emotional connection to what was underway enabled them to alienate themselves from the familiar and from the taken-for-granted reality and to see them anew. Given the crucial starting point of connection and investment, we will teach and educate in the new world within an understanding that all learning is emotion laden. We know we must connect and feel deeply about what is under study if we are to truly learn it. In addition, everyone must fully participate and contribute as we hold firmly to the



belief that everyone knows something and, therefore, critical consciousness can be improved and expanded. Third, we must provide experiences that will cultivate and improve imaginations as it is only through the imagination that we can cope with the multitude of realities and competing truths that we face as well as form our own visions, dreams and connections out of which the postmodern world will be created. Furthermore, it is also essential that we relearn the function of speech as constitutive of reality. Through the aesthetic of rhetoric and of dialogue, consciousness is expanded and corrected. Through the respect participants afford each other in positive, constructive communication and the reverence for the process and for each other that results, the world is named and reality is formed, expanded and enriched. Fifth, education will validate lived experience rather than be posited in disembodied abstractions. It will focus on the ultimate and unanswerable questions of the human condition that generate from being in the world and will stand in dramatic contrast to the current concentration on skill training and algorithmic practice. In the new schools, all training for teachers and administrators will be imbued with the ideas that educators of every stripe must think and act like artists, or perhaps as Jim Houlik suggests, as shamen. They will stand as Dorothy Heathcote posits between all of the past

and the future that they are charged with assisting their students as they create it together. Fundamentally, teachers will understand fully what John Dewey meant when he said, "Education is what is left when all facts are forgotten."<sup>40</sup> Within this conceptualization of what education is to be, the stamina required of teachers will also be unprecedented. They must have the fortitude of pioneers. While it is essential that they learn to make connections, to synthesize, to create something where little or nothing is given and to constantly look for implications, they will also learn that teaching is the art of making visions manifest in the world. They will come to understand that they must believe in their visions and dreams to the extent that they will carry them forward in the face of seemingly endless and insurmountable adversity for the new world may well be as strange as outer space. However, there will be no mechanisms for return to the old, familiar ways.

Given the current constrictions I have described throughout this paper, do I think any part of what I suggest as the essential qualities of the needed transformation are possible? Dr. Purpel has said, "When optimism runs out, there is hope. When hope runs out there is faith."<sup>41</sup> My experience in the current contest has drained me of optimism. I am able to muster very little hope. But, I have enormous faith in what could and

in the new order must be. For, my experience as revealed in the conversations and sessions with students and teachers that are integral parts of this paper has also informed me that it is as Brueggemann says. The text is there to be discovered and negotiated. However, I am in something of a panic for I sense that time is running out. For, as Berman has told us, our current system is taking us surely and rapidly toward death. And, the system is like a freight train that is pushing us to some unknown destination and rather than jump aside we keep running in the track. Because we lack sufficient critical capability and courage, we try desperately to stay ahead of the enormous energy and weight that threatens to crush us when if we would simply step aside we could avoid the impending disaster. The issue is crucial because the time is now. We must do immediately as Maria Harris has said: education must "take risks, take care, take steps, take time, take form."<sup>42</sup> To save our children and ourselves, all of us with some sense that things are seriously awry must begin to follow our visions and dreams with increased vigor. We must devote every facet of our full humanity to the challenges of transforming school into a "lively place." School must very quickly become the site of the best and most important action in town.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Berman, 1989.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 315.

<sup>3</sup>Apple, 1982, p. 166.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 154.

<sup>5</sup>Freire, 1970, Throughout.

<sup>6</sup>Walter Brueggemann, Texts Under Negotiation, The Bible and Postmodern Imagination, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993), pp. 6-7.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., (cite for entire book.)

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 23.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 24-25.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 12.

<sup>21</sup>Norman Bernier and Deleuse Wear, "Hermeneutics in the Curriculum: A Cubist Approach," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, March, 1989.

<sup>22</sup>Shlain, 1991, p. 18.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>24</sup>Hughes, 1980, p. 366.

<sup>25</sup>McLuhan, 1964, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup>Dr. David Purpel, Conversation, Curry Building, Greensboro: UNCG, June 22, 1995.

<sup>27</sup>Aunt Leta was full of colorful phrases. Her discipline always had an undercurrent of humor. For instance, when I had committed serious infractions of her rules, two of her favorite phrases were, "Janey, if you ever do that again I'll spit in your eye and drown you," and "Janey, you couldn't possibly be as dumb as what you have done makes you look. Let me see, is it the way we've combed your hair today?" Leta's husband, Jim, was known to stop by the local corner saloon and on occasion partake of one too many which made Leta as angry as I ever saw her. Nevertheless, she was still in command of her language. When Jim returned home one evening after over indulging a bit she said, "Jimmy, the more I see of men, the more I think of dogs."

<sup>28</sup>Berman, 1989, p. 315.

<sup>29</sup>LTRA, Learning to Read Through the Arts, Developed by Bernadette C. O'Brien, Developer Demonstrator Project, National Diffusion Network, United States Department of Education, Public School 156X, 750 Concourse Village West, Bronx, NY 10451.

North Carolina A+ Schools Program, A Project of the Thomas S. Kenan Institute for the Arts, P. O. Box 10610, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 27108.

<sup>30</sup>It has crossed my mind, however, that perhaps the people in charge of these programs are aware and simply more astute than most of us. Their strategy may be to tout their programs in terms the culture can understand and accept with an eye toward developing them fully and appropriately.

<sup>31</sup>Heathcote, Lectures, June 23-July 11, 1975.

<sup>32</sup>Konnoak School staff, Janice Sherrill, Principal. The session referred to was held at Shelter 3, Tanglewood Park, Clemmons, North Carolina, July 17, 1995.

<sup>33</sup>Purpel, Conversation, June 22, 1995.

<sup>34</sup>Brueggemann, 1993, p. 25.

<sup>35</sup>James Houlik, Phone Conversation, July 25, 1995.

<sup>36</sup>Purpel, Conversation, June 22, 1995.

<sup>37</sup>Reynolda House Museum of American Art, 2250  
Reynolda Road, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 27106.

Southeastern Center for Contemporary Art (SECCA), 750  
Marguerite Drive, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, 27106.

<sup>38</sup>Brueggemann, 1993, p. 25.

<sup>39</sup>Classes taught by the writer, Sixth Grade  
(Willard) Skyland School, September 1977.

<sup>40</sup>Neil Postman, quoting John Dewey, New York: New  
York University, American Alliance for Theatre Education  
Conference, February 9, 1989.

<sup>41</sup>Purpel, Conversation, June 22, 1995.

<sup>42</sup>Brueggemann, 1993, p. 17.

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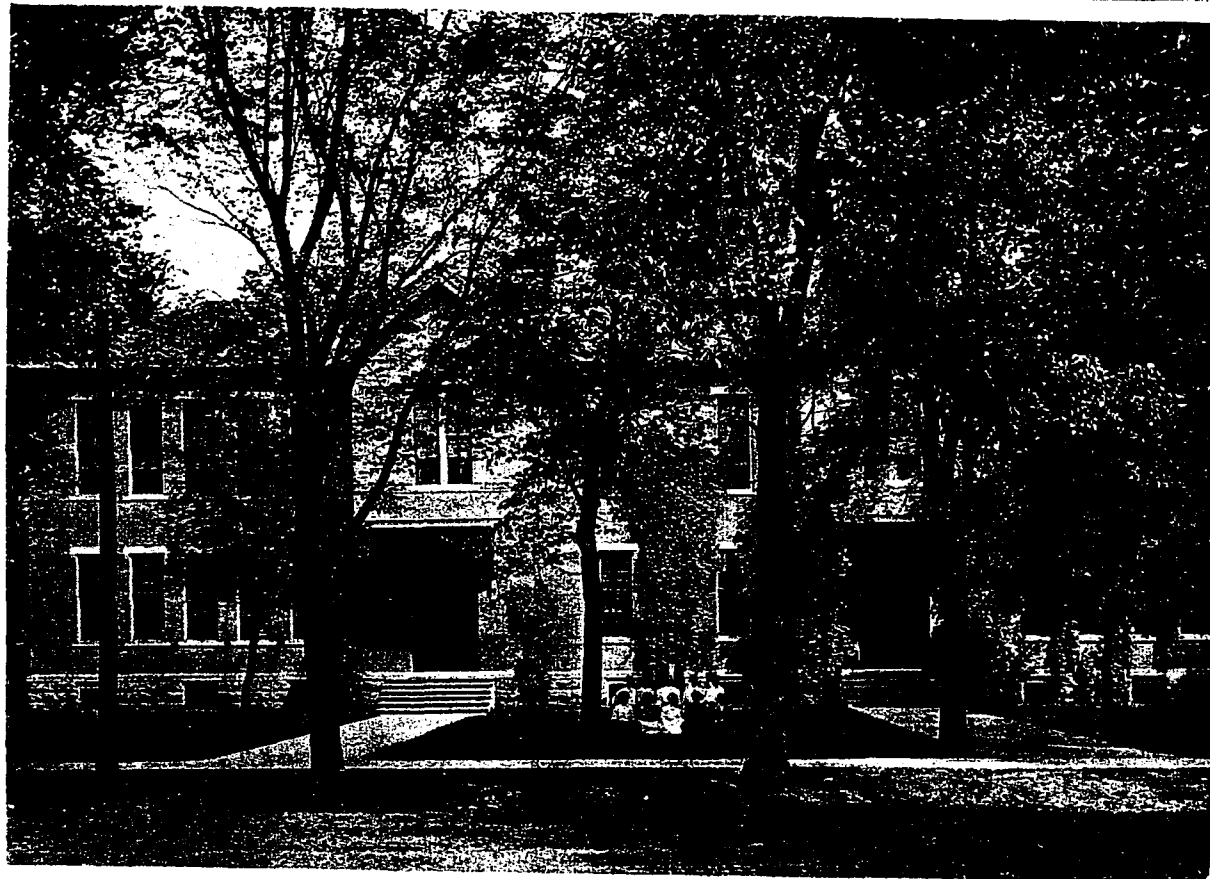
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APPENDIX A  
PICTURES FROM THE PAST AND  
OF THE PRESENT



Leta Blanche Andrews  
High School Graduation  
1902





Aunt Leta's School  
Clinton, Iowa; Sometime Between 1904-1909



Aunt Leta and Her First-Grade Class  
Clinton, Iowa; Sometime Between 1904-1909



Laretta Jane Andrews



Alfred Wilhelm Frederick Mess

My Parents

Wedding Day: August 15, 1925



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Printed in U.S.A.

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### My Family

My children: Katie, Karl and Paul; Me; My dog:  
Jill Russell, the Jack Russel Terrier; My  
husband: Bill