

rooms should only be part of the story. The context and form of our presentations can have a profound effect on their potential impact. The conference is ours to modify or transform. It is the only way to make our time in these meeting rooms as exciting and stimulating as those moments we spend with each other exchanging ideas and gossiping in the corridors and over lunch.

... we can work so that the theater of our thought reveals both our conviction and our doubt, as well as our inevitable duplicities. Those aesthetic forms that present their own contradictions without containing them in comforting resolutions, are the ones that constitute great theater (Grumet, 1986, p. 86).

References

- Collins, G. and Sandell, R. (1984). *Women, art, and education*. Reston, Virginia: National Art Education Association, 82-110.
- Grumet, M. (1986). Conference address: The theater of inquiry. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, 4 (1), 81-87.
- Myerhoff, B. (1979). *Number our days*. New York: E.P. Dutton.
- Turner, V. (1986). *The anthropology of performance*. New York: Paj Productions.

Outsiders and Taboo Subjects: The Horseflies of Art Education

KAREN A. HAMBLÉN

Both individuals and groups may take on outsider status depending on the extent they deviate from social norms and the extent they act as critics of society. In this paper, the role of art education outsider individuals and groups and the taboo subjects they discuss are examined in relationship to the norms of the policy-making institutions of art education. It is proposed that not only are outsiders necessary for maintaining the health and integrity of the field, but also that outsider status might be considered a desired state of being in that it allows individuals to exercise choices and freedoms that are denied more secure and protected insiders.

The observation that flies, gnats, mosquitoes, and other small flying insects tend to be bothersome to both humans and beasts led some of the ancient Greeks to consider their more persistent philosophers as horseflies¹ of the state. Socrates, in particular, was a major critic of conservative, entrenched, and unexamined ideas in Greek society. He proudly considered himself a horsefly of the state and, as it is well-known, suffered the ultimate fate for his critical stance. Both individuals and groups may take on outsider status depending on the extent they deviate from social norms and the extent they act as critics of society. In this paper, the role of art education outsider individuals and groups and the taboo subjects they discuss will be examined in relationship to the norms of the policy-making institutions of art education.

Through its actions, the art education establishment both creates and, I believe, needs pesky and persistent horseflies that serve as critics of the status quo, proponents of new ideas, and reviewers of institutional actions. At this time in our field, major professional, philanthropic, and academic institutions, with support from the federal government, are consolidating their efforts toward a particular interpretation of what is to be considered correct art education practice (Bersson, 1987; Hamblén, 1988). Generally, these institutions are proposing a discipline-based art education (DBAE) that focuses on the study of artistic exemplars (which have been so-designated by selected experts), the sequencing of art content, curricular implementation district-wide, the evaluation of student outcomes, and curriculum content in the areas of art production, art history, art criticism, and aesthetics. According to Hausman (1987), "In a time of stress and imbalance there is a welcome and reassuring ring to a more 'disciplined' approach to teaching" (p. 57). Hausman has further noted that school budget cutbacks and proposals for a return to basics have resulted in a re-entrench-

ment of conservatism that ignores much of the scope possible in art instruction. It is, therefore, imperative that there be critics to offer alternative perspectives.

The extent to which outsider individuals or groups are ostracized, are themselves criticized, or are considered dangerous indicates the conservative nature of established institutions and a limited level of tolerance for change, adjustment, and compromise. The way in which the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education has been viewed represents a prime example of the trend toward an exclusive conservatism that concentrates power and policy-making decisions within the higher echelons of formal art education institutions. The Caucus was accepted into the NAEA official family in the late 1970's under the tutelage of Edmund Feldman, who was then president of NAEA. Feldman's focus on art study in its sociocultural context has been well-documented (Anderson, 1986; Hobbs, 1986), and it is doubtful whether the Caucus founders would have been given official recognition without Feldman's help. Outsiders can benefit greatly from having an insider connection.

The sociocultural concerns of the Caucus were originally conceived as providing balance within the art education professional organization and ultimately providing balanced art instruction in the schools. The fact that the Caucus has increasingly been perceived as being of peripheral importance, if not serving as a haven for art education dissidents and radicals, cannot be merely attributed to the sociocultural perspective of the Caucus, actions of the Caucus, or even actions of individual members. To date, the Caucus has presented its ideas in a low-key, nonconfrontational manner, and none of its ideas could be considered far from the mainstream, let alone revolutionary. One might rhetorically ask, "If the Caucus is considered to be outside the normative fold, how would truly radical or critical groups stand?"

The level of tolerance a society or an institution has for dissidents, for deviations from the norm, or for full-blown critics is a fair indication of the extent to which democratic principles are operative and the extent to which there is a receptiveness to the inclusion of divergent ideas and actions that might change the norm. A democracy allows for and even supports outsider groups in order to allow for a healthy exchange of new ideas. One might even define a democracy as consisting of a tenuous, vulnerable alliance among numerous outsider groups.

A major theme of this paper is the necessity for outsider groups to maintain an ongoing critique of the status quo. It will be argued that not only rare outsiders are necessary for maintaining the health and integrity of the field, but also that outsider status allows individuals to exercise choices and freedoms that are often denied more secure and protected insiders. Rather than considering outsider status as an unsatisfactory condition that needs to be remedied, it will be proposed that outsider status can be considered a desired state of being that contributes toward the celebration and exercise of existential choice.

Types of Outsiders

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the many types of groups that exist within a society - or within a profession such as art education - and their various relationships to codified norms and to concentrations of policy-making power. Perceptions of power concentrations are decidedly fluid. Individuals and groups move in and out of positions of power and influence. For example, states arts councils might rightly argue that they are not within the power echelon, and that they often serve more as conduits of policy decided upon by state legislatures, NEA, or NEH. Some basic types of outsiders, however, need to be identified to indicate how art educators, individually and in groups, can and presently do work toward a critical consciousness of the field.

Outsider groups may be formalized to the extent of having a charter and formal rules of order and of purpose. *The Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education* belongs in this category, as do such quasi-governmental groups as Common Cause, Nader's "Raiders," and various consumer protection organizations. These groups may be given official status to provide balance, to co-opt dissent, or to allow them to act as informal watchdogs. Individuals who maintain strong contacts with the National Art Education Association, yet who are more or less consistently critical of many NAEA policies, would also belong in this category. They would also qualify as muckrakers in Lanier's (1977) lexicon of art educator types.

Informal networking in art education provides a powerful form of dissent that can be easily overlooked (Hamblen, 1986). Conversations in hotel lobbies at conventions, telephone calls among colleagues, informal groupings of university alumni, as well as other types of liaisons result in *ad hoc* outsider groups that, through informal contacts with decision-makers, can influence policy. Such personal and informal networking is often invisible to the untutored eye - or it may be so obvious as to be highly offensive to those who believe input into decision-making should follow some type of publicly scrutinized, established protocol. Informal networking can result in bringing like-minded individuals together who then act in concert to create a formalized, albeit continuing outsider group. The Caucus appears to have followed some similar path of development.

There are undoubtedly outsider groups within our society and our profession who are either so oppressed or so clandestine that we never learn of them. The short-lived White Rose anti-Nazi group in Germany existed only by dint of its members' abilities to elude detection. In art education, clandestine or almost-invisible groups are probably most characteristic of power elite groups. For example, the National Council for Policy Studies, composed of a limited number of art educators, is a closed elite that is part of the art education establishment. Yet, relatively few members of NAEA are even aware of the existence of this group since it does not appear on any formal roster, and knowledge of its membership must be informally gathered. The Council's members are primarily those who are also part of the formalized institutional and policy-making structure of NAEA or

are close to this structure. One might easily surmise that nominations to this Council are made on the basis of friendships and other types of informal networking. This Council is similar to exclusive social clubs, such as the politically conservative Bohemian Club in California which has an all-male membership that is further limited to the powerful and wealthy. Groups are clandestine in order to avoid detection or persecution or to acquire special privileges that will elude accountability.

The art education establishment creates its own horseflies. Within a reaction theory of social outsider groups, outsider individuals and groups and the subjects they discuss result from the characteristics of normative institutions. Conversely, an action theory of social or professional criticism deals with how outsiders propose and instigate policy that is different from that of normative institutions. Reaction theory deals with outsiders as being on the defensive. Action theory deals with outsiders as being on the offensive and of having an agenda in their own right. However, within the phases of social action, both reaction and action theories are applicable. The "what is" of society is the baseline from which one is able to imagine other possibilities. In this sense, all outsider groups, irrespective of their reactive or active stance, are "inside" to some extent.

Small, tightly formed official groups that are exclusive in their policy decisions and that make decisions that consolidate their power will place most individuals in outsider status, whether such individuals consciously understand their exclusion or not. As long as the illusion can be maintained that decisions are being made for the general good or that it is possible to gain access to the inner circle, exclusionary practices may not in fact be interpreted as such. This author believes that this has often been the case regarding the NAEA and more recently the J. Paul Getty Trust. We are told that NAEA is our professional organization at the same time that the budget of *our* research journal is cut, *our* time slots at conferences become scarce, and *our* membership fees are used for the publication of monographs of selected authors with singular philosophical perspectives that are compatible with a conservative agenda.

Relationships to power and favoritism are even more exclusionary, secretive and convoluted regarding the Getty. The financial resources of the Getty are legendary, and it would seem that some part of that budgetary grant pie could be ours if we behaved and avoided overt dissent. This seems to be the promise. But even Getty monies are limited and grants have tended to be given on the basis of uncertain criteria and questionable affiliations. Moreover, as a private philanthropy, Getty decisions are not open to scrutiny or subject to review. It is commonly stated that to be critical of the Getty's actions is to show an ungratefulness for what the Getty is doing for the field (Dobbs, 1987, April). Because of the low status of art in our society - the reasoning goes - art educators are to be properly differential irrespective of whether or not they agree with decisions made for the entire field by an unelected few.

While instances of fear and intimidation emanating from the perceived power of the Getty have been discussed informally and often in hushed tones, recently a reference to intimidation has been included in educational literature by Elliot Eisner, who is closely affiliated with Getty. Eisner (1988) refers to criticisms of DBAE and states that "Some have

claimed that DBAE . . . has been used to coerce teachers in some school districts" (p. 50). Eisner referenced his statement to personal communication he has had with an art educator. Eisner neither validates nor refutes this claim of coercion. The informal nature of much of the criticism of the Getty suggests that coercion may be fairly prevalent and that the complaint made to Eisner represents the tip of an iceberg of intimidation.

All individuals or groups are not working toward being accepted into the inner circles of exclusionary power, with some perhaps well aware that they would be unsuccessful if they attempted to do so. Informal conversations with art educators would suggest that a substantial number strongly disagree with current proposals and policies, and base their objections on philosophical, practical, and moral grounds. It is this group of outsiders, who do not wish to be part of the power elite, who have the potential to act as pesky and persistent horseflies on the "back" of the art education hierarchy at this time.

The Freedom of Horseflies

Society needs outsider groups in that they serve to sublimate dissent. Outsider groups may serve as a safety valve and be smugly tolerated or even supported by the establishment to avoid direct confrontations. The inclusion of caucuses within the NAEA has probably served to sublimate or possibly co-opt much dissent. To my knowledge, none of the caucuses have publicly confronted or challenged the power of the NAEA inner circle, and, I would suggest, that the various caucuses' original activist roles have become diminished over time after being accepted into the NAEA. The ideas and actions of quasi-outsider groups, such as the caucuses, can be easily monitored when they are part of NAEA. For the sake of appearances and to maintain respectability, such groups will also probably monitor and censor their own actions.

It is proposed in this paper that individuals and groups need to consider if outsider status might not be advantageous and allow for an exercise of freedoms that are denied those securely entrenched and indebted to the establishment. Although outsider status may initially not be of one's choice and may be considered an obstacle that should be overcome, status can be seen as offering an opportunity to act out new forms of being. As a horsefly of art education, one does not have to censor one's ideas in conformity with an array of prescribed norms. Conversely, those who are part of the inner circle of the Getty, for example, have to be careful they do not openly criticize the Getty version of DBAE. They may even find themselves in the unenviable position of defending such questionable practices as the use of the SWRL teacher-proof curriculum. Articles and booklets supportive of DBAE and especially those funded by the Getty have a familiar and similar tone with none of the usual sense of personal style one finds in the writings of individual researchers. That a high level of conformity is required is consistent with the basic corporate structure adhered to by the Getty. Persistent rumors abound of individuals who have quickly received outsider status for criticizing Getty policy, and one hears of grants that have not been given to applicants who were less than obsequious.

The power of outsiders resides in their understanding, accepting, and even revelling in their outsider status. As long as the outsider wishes to be accepted into the normative fold or as long as the outsider is open to being co-opted and believes that some compromise is possible, he/she is not existentially free and is not free to propose truly revolutionary alternatives.

At this time in the history of art education, I believe that the art education establishment embodies characteristics that should give many art educators the impetus to act as critics. There seem to be no viable, official alternatives that can seriously confront current art education institutions. In recent years, state organizations or art education programs at individual universities have not posed serious threats to NAEA policy, and neither have other formalized art education groups, such as the Arts and Learning Special Interest Group of the American Educational Research Association. The inner circles of power within the institutions of art education are being consolidated at the same time these institutions themselves are forming an alliance for a conservative agenda of curriculum development and research (Bersson, 1987; Hamblen, 1988). Even minimal dissent is seen as being disloyal, if not seditious. One might note that while art educators were far from being bashful in their criticisms of the Rockefeller Commission and its publication, *Coming to Our Senses* (Arts, Education and Americans Panel, 1977), there have been surprisingly few formalized, published criticisms of *Beyond Creating* (The J. Paul Getty Trust, 1985). This is despite the fact that the interpretation of DBAE adhered to by the formal institutions of art education is one that is decidedly rationalistic, technocratic, and embodies characteristics of general education that have, in the very near past, been roundly criticized by ostensibly the entire field of art education. Criticism, one might conclude, has been co-opted through real or implied retaliations. Friendships, professional alliances, and professional opportunities in art education, in many instances, are becoming contingent upon how closely one is allied to official policy or is part of official policy-making mechanisms.

As a horsefly of the state, Socrates went well beyond merely providing persistent irritations. Reacting to current policy puts one in a situation of being continuously on the defensive. This can dissipate energies as well as result in charges of negativism. To maintain an ongoing critical stance, outsiders need to have their own agenda as a focus for positive action. At this time, most criticisms of DBAE have been primarily reactive or have been partially proposed programs that do not really offer new perspectives. Glimpses of more programmatic dissent are, however, beginning to surface (Jagodzinski, 1987; Lanier, 1987).

Taboo Subjects

Somewhat akin to the child who says naughty words and makes unseemly noises at the dinner table, outsiders can deal with subjects that cause an uneasiness if not indignation and anger. Bowers (1987) has discussed how we can create areas of heightened consciousness or liminality by critically examining taken-for-granted ideas as well as ideas that

have been ignored. The latter he refers to as areas of audible silence, in that they are ideas that are not overtly discussed. Not surprisingly, many such areas of silence in art education are those that would broaden the base of power and those that are concerned with aspects outside the norms of a conservative agenda.

The art of ethnic minorities, women's aesthetics, socially concerned art, and non-formalistic art instruction are just some of the topics that have received short shrift in formalized art theory, research, and sanctioned programs. Much could be accomplished if the life worlds of the art education academic were studied and monitored for infringements on professional development, sexism, racism and tenure and promotion review practices. Also in need of study are such things as how power is distributed within and among official art education institutions, how philanthropies influence policy, how mechanisms develop to quell dissent, and how some individuals are able to self-appoint themselves as power brokers.

The contexts in which criticism of the field occur or in which taboo subjects are examined are of significance. Much discussion of taboo subjects and criticisms of the field occur in informal conversations in informal settings in which no permanent record is kept. In these informal contexts, the most wide-ranging, uninhibited discussions occur. In semi-formal settings, such as presentations at conferences, critical comments are more focused, and they also must be more carefully phrased and referenced. The formal context of the bulletin or journal page offers a permanent record for the widest audience, but this is also the context closest to sources of power and, therefore, this is the context in which one must most carefully and politely present criticisms. Moving from informal to formal contexts one finds a decrease in the actual numbers of criticisms, but the potential for creating programmatic change increases. To change the metaphor from horseflies to cats and mice, it is at the juncture of formal contexts that the mice must very carefully figure out how they are going to put the bell on the cat's collar.

Conclusion

Perceiving the ongoing need for horseflies of art education is a function of the extent one believes in democratic principles and in the inclusion of a variety of perspectives within our profession. Outsiders can provide critical input, examination of taken-for-granted ideas, and discussions on unpopular subjects. Specifically because of their uncertain position, outsiders possess a strength and power that can be utilized to vitalize and possibly change the field. While individual efforts that receive no formal recognition should not be discounted, outsider groups can more easily concentrate efforts and tackle specific problems.

For those not part of the power structure or with marginal membership, the choices are to be a follower, to hope for admission to enclaves of official power, or, to paraphrase Voltaire (1981), one can throw up one's hands, go home, and tend one's own garden and hope not to be disturbed. Or, as I propose, one can, acting alone or in small groups, act like a horsefly, albeit a short-lived one.

Footnotes

1. Socrates likened his function of chiding and criticizing the complacent Greek state to that of a gadfly stinging and awakening a sleeping horse (Warrington and Rouse, 1961). A gadfly is an inclusive term for flying insects that torment cattle and horses.

References

- Anderson, T. (1986). The Feldman method of art criticism: Is it adequate for the socially concerned art educator? *The Bulletin of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education*, 6, 59-70.
- The Arts, Education and Americans Panel. (1977). *Coming to our senses: The significance of the arts for American education*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Bersson, R. (1987). Why art education is neither socially relevant nor culturally democratic: A contextual analysis. In D. Blandy & K. Congdon (Eds.), *Art in a democracy* (pp. 78-90). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Bowers, C. (1987). *The promise of theory: Education and the politics of cultural change*. New York: Longman.
- Dobbs, S. (1987, April). *Guiding the Getty*. Discussion at the conference of the National Art Education Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Eisner, E. (1988). Discipline-based art education: A reply to Jackson. *Educational Researcher*, 16 (9), 50-52.
- The J. Paul Getty Trust. (1985). *Beyond creating: The place for art in America's schools*. Los Angeles, CA: Author.
- Hamblen, K. A. (1986). Professional networking in art education. *The Bulletin of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education*, 6, 94-107.
- Hamblen, K. A. (1988, April). *Research in art education: A form of educational consumer protection*. Paper presented at the conference of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C.
- Hausman, J. (1987). Another view of discipline based art education. *Art Education*, 40(1), 56-60.
- Hobbs, J. (1986). Various applications of the Feldman method. *The Bulletin of the Caucus on Social Theory and Art Education*, 6, 71-78.
- Jagodzinski, J. (1987). Toward an ecological aesthetic: Notes on a "green" frame of mind. In D. Blandy and K. Congdon (Eds.), *Art in a democracy* (pp. 138-163). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Lanier, V. (1977). The five faces of art education. *Studies in Art Education*, 18(3), 7-21.
- Lanier, V. (1987). A*R*T, a friendly alternative to DBAE. *Art Education*, 40(5), 46-52.
- Voltaire, F. M. A. (1981). *Candide*. New York: Bantam Books.
- Warrington, E. H., & Rouse, P. G. (Eds.). (1961). *Great dialogues of Plato* (rev. ed.) (W. H. D. Rouse, Trans.). New York: The New American Library.